

“I Take My School Serious”

Case Study of Oliver, 11th Grade Student at Bayview High School

Ian Martin

ED 240: Adolescent Development and Learning

Dr. Linda Darling Hammond

December 10, 2010



Table of Contents



Introduction	3
Methods	4
Physical Description	5
Identity as a Learner	6
Social and Cultural Dimensions of Identity Formation	10
Cognitive Development in Adolescence	13
Role of Motivation and Effort in Learning	18
The School Context	24
Development in Family and Community Contexts	30
Peers and Friendships	34
Social-Emotional Development	37
Conclusion	42
Bibliography	44
Appendix	46

Introduction

The first day Oliver* walked into my classroom at Bayview High School, I felt drawn to him, though I was not entirely sure of the reason. There was a joy and positivity in his presence, a magnetic and paradoxical blend of insecurity and confidence. He definitely seemed very different than I was in high school. While I was reserved, and would often sit in the back of class doodling instead of paying attention, Oliver appeared to be very socially-oriented. He often would say his thoughts and questions out loud to himself, other classmates, and the teachers.

In one of my very first interactions with Oliver, he admitted to me that he struggles with reading and writing, an incredibly honest and courageous statement for an adolescent to make during the first week of school, especially to a brand new teacher. I think it is this combination of honesty, sense of humor, and struggles with literacy that inspired me to select him as my focal student for this case study. One of my early impressions of Oliver was that he seemed to self-identify with a certain role, that of “bad student” or “troublemaker”, often making comments to that effect, and I hazarded a guess that a main reason was that he had been labeled as such by teachers in the past. This turned out to have a definite element of truth to it, though I was initially unaware of the extent of his troubled relationship with school in the past, which, I eventually discovered, included a long history of formal disciplinary actions and negative teacher perceptions of his behavior.

To provide some context for Oliver’s educational situation, some background on his current school is necessary. Bayview High School is a small charter school in California, with an approximate enrollment of around 300 students. Demographically, the student body is about 80% Latino, 10% Black, and 10% Pacific Islander (which includes mostly either Samoan or Tongan ethnicities). The students are fairly homogenous in a socioeconomic sense, with around 90% being on a free or reduced lunch program, and most living in a community that is one of the most impoverished in the state. Currently, the school is under close review by the district that holds its charter, and the next few years are seen as crucial in determining the ultimate survival of the school, with this result being largely influenced by standardized test scores. The

* Oliver is a pseudonym. The name of the school has also been changed.

school is run with a large amount of input by the teachers and staff, in conjunction with administration, and largely works on a consensus model of decision-making. Bayview uses block periods of eighty minutes, along with an advisory structure, where students are assigned to an advisor who serves as their support and mentor through all four years of high school.

Early on in the process of learning more about Oliver, I talked to his sophomore humanities teacher (Oliver is a junior at the time of this study), who advised me that he does not like being called out in front of others, and responds better to individual help and attention. In this way, he seemed to match up with K. Cushman's assertion that adolescents "...crave the respect of adults, feeling retaliatory rage when humiliated or ignored"¹. While this sense of rage and aggression forms a substantial part of Oliver's school history (this aspect will be explored in-depth later in this case study), it did not match up with the student I saw in my class, the one who smiled and laughed more than any other, the one who would exclaim, "Real talk!", when he heard someone saying a comment he saw as truthful or bold. In learning more about Oliver, I could not help but return to the idea of resilience time and time again. What had enabled him to reconcile a difficult past with the challenges of the present, and still emerge with a palpable sense of hope and not disengagement or despair?

Methods

This case study was conducted over the course of approximately two months (September to December of 2010). I conducted four formal interviews with Oliver over this period of time, ranging from thirty to forty-five minutes. Usually there was a defined topic or theme for each interview. While Oliver is usually very gregarious in most situations, during these interviews I often had to rely on prompting questions to probe his thinking on certain subjects further. In addition, I shadowed Oliver through his full class schedule over the course of two days (Bayview has a block schedule with Monday-Wednesday and Tuesday-Thursday being a different set of classes. Friday is

¹ K. Cushman, *Fires in the bathroom: Advice for teachers from high school students* (New York: New Press, 2003), 4.

the only day that all classes are held). Primarily, I observed from the back of his classes, taking detailed notes on classroom structures, norms, teacher and student interactions with Oliver, and dialogue that I overheard. Given the close-knit community at Bayview, I was able to learn more about Oliver through talking with staff members (his advisor, former and current teachers, etc.). I examined his cumulative folder, which includes information, documents, teacher comments, etc. from approximately the 3rd or 4th grade until the present. Finally, I conducted a phone interview with Oliver's foster mother, during which we talked about his education and some of her thoughts about his development (this mutual choice of a phone interview versus a home visit was made because of distance, logistics, and scheduling constraints).

Physical Description

Oliver is a 17-year-old male student, currently in the 11th grade. He is labeled as Latino in school records, and his physical appearance appears to fit this general description, though his features are ambiguous enough to inspire some questioning of ethnicity upon those who first meet him. He is of a medium to short height, and a slender frame. This contrasts with his love of basketball and other sports, as he is probably the shortest member of the basketball team. However, Oliver never betrays any insecurity around this point, and carries himself in a way that conveys confidence and charisma. Oliver has short, curly, dark brown hair, a light mustache, and a thin "chin-strap" style beard. He usually wears one earring in his left ear. Oliver's style of dress almost always consists of jeans, along with a baggy t-shirt or flannel, and he often also has either a baseball cap or beanie. Generally, it could be characterized as a "hip-hop" style of the particular region that Oliver lives in (it should be said that "hip-hop" is a fairly ambiguous category that covers a wide range of styles).

His speech patterns do not match the standards of "academic English" or the middle class norm represented on television and in the general media. Instead, he speaks in a pattern common to many youth of color of a certain socioeconomic status in his community, one that is often associated with and influenced by hip hop culture. As an example, "got" is often used instead of "have", while slang terms such as "hella" or "rogue" are often peppered into conversation. While this type of language is often

interpreted simply as representative of a lack of education, it is actually a form of cultural communication that has evolved over time. For Oliver, this is his main form of speech, both inside and outside the classroom. When expressing his ideas verbally about academic subjects, he retains this language pattern, which does not compromise clarity but does show that he struggles with switching “codes” or language patterns to the middle-class, White-identified standard (i.e. “Standard English”). This might be one of the challenges he faces as a developing writer, in that writing entails both learning concrete skills and issues of translation.

Identity as a Learner

Overall, Oliver seems to have a fairly complex relationship with school and learning. Despite my initial belief that he straightforwardly viewed himself as a “bad student” (one incident stood out in particular: when I asked him to stay after class so that I could talk to him about being part of this case study, he immediately responded by saying, “It’s something bad, isn’t it?”), he consciously self-identifies as neither a good or bad student. In fact, in one interview with him, he avoided both of those labels when describing himself as a student, instead replying, “I do my work, sometimes I get lazy on homework”. Oliver went on to explain that he feels that he can get work done and feel productive academically when he’s at school, because “there’s motivation” and “teachers there to help you”. Interestingly, he defined himself as a student not through easily defined categories, but by expressing his needs and frustrations. It does seem apparent from comments that he makes in interviews or in class, however, that he does subconsciously see himself as labeled by teachers and peers as a “bad student”, although how much he has internalized that label as a self-applied designation is unclear.

Oliver stated in an interview that the school subjects he feels most competent in are history and math. Interestingly, however, he immediately segued into discussing his love for sports and how good he is at them, even though I had framed the original question in terms of academic strengths. He described how he plays basketball, soccer, and baseball, and feels like he is strong at all three of those sports, and currently is on both the basketball and soccer teams at Bayview (there is no baseball

team, which he expressed regret about, as he said he would be on that team as well). Thus, while he did express some measure of confidence in certain academic areas, it seemed that he felt a greater sense of competence and control about athletics, a theme that would reoccur throughout the interview. The area that he felt weakest in was English, mostly because of vocabulary work and writing. Oliver stated that he felt he was a pretty good reader, at least when he was at school and other people were around, but that writing was a challenge, mainly because of grammar issues and a feeling that his vocabulary skills were not particularly strong. He said that his mother used to force him to read one hour per day when he was younger, but that he no longer read outside of school.

In terms of learning styles and intelligences, Oliver expressed that visuals and images helped him to learn better than just listening to someone speak or reading. He also said that he liked when teachers used analogies or real world examples to explain what they were talking about. One subject that he seemed to really describe an interest in was science (he is currently in a Chemistry class), because he liked the way in which it was possible to learn about everyday things that are usually taken for granted (he gave the example of air and breathing). His biggest self-described fear regarding academic work were “big tests”, where “you could have an average grade” in the class, but then if “you got a bad grade”, it would bring it down, so he admitted to being intimidated by that kind of pressure. Oliver also described constantly second-guessing himself on tests, and then finding out later that his first instinct was actually the right one, but he didn’t know where that doubt came from. I would speculate that some of this self-doubt arises from his previous experiences with school, where he has perhaps been labeled and treated as the “troublemaker” student, and thus not a reliable source of academic knowledge.

Oliver’s description of his school history seemed to be marked by a few distinct stages. He immigrated with his family from Honduras when he was in second or third grade (he couldn’t remember exactly when, just that he was in elementary school at the time), and recalled how difficult the transition was at first and that he felt alone at school because he didn’t speak much English. However, he described a process whereby he was consumed with learning the new language by talking to others, reading books, and

picking up English from friends and classmates. However, in middle school, he described his behavior as “bad”, marked by “fighting, not listening, and talking”. Oliver couldn’t explain why his behavior shifted this way in middle school or why he manifested these behaviors, eventually settling on the explanation that he didn’t feel school was important at that time (later on, I discovered a more poignant explanation). However, he felt that in high school he had transitioned to caring about school and feeling that it was very important and that he wanted to succeed. I do recall a particular incident in class one day, when he had made a mistake on a worksheet in class and was visibly distraught (though it was also attenuated by what seemed to be an over-the-top, joking manner) and he remarked to his partner at the time, “I take my school serious!”.

Oliver attributed this transition to being around adults at the school who had gone to college and succeeded (he used myself as an example), and that he knew people who had gone pro in various sports and that this had always happened because they went through college first. Thus, it seems that his love for sports is definitely a motivating force in pushing him to succeed academically, but he also sees sports as a possible entry point to college, so it is not a simplistic relationship. He also gave credit to a College Prep program he had joined through Bayview’s partnership with a large university. This program, which runs through the summer, helps to introduce students to college environments and assist them in making the necessary commitments in order to get into college. Oliver has spoken to freshman students at Bayview about the program and its benefits, demonstrating its importance in his life and transition.

Given this self-reflection and new commitment, it seems that Oliver is not in a state of “foreclosure”, as described by Erikson, where “(h)e sees himself as destined to fulfill a certain kind of role in society, based in part on his gender, social class, and family history...”². Instead, he seems to be exploring ideals of commitment, hard work, and self-improvement, and seeking to integrate these into his identity. The state of “moratorium”, again referencing Erikson, occurs when adolescents “...have an opportunity to reflect on and experiment with who they are, particularly with respect to

² Michael Nakkula, “Identity and Possibility: Adolescent Development and the Potential of Schools,” in *Adolescents at School: Perspectives on Youth, Identity, and Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2008), 16.

their skills, interests, and relationships with others...”³. My hypothesis would be that Oliver is currently in such a state, and this correlates with the idea of resiliency. How was Oliver able to move from a seeming state of foreclosure in middle school to one of moratorium?

Oliver’s view of intelligence was quite interesting and seemed to be a mix of a fixed mindset, where one believes that intelligence and ability are innate, and a growth mindset, where one believes that human traits can be developed and trained⁴. He said that “some people are born very smart”, but that “if you’re not on the same level” and don’t have the same “technique”, “as long as you’re trying to be successful then you’re showing something, you not giving up”. He then gave a sports-related example, in what was an interesting cognitive move. Oliver described being not very good at basketball when he was in fifth grade, and he said that people used to tell him that he “sucked” at it. However, he described a process whereby he took what they said as motivation to work hard and practice, and eventually got better to the point where he now sees himself as a very good basketball player and is on the school team. This seems to represent a growth mindset regarding sports, yet he seemingly using it as an analogy to express his views and approach to school as well.

He stated clearly, “I’m not stupid”, instead feeling that what held him back academically was not studying or doing his homework. Oliver expressed an interesting sentiment that if he could go to a school where he could live on campus, and constantly be in a school environment, then he felt that he would do well academically. In his view, the people who were born smart are the ones who “don’t do nothing” yet still “ace the tests”. It seems that there is a tension in his thinking between some elements of a fixed mindset and some of a growth mindset. He sees intelligence as residing in those who don’t have to expend any effort and still succeed⁵. However, based on my observations and interviews with Oliver, he does not seem to take bad grades in the past or mistakes on a test as statements about his intelligence, rather he sees them as messages about what he needs to improve and he feels that he can improve if he works harder and receives the help that he needs (patterns of thought which represent a growth

³ Ibid., 15.

⁴ Carol Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006), 4.

⁵ Ibid., 40.

mentality). As is clear with his basketball example, Oliver thrives on taking criticism and transmuting it into motivation to become better.

Oliver stated definitively that he plans to go to college after he graduates, and he hopes to continue playing sports on that level (again, I sensed that part of his desire for college is a blend between the opportunity to keep playing sports and also that sports might be a ticket into certain colleges). He sees San Jose State University or UC Davis as realistic options, while schools such as UCLA or Stanford seem desirable, but less attainable. One interesting response is that Oliver set himself a goal of achieving a 3.0 GPA this year, and explained that this would meet his goal of improving every year, as he received a 1.9 GPA the first year, and then a 2.6 GPA the second year.

The one aspect that I did not hear Oliver talk much about is the social aspect of learning. I have observed that he seems to learn best when working in pairs or in a group. The fact that he kept mentioning how hard it was for him to learn when he is alone seems to reinforce this observation. Oftentimes in my class, he seems to be the most confident and engaged with the material when he is discussing it or working on it with other students. It is when there is individual work, whether tests or seat work, that he seems to not finish, whether through frustration, disengagement, or for some other reason.

Social and Cultural Dimensions of Identity Formation

Oliver identifies, in his own words, as both “Latin and Black”. His parents were both from Honduras, with his mom also being Black-identified, and his dad (who passed away, I was never able to ascertain exactly how this happened, and did not feel it was necessary to push the subject) being identified as “Latin”. Around 3rd or 4th grade, he was placed in a foster home, and his foster mother is Black. In general, he tends to identify with and feel a part of both groups. His social groups tend to be closely identified with the sports he plays, which once again reaffirms the importance of sports in his life. He says that he hangs out with members of the basketball team, who tend to be African-American, and at other times hangs out with members of the soccer team, who tend to be Latino. Interestingly, I discovered from a fellow teacher interviewing another Bayview student, that Oliver is associated and identified with the Black students

by some of his peers (this particular student was talking about Black students, and mentioned Oliver in a list of their names). This tends to match up with my own observations of who he tends to associate with the most during brunch and lunch periods. While he does know Spanish, he related to me that he doesn't really use it, and hasn't used it much since he was younger, so he feels like he "can't really speak it", though he does understand it. Beverly Tatum explored Zavala's research on the link between language and identity for Latinos, noting that "Zavala effectively demonstrates that while these young people are still in the process of exploring identity, the resolution of their feelings about the Spanish language is a central dimension of the identity development process"⁶. It is possible that Oliver's feeling of disconnection from the Spanish language influences what group (Latino or Black) he feels more at home with and comfortable. This could also be influenced by the presence of his foster mother, who is Black, the absence of his birth mother, and death of his father, along with the demographics of his neighborhood.

One aspect of social/cultural identity that is distinctive about Oliver compared to most other Bayview students is his home being in a city quite a distance away from the school. He explained that he felt there was a cultural difference when he first came to the school: "It felt weird. Words weren't the same, almost like a different language". This difference in slang ("Eh rogue" vs. "Eh bro", or "Ya feel me", "Let's go!") seemed to be a matter of curiosity between Oliver and other students at the school, but not much more than that. From an outside perspective, the differences are tangible but still share a similar class and cultural background, representing regional variations more so than the culture shock that might occur if Oliver suddenly found himself in a wealthy, mostly white high school.

Religion does play a definite role in Oliver's life, as he attends church "almost every Sunday". It is a local neighborhood church close to the school, which he identified as "Christian". The neighborhood around Bayview (and this church) is interesting as it includes both a fairly high socioeconomic status (S.E.S.) area that is mostly white, along with a portion of the city that most of the students come from that is

⁶ Beverly Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 142.

mostly communities of color and low S.E.S. He believes in God, but also reported enjoying "...thinking in a different way." Oliver talks about how many people "don't go deep" enough when they talk or think about God, and that he likes to ponder philosophical issues about God, God's origin, etc.

Oliver's own take on the relationships between different racial groups and ethnicities at the high school is quite interesting. He feels that people at the school generally "get along well". Referring to racial groups, "some don't talk to each other", but he doesn't see conflicts, mostly saying "they mind their own business". Oliver feels that this may have something to do with how small the school is, and that this seems to promote some level of interdependence and exchange. In his words, some "people mix it up". That being said, when asked to place groups on a campus map based on where they hang out during breaks, there were clearly distinct racial groups (his terms being "Blacks", "Latinos", and "Samoans"), with their own areas of the school that they occupied during brunch or lunch.

Oliver put himself on the map as hanging out mostly in one of the two athletics areas, either the volleyball court, where he placed the Latinos, or the basketball court, where he placed the Blacks. He also spent some time at the benches, which he identified as the spot for the "Samoans" (there are Pacific Islander students of various nationalities, usually either Samoan or Tongan). Interestingly, despite tending to downplay the importance of racial division at the school, Oliver struggled to think of groups that were not based on racial/ethnic affiliations, only coming up with the "gangsters" who hang out far away from the school by the baseball backstop, and people who play football on the field by the side of the school, which seems to be a mixed group. He didn't seem to think distinctions such as the "cool kids" or "nerdy kids" had any importance or meaning at the school. An intriguing point is that he tended to clump a group of "girls" together without racial markers, though when pushed he categorized them as mostly Latinas. This may represent a situation where he thought of that particular group mostly in terms of gender and not race.

On a personal level as well, Oliver tends to minimize the importance of race to his life or identity. He says that growing up, "I didn't really think about it, didn't care". At the same time, he feels that at times he is judged by his perceived race: "The way

people look at you, they give you mean looks, especially people that's not your race" (I interpreted this to be a reference to people who were not Black or Latino, most likely white). However, he was quick to follow up by saying that "...it don't happen often". Pedro Noguera's work on the development of awareness of race might be instructive here, as he notes that "Children who attend racially diverse schools or reside in racially diverse communities are much more likely to become aware of race at an earlier age than children in more homogenous settings. In the latter context, race is often not a defining issue, nor is it a primary basis for identity formation"⁷. This may explain Oliver's understatement of race both in his personal life and in the context of the school, as both the school and his community are relatively socioeconomically homogenous, and racially separated from white populations. In such a context, especially for a student that sees both of his claimed identities (Latino and Black) represented around him in large numbers, race may not seem as salient as it would in other contexts. I would add from my own observations that there does seem to be a clear division between different racial groups at the school that seems to be more subtextual than explicit or overt. However, it seems to be very real and manifests itself in a base level of mistrust or perhaps lack of familiarity. The fact that Oliver feels part of both groups may render him less attuned to this division, although that is a situation that often increases one's sensitivity to such issues.

Cognitive Development in Adolescence

In the process of examining samples of Oliver's classroom work, several aspects of his cognitive development become apparent. In terms of domain-specific understanding (in this case, U.S. history) and historical thinking, his work on a "Slavery in the Constitution" worksheet is quite revealing. Many students in Oliver's class, perhaps 60-70% of the students, struggled to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. In particular, there were three secondary sources written by historians, explaining why they believed the Founding Fathers kept the institution of

⁷ Pedro Noguera, "Joaquin's Dilemma': Understanding the Link between Racial Identity and School-Related Behaviors," in *Adolescents at School: Perspectives on Youth, Identity, and Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2008), 25.

slavery in the Constitution, and some students confused the historians' descriptions of opinions from that time period for the historians' own opinions. By contrast, Oliver was able to distinguish that the historians did oppose slavery themselves, while explaining why it wasn't seen as an urgent problem for the Founding Fathers. The skill of being able to organize in one's mind multiple layers of evaluation about a particular topic (i.e. one's own opinion, the historian's opinion, the Founding Father's opinion, the historian's opinion about the Founding Father's opinion, one's own opinion about the historian's opinion about the Founding Father's opinion, etc.) is one that is crucial to history and an example of higher-order thinking. Oliver seems to be fairly proficient at this skill.

Another example of higher-order thinking in a formal operational sense is Oliver's grasp of "abstract ideas", "abstract principles", and "universal ethical principles"⁸. In order to understand the material and sources presented in the "Slavery in the Constitution" activity, students must be able to comprehend some fairly abstract concepts. For example, several of the primary sources (speakers from the Constitutional Convention) do not directly state their opinions on slavery, but instead couch their arguments (for maintaining slavery) in terms of the need for national unity or by appealing to economic interests. These are abstract ideas that need to be understood before a student can understand and grapple with the actual text. Oliver seemed to do very well with this kind of abstract thinking on this particular assignment. Also, he expressed his own opinions about this particular topic by criticizing the Founding Fathers for failing to prioritize freedom and equality above other, more material concerns, which represents an appeal to "universal ethical principles". One area that Oliver could develop would be to generate an understanding of the context of particular historical periods, in order to better situate and understand the evolution of abstract ethical principles over time, and in response to historical forces.

Examining some of Oliver's work in reading through and summarizing various primary or secondary sources, it becomes clear that he is fairly skilled at synthesizing and explaining ideas and concepts in a concise fashion. However, his writing usually contains a high frequency of grammatical and spelling errors, which could too easily be

⁸ Michael Cole and Sheila R. Cole, *The Development of Children* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2001), 647.

interpreted as a general lack of intelligence. In our society, such errors are often construed to mean that a person's cognitive development has been stunted in some way, and the formality and complexity of one's written communication is taken as a shorthand for intelligence and maturity. For this reason, a teacher who looked only at Oliver's written work and analysis might come to the quick conclusion that he is generally deficient. However, this would be to ignore his proficiency in grasping complex/abstract ideas and rendering them into a deceptively simple form. Development of his writing skills would allow not only a more accurate display of his cognitive development, but facilitate a transformation of his academic identity. Conflation of intelligence and formal writing skills tends to marginalize students such as Oliver, and the challenge is to strengthen their tool set while affirming the skills they already possess.

In one of my interviews with Oliver, he expressed what works for him best as a learner: visuals/images, the use of analogies to explain concepts, and "when teachers explain things". When talking about science, and how he enjoys it the most because it connects with everyday phenomena (yet pushes and deepens his understanding of the everyday), he seems to be expressing a desire for curriculum to relate to his experiences and background knowledge. The How People Learn framework of learning argues that "...many students seem to learn effectively in the context of authentic, real-life activities yet have difficulty with the more artificial tasks required in school"⁹. What Oliver may be receiving in science that seems to work for him as a learner are activities and concepts that approximate "real-life activities" and concerns. In looking through Oliver's cumulative folder, it became apparent that his interest in science has been borne out in terms of academic success throughout middle school and high school. In almost every semester/quarter, Oliver's highest grade has been in science classes, and even during times when he was receiving D's and F's, he would earn at least a C, if not an A, in science. While it may be a bit too far of a stretch to say that this success is completely due to the ways in which science can resonate most directly with "real life", the fact that he brought up this connection himself is significant.

⁹ John Bransford and others, "Theories of Learning and Their Roles in Teaching," in *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 160.

Reviewing Oliver's cumulative folder was an intense and emotional experience. It also helped to shed light on his academic development over time, and the factors that may have been influential. Examining his records, he was suspended at least ten times over the course of middle school and the first year of high school. Most of these incidents involved fighting with other students, though a few were related to defiance of teachers or school staff. Most teacher comments centered around disruptive behavior, an unwillingness to turn in homework, and a lack of cooperation with authority figures. His seventh grade teacher identified the main barrier to his achievement as being excessive "socializing", as well as a "lack of focus", and observed a "lack of interest in academic success" (I must admit that this last statement is a bit troubling to me, as I am not sure how it is possible to deduce a "lack of interest" in success as opposed to disengagement due to other factors). Another teacher in 5th grade commented that Oliver was "easily off-task", and needs an "environment where he can focus". There were countless other comments along these lines. His grades have been consistently either C's or D's, though he would often get B's and A's in science and P.E.. In high school, his grades have constantly improved each semester, as he described in an early interview. An intriguing comment from a 5th grade summer school teacher was that "I see no reason that [Oliver] cannot be at grade level. His only problem is his behavior." A picture emerges that his academic development has been shaped, and perhaps impeded, by discipline issues.

In examining Oliver's cumulative folder, I came upon the discovery that Oliver was placed with foster parents in 2003, (this was not information that he shared with me in any of our interviews, and I did not press him on the matter) because of child abuse by his birth mother. The order placing him in foster care described him as "severely abused, can be defiant and oppositional, emotionally disturbed". The transition from elementary school to middle school that can be difficult for many children, as well as the transition into puberty, was made even more challenging for Oliver due to parental abuse and a transition into a new family. It would not seem to be far-fetched to attribute Oliver's discipline issues to these factors. At the same time, he has displayed a remarkable resiliency in, after undergoing myriad challenges, dedicating himself to a

course of academic improvement over the course of high school since coming to Bayview (after being put up for expulsion at a previous high school).

Academically, by most standardized measures, such as test scores and grades, Oliver seemingly has been labeled a “below basic” student. On his 2009 CST test, he scored “below basic” on english/language arts, algebra, and science. He failed to pass the CAHSEE his sophomore year, albeit falling short on the ELA and math portions only by eight and five points respectively. However, this “objective” and standardized view of Oliver’s abilities is incomplete and inaccurate. It does not take into account his athletic abilities and determination to improve. Similarly, Oliver’s charisma and interpersonal skills are obscured, along with the ways in which he can express his ideas verbally in a clear manner. As mentioned earlier, he possesses a level of proficiency in tackling abstract concepts and higher-order thinking. In a recent essay, Oliver displayed an ability to organize pieces of evidence and concepts into distinct categories, use quotations and explain them, and draw connections from past events to the present day. All these are examples of systematic thinking, described by Piaget as “formal operational” thinking¹⁰. It would be all too easy to pathologize Oliver’s academic struggles as a result of childhood hardships, and reduce him to the status of “victim”. However, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that Oliver has seemingly escaped the path of Erikson’s “foreclosure” that he seemed to be on in middle school and the first year of high school, and at Bayview has found a space in which he can experiment with different identities, ideas, and futures (Erikson’s “moratorium”).

Role of Motivation and Effort in Learning

Due to the school’s block schedule, I shadowed Oliver through his two different sets of classes over a period of two days. Oliver experiences a variety of teaching styles and classroom structures throughout the day and week. Using Blumenfeld,

¹⁰ Cole and Cole, *Development of Children*, 646.

Mergendoller, and Puro's concepts of "bringing students to the lesson" and "bringing the lesson to the students" is useful in clarifying the details of his classroom experiences¹¹.

His first class of the day on Mondays and Wednesdays is intermediate algebra. What immediately stood out to me about this class is how loud it can be at times, with students engaged in various side conversations that I could clearly hear were not related to the task at hand. Looking at it from the perspective of a student trying to get his or her work done, this could be a real distraction. Most of the class seemed to center around practice of math problems, focusing on an objective of the day, which was learning about graphing inequalities. There was a definite rhythm to the class, with students expected to work individually or in pairs on different variations of the same type of problem, and then there would be some version of a whole class debrief. There did not seem to be a high degree of "bringing the lesson to students", as it seemed that the material did not relate to "students' lives and experiences or to current events"¹². The material seemed to exist on its own in a theoretical vacuum.

However, the teacher did make many attempts to "bring the students to the lesson". For example, there was a double-entry journal activity where students completed equations on one half of the paper, and explained their process, reasoning, and questions on the right hand side. There was also a portion at the end of class where students were chosen to stand at the front of the board and complete a problem while the class coached them. However, my hypothesis is that these attempts were undermined or rendered less effective by a lack of enforced norms. For example, in the coaching activity, one student ended up doing all the coaching, while the rest of the class seemed to be socializing and didn't seem to be paying much attention to the process. Based on these observations, it does not seem to be a particularly motivating environment for Oliver. It did seem like he was completing some of the practice activities, though he was prompted by the teacher to complete his double-entry journal and his warm-up question. However, he did not participate verbally the way he often does in other classes.

¹¹ Phyllis C. Blumenfeld, John R. Mergendoller, and Pamela Puro, "Translating Motivation into Thoughtfulness," in *Redefining Student Learning* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1992), 90.

¹² *Ibid.*, 65.

One interesting episode of note was when Oliver cussed in Spanish, which prompted a Latino student towards the front of the class to turn around and say, “Don’t cuss in Spanish”. This then turned into a back-and-forth discussion about Oliver’s lack of fluency in Spanish. At one point, Oliver said “I don’t have to know it, I’m in the United States”. The other student said, “Look around, everyone here speaks more than one language. We came here at the same time and I’m still fluent in Spanish”. Oliver replied, “That’s you, we’re different people”. This was an interesting look into Oliver’s construction of identity with regards to ethnicity and language, especially in relation to other students. It made me think about how these types of important discussions often are not included in school curriculum, yet they would be valuable means of engaging students and helping their process of self-discovery and articulation of their ideas and identities.

Oliver’s second class of the day on Mondays and Wednesdays is Spanish 2. In this case, the teacher brings the lesson to the students through an immersive classroom environment. For example, while students work on a warm-up activity, instead of using a timer, the teacher plays a Spanish-language song on his computer. The teacher also brings the students to the lesson in several different ways. For example, one half of students were allowed to work collaboratively on an exam that was set up in order to facilitate this process and allow for peer coaching between students. The other half worked on creating an invitation in Spanish, gaining the experience of using Spanish in a creative and practical way. Allowing students to draw and express their understanding creatively can assist the learning process and increase student engagement¹³. Interestingly, the teacher also allowed students to socialize while they worked on their invitations, but repeatedly prompted them to keep their voices below the sound of the music he was playing. Oliver tends to be very socially oriented in all of his classes, interacting verbally and joking with a variety of different students. In this class, he was able to socialize throughout the work time, which he took full advantage of, and this was not dealt with as a problem by the teacher. At the same time, he completed the invitation along with his partner. However, there was a large stretch of time, about fifteen minutes or so, where his partner was taking his turn drawing, and Oliver spent

¹³ Cushman, *Fires in the bathroom*, 117.

that time interacting with other students and walking across the room a few times. Thus, while Oliver's level of motivation seemed to be enhanced by this lesson compared to the earlier math lesson, and he did finish the assigned activity, his level of cognitive engagement was perhaps not as high as I observed in some of his other classes.

Oliver's third class on Mondays and Wednesdays is chemistry. On this particular day he was taking a school-wide math assessment during this block. From observing this class on two occasions, I have noticed that the teacher often verbally directs Oliver to stop talking or to stay on task. From conversations with the student teacher who is regularly in the classroom, I have learned that Oliver is seen as a discipline problem within the classroom. Within the space of about ten minutes on this particular day, Oliver was prompted to stop talking at least three times, which far exceeded any similar admonitions to any other students during that period. What is interesting about this is that Oliver's behavior had not changed from Spanish class to chemistry, yet the meaning of it had seemingly transformed because of the difference in teacher expectations and classroom structure. However, science class is also the one that Oliver identified as his favorite, because of its real world applicability. On the previous occasion that I observed this class, the teacher brought the lesson to the students through such methods as issuing a "Snapple challenge", where students were given a week to discover how the producers of Snapple bottles are able to create the "pop" when the bottle is opened (with a prize awarded to the student who could figure it out). The students were brought to the lesson through a variety of verbal and visual techniques: diagrams, analogies, translation of scientific terms into everyday language, etc. Thus, despite whatever ramifications may attend the labeling and enacting of Oliver as a "discipline problem" within the classroom, the classroom structure and pedagogy are geared towards enabling a high degree of motivation, and I did observe that Oliver's level of verbal participation and engagement was quite high.

An additional note of interest is that following my shadowing experience, Oliver's chemistry teacher worked to marshal his energy and enthusiasm in a way that would contribute to classroom learning. Specifically, the teacher designed demonstrations and activities that require physical movement, and Oliver would invariably volunteer for such

an opportunity (the same is true in my classroom as well). For example, the concept of diffusion was taught by having a student represent an air particle by wearing an orange vest and moving around the room, and Oliver carried out the role with enthusiasm. Using Oliver's physicality and sociability to engage him in learning, as well as to engage other students, seems to be an ideal example of both bringing students to the lesson and bringing the lesson to students.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Oliver has a completely different schedule. His first class of the day is Arts 3. I observed that his behavior seemed markedly different, if not in character than in degree, from other classes. My hypothesis is that this difference had less to do with pedagogy than the social context. In this class, he sits at a table next to another student, who is also often labeled a troublesome student. I noticed that she carried out conversations with Oliver while the teacher was talking, was singing a song when students were supposed to be working silently, and commented negatively on Oliver's art work (a portrait) at one point, saying "It looks like she's on crack or something". Shortly after this statement, Oliver had gone to examine an example portrait on the wall, and came back to his table to find this student sketching on his portrait, apparently in an attempt to fix what she thought was lacking. Oliver was continually prompted by the teacher to stay on task: "Oliver, fold the paper, let's go", "Oliver, there should be a lot more paint on your page, c'mon", "You're just watching other people do it. The point is to practice it so *you* can do it". At one point, Oliver held up the portrait that was being joked about by other students and punched it a few feet across the room. The teacher wasn't watching at the time, and he laughed as he picked it up and took it back to his table. It would be far too simplistic to blame what seemed to be different or "enhanced" behavior on Oliver's part solely on his seating being next to a "disruptive" student. A closer approximation to reality might be that a combination of social dynamics (his high social status and perceived low academic status in conjunction with other status differences in the classroom) and pedagogy was responsible for his perceived lack of motivation, though there are other factors that could also be responsible: time of day, diet, the particular task they were working on (a practice-focused activity where they were asked to create a gray scale and color scale), etc.

English class that day was a marked contrast, as the classroom environment is heavily structured and the teacher makes almost all expectations and norms clear and explicit. The main activity of the day was literature circles, where students are assigned various tasks (quote expert, character expert, etc.) within a group and if a student has not completed the reading and their task, then they are not allowed to participate. On this day, Oliver had not completed what was necessary, and so spent much of the period catching up to the rest of the class by reading through the novel the class was discussing (*Narrative of Frederick Douglass*). The teacher checked in with him on a regular basis, asking about his progress, and saying “your goal for today is getting caught up”. The final activity of the day was a quiz. Judging by whether or not his pencil was moving or his eyes were tracking the page, Oliver seemed to be on-task about 90-95% of the time, which was quite a bit higher than the other classes I observed. One question that I am left with is where is the boundary between motivation and structural coercion? In other words, a student can be focused because they are motivated to be so or because the structure of the task, norms, and classroom ensures that they have no other option. Are the two complementary, contradictory, or completely separate considerations?

Reflecting on Oliver’s total experience of school, the How People Learn framework is once again instructive in providing different lenses of analysis: assessment-centered, student-centered, community-centered, and knowledge-centered¹⁴. Thinking about the knowledge-centered aspect and the balance between efficiency and innovation, it struck me that the particular ratio of the two varied from class to class. Overall, innovation, defined as the “...ability to ‘let go’ of previously held beliefs and tolerate the ambiguity of having to rethink one’s perspective...”¹⁵, seemed especially prominent only in Oliver’s history and science classes. From a learner-centered viewpoint, I rarely saw Oliver’s skills, experiences, and existing knowledge tapped as a resource, as a source of learning rather than a hindrance or as being irrelevant (identified by Bransford and others as the “constructive nature of knowing”¹⁶). One exception is in Spanish class when a certain group of students asked Oliver for the

¹⁴ Bransford and others, *Preparing Teachers*, 177-180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

meaning of various words in Spanish or how to say phrases in Spanish. He appeared to be the only Latino student in the class, with the rest being either Black or Pacific Islander. I infer that he is seen as a resource by these students because they know he speaks Spanish as his first language (though he no longer has fluency). I wonder if Oliver's classes were structured so that he would be integrated as a valuable resource, if this would increase his motivation and decrease the amount of times he needed to be prompted to stay on-task by teachers.

Moving to the concept of community-centeredness, Bayview is a small school, with only a few hundred students, which does allow for certain aspects of the small learning communities that Bransford and others advocate for. However, I did wonder on several occasions during my shadowing, if the connections established between students due to the small scale of the school could be utilized more than they are at the moment, in order to allow students to "share their understandings and reasoning with one another"¹⁷. As Bransford and others argue, "Not only are ideas shared, but modes of argumentation, reasoning, and problem solving are also modeled and shared"¹⁸. This would undoubtedly enrich Oliver's learning experiences and motivation, given the ways I have observed him use other students and social interaction as a primary method of learning. Finally, the assessments I noticed in Oliver's classes varied from standard summative assessments such as a quiz in English that checked for reading comprehension to the collaborative exam in Spanish 2.

In several of his classes throughout the two days, I observed Oliver making comments that denigrated his own ability to complete a task or stated a lack of motivation. For example, concerning a math task, he said aloud, "I don't know this s*** at all. I forgot it from 8th grade. I'm not tryin' to remember." In Spanish class, while working on the invitation with his partner, Oliver said to his partner, "I can't do this, you do this. I can draw when I want to." What was most interesting about these statements is that they were made out loud, not just to himself, but to whoever happened to be in the range of hearing (in all cases, the teacher did not seem to hear them). They seemed to be both verbal manifestations of internal struggles of motivation and

¹⁷ Ibid., 169.

¹⁸ Ibid., 169.

frustration, while also posing as stark counterpoints to moments when Oliver did appear to be engaged and dared to give answers out loud even when seemingly uncertain about their validity. This sheds light on Oliver's resiliency, as it becomes clear that it is not simply a heroic story of overcoming adversity in a predestined way, but rather that it is a constant struggle that he must negotiate each day, and that each moment requires a decision as to how he will relate to the tasks that are placed in front of him. That decision-making is influenced by different classroom structures/norms, the nature of learning tasks, and the agency and interests of Oliver himself.

The School Context

As a learner, Oliver tends to be motivated most by material that relates to everyday experiences or subjects of interest to him. For example, he has repeatedly stressed his interest in science, because it helps develop an understanding of things that are already familiar to him. Pushing a little further, perhaps Oliver feels both more engaged with and competent in dealing with a subject that is based in concrete phenomena that he is familiar with, rather than just theoretical concepts or skills. Interestingly, Oliver's science teacher was quite surprised when I told her about his expressed enthusiasm for science, as he is seen as a somewhat disruptive influence in that class. However, from my observation of him in chemistry, he did appear to be more engaged in the sense of participating in classroom discussions and expressing a sense of competence by explaining material to a partner than I had seen in other classes. In a recent lesson that I conducted on the use of quotes as evidence in history, one activity was based around choosing a quote to prove that the Los Angeles Lakers were the best basketball team in the world. While previously, Oliver had appeared to be a bit bored or unfocused, once the lesson reached this activity, he was engaged and participatory in discussions both with his group and the class as a whole. This continued for the rest of the lesson even after the activity was over.

Oliver's strengths as a learner are his resiliency and social skills. By resiliency, I mean that even when he falls behind in work, as he did in my class, or is verbally admonished by teachers to modify behavior in some of his other classes that I

observed, he rarely gets discouraged to the point of giving up completely. In my class (history), he worked to make up and turn in missed assignments, which raised his grade from an F to a B-. Similarly, his tendency to engage in social interaction or engage in classroom discussions does not appear to be dampened even after being involved in a confrontation of sorts with the teachers. One of Oliver's primary strengths is also his social skills. By this I mean that he seems to know how to interact and get along with a variety of students in his different classes (from varying ethnic backgrounds, genders, ages, etc.). While Oliver's cumulative folder documents a history of conflict and violence with other students, it appears that he has grown developmentally towards a more productive use of his social orientation. While shadowing Oliver, I often noticed him discussing content with other students nearby to develop his understanding, and it seemed that activities that involved interaction with other students seemed to engage him the most and provide the best space to promote his learning. It was when Oliver had to do individual work that it seemed like he would lose focus, stare into space, and fail to complete the activity. While this social orientation can be distracting as well if it drifts into socializing, the tendency for this to happen seemed to depend on the particular classroom structure and norms that Oliver was in at the moment.

Oliver's level of knowledge and skills is quite variable. Based on his past grade records, his level of scientific knowledge and skills appears to be relatively high. He also brings a high level of background knowledge about sports, one of his main passions. Oliver has shown an ability to decode historical texts and juggle the various levels of meaning and opinion. Academically, he needs support in improving his vocabulary and writing skills. His main obstacle to learning at the moment seems to be that he is unable to get homework and reading done at home, which he mentioned in an interview, and that even when he does complete an assignment, sometimes he just doesn't turn it in. Also, the maintenance of focus when working individually is something that can be a struggle for Oliver.

Oliver's high school environment is working positively to support his learning in several ways. One key is the small school size, with only a few hundred students. As expressed in "Reinventing High School: Outcomes of the Coalition Campus Schools Project", bigger schools are often more ridden with conflict, "craziness" and

impersonality, while small schools can minimize these factors¹⁹. This resonates with something that Oliver said in one of our interviews, where he commented that racial conflict was not significant at the school because it was so small and everyone knew each other. A large part of his school record consists of suspensions and discipline for fighting, and he was put up for expulsion at his previous school for a serious fight that led to his arrest. However, since coming to Bayview, he has not been suspended or engaged in a fight. While there are likely several factors influencing this change, being in a small school and a closer-knit environment has likely played an important role.

Closely related to the size of the school is the issue of personalization. The small staff and student population means that teachers are quite familiar with the students, even those who they do not teach, and are often quite knowledgeable about their background and families. The school size also facilitates smaller class sizes (Bayview aims to keep classes below 25, with 30 being the theoretical limit) and student loads for teachers are thus much lower than the average at a comprehensive school. In this environment, “low-achieving” students who might be lost in the mix at bigger schools are supported and constantly worked with on an individual level²⁰. From watching Oliver through his various classes, he seems to especially benefit from such individual teacher attention. Oftentimes when he seems to lose focus, teachers are there to prompt him to complete his work or to help him work through whatever seems to be standing in his way (in my own experience of working with Oliver, he often will not ask for help, but when I approach him to check on his status, he will have a question or concern). In talking with Oliver, he has expressed the way that he feels the school environment allows him to get work (and learning) done because there is always a teacher there to provide assistance or other students who are doing the work as well. This might not be the case for Oliver if he was in classes of 35 or 40 students, with teachers who had pupil loads of 150 plus. Other structures at the school, such as an advisory structure, the use of multiple instructional strategies, professional development

¹⁹ Linda Darling Hammond, Jacqueline Ancess, and Susanna Wichterle Orl, “Reinventing High School: Outcomes of the Coalition Campus Schools Project,” *American Educational Research Journal* 39 (Fall 2002): 654.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 655.

days and performance assessments in the form of yearly exhibitions also contribute to a positive learning environment²¹.

There appear to be some aspects of the school that could be improved, and may be having a negative impact on Oliver's learning. The school's curriculum and focus is based around preparing students for college, with the classes provided being designed to meet the University of California's A-G requirements. A college preparation focus is not negative in and of itself, however it can often be pursued from a deficiency perspective. By this, I mean that the assumption is that students coming to the school are lacking or deficient in certain necessary skills and knowledge and must be "brought up" to the level of students from wealthier socioeconomic backgrounds. While the achievement gap is real, and many students at Oliver's school are several grade levels behind in reading, writing, and math skills, the problem is that this perspective fails to honor and engage with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students *do* bring to the table. By connecting with and acknowledging what students *can* do, and allowing them to feel a sense of competence, it is more likely that they will develop necessary skills and a feeling of competence in other areas. When shadowing Oliver through his classes, it became apparent that much of the curriculum was based on academic, standards-based curriculum that did not leave much room for real world applications or different kinds of connections. I saw Oliver experience school as a place where he didn't have much of a sense of competence, other than the moment where he could share his knowledge about basketball. Another aspect that could be improved is the use of collaborative planning. While teachers often informally share strategies and information about students, if teachers were to "...meet regularly in teams that share students or subject matter for several hours weekly to plan curriculum and to discuss pedagogy and students"²², then the school experience for individual students like Oliver could be much more cohesive, enabling them to feel more consistently competent.

As far as additional supports to the school experience, Oliver's foster mother has helped support his learning by being in contact with teachers and coming to events like Back to School night. In addition, his sophomore humanities teacher has expressed

²¹ Ibid., 654-662.

²² Ibid., 663.

great affection for Oliver, and reports that he often still comes by to visit her during brunch or lunch periods. Apparently, this teacher relationship was fairly transformational for him as he grew throughout his sophomore year into the person he is now, leaving behind a turbulent freshman year and entry into high school life. He also has expressed that being part of the College Prep program has helped bring home to him the importance and desirability of academic success.

Overall, I feel that there is a positive “person-environment fit” between Oliver and his school, defined as “...the fit between the characteristics individuals bring to their social environments and the characteristics of these social environments”²³. While not perfect, with the area of teacher control/discipline and autonomy perhaps not fitting well with Oliver’s needs, the school does appear to provide personal and positive teacher-student relationships that are important for adolescents (for example, Oliver’s sophomore humanities teacher, his advisor, the basketball coach, etc.), who often suffer in transitioning to secondary schools where these relationships tend to become more impersonal²⁴. Also, the school tends to avoid ability grouping/tracking and competitive evaluations, which helps minimize status considerations as an obstacle to learning. Oliver appears to be a high-status student socially, yet seems to show no fear that participating in classroom discussions or demonstrating an interest in school (whether he gets an answer wrong or right) will negatively affect this status. He has at times declared out loud how important school is to him to other students. While I would hesitate to say that this is a generalized experience for all students at the school, it does seem to hold true for Oliver and thus the person-environment fit in this case seems to be beneficial.

The main obstacle to Oliver’s academic success at the moment is that he does not always know how to “do school”. As described in *Doing School* by Denise Pope, “doing school” occurs when students, “[h]aving cleverly determined what kind of behavior gets rewarded in school, [devote] themselves to pursuing strategies that lead

²³ Jacquelynne S. Eccles and others, “Development During Adolescence: The Impact of Stage-Environment Fit on Young Adolescents’ Experiences in Schools and in Families,” *American Psychologist* 48 (February 1993): 91.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

to this kind of success”²⁵. In Oliver’s case, he often engages in behaviors that will not lead to academic rewards, such as socializing with other students, failing to complete class work exercises, and failing to complete or turn in homework assignments. He does not multi-task in classes, make alliances, or engage in cheating, all strategies described by Pope as those used by successful students to “do school” (this is neither a positive or negative evaluation, simply an observation of his approach to school). Oliver also has not demonstrated a willingness to challenge teachers or administrators over grades or school policies.

One of the most important factors in determining whether students know how to “do school” or not, as argued by Pope, is whether or not they come from a background with a certain amount of cultural/social capital²⁶. Oliver is a foster child who comes from a low-income immigrant background, and clearly does not have the type of cultural capital that would allow him to understand the best way to navigate the school system in order to reach his goals. While the desired aim is definitely not to encourage the cheating and manipulation described by Pope as strategies used by certain students, the point is that there is a disconnect between Oliver’s lived experience and the identity, as expressed in language and habits, that fits seamlessly into a school environment. There are two issues at stake here. One is that the school system is designed to meet the social and cultural standards of the middle and wealthier classes, and so students who do not come from this background must assimilate, fail, or figure out strategies to make up for their lack of capital. The second issue is that schools like the one Oliver attends attempt to address the situation by giving them “substitute capital” in the form of explicit teaching of academic strategies (for example, an Organized Binder system, note-taking strategies, etc.) in order to enable them to “do school”. This has varying levels of success, and is important work in attempting to close the achievement gap, yet it does not change the fact that the educational system as a whole is not designed to meet the needs, competencies, and desires of a student like Oliver.

Development in Family and Community Contexts

²⁵ Denise Clark Pope, *“Doing School”: How We Are Creating a Generation fo Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 150.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 158-9.

Oliver's family context does not meet the mainstream norm of two biological parents, living with their children in a nuclear family. In the context of his school environment and community, however, this "norm" is not normal (in the sense, of being common). He lives with a foster parent, and has done so since third or fourth grade, when he became a ward of the county due to physical abuse by his birth mother. At this point, he lived with one transitional foster family, before being placed with his current guardian. Originally, it was a husband and wife couple who assumed guardianship, however they divorced several years later, and Oliver has lived with his foster mother since that point. In his home there are also three other siblings, all of whom are foster children. He does not ever mention his foster siblings, and there does not appear to be a close relationship, although whether this is due to time constraints, the foster relationship or other reasons, I was not able to ascertain. For this reason, I would characterize his relationship with his siblings as a casual relationship, as "...the relationship between them is not emotionally intense, and they may have little to do with one another..."²⁷. He does have a biological sibling, who his foster mother sometimes takes him to visit in a city about a thousand miles away. Oliver does not live in the same community as many of the other students at his high school, and thus his life spans two different community contexts.

When it comes to the parenting style of Oliver's mother, it would be difficult, probably inaccurate, and possibly irresponsible to place it in one of the categories devised by Arnett (authoritarian, authoritative, traditional, disengaged or permissive)²⁸, without having a lot more information. However, the categories can be used as a tool of analysis, without necessarily placing a parent within a particular box. For example, Oliver reported in an interview that, "My mom rarely says no if I ask for something. She's okay with it as long as I tell her where I'm at." With this response and in talking to her myself, she does not come across as an authoritarian parent, in the sense of being high in demandingness (setting down rules for behavior) while low in responsiveness

²⁷ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009), 198.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 201-207.

(supportive and affectionate)²⁹. She does make her expectations clear (such as making sure that Oliver checks in with her), while at the same time allowing him to have a relatively high degree of autonomy. An important point is that their relationship is highly structured by time constraints. Oliver typically wakes up at five-thirty in the morning every day, in order to take the bus and train which takes him the long distance to school. He has either soccer or basketball practice after school, eventually making it home around eight, after taking the bus once more. His mom has a similar schedule, so that they see each other at most only about 2 hours per day (on the weekdays). She takes Oliver to church on Sundays, and during the weekdays often attends church or Bible study after work, and religion seems to be an important part of her life. During longer vacations from school (Thanksgiving, winter or summer breaks), Oliver reported that they sometimes take trips to other cities, and that his mom “always got something to do”, in other words, that she continually makes the effort to take the family on trips or provide them with activities during breaks from school.

Oliver constantly moves between different social worlds throughout the day, and Davidson and Phelan’s work on student engagement and social spaces provides some theoretical tools to deconstruct this process³⁰. Davidson and Phelan describe the different social spaces which students inhabit (self, school, family, and peers), and borders between such spaces, which are defined as “...features of cultural difference that are not politically neutral”³¹. This occurs when “...the knowledge, skills, and behaviors in one world are more highly valued and rewarded than those in another”³². In a very literal sense, Oliver crossed a border between countries at an early age. However using this framework, I would argue that Oliver faces several border crossings on a daily basis as well: sociocultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic. Oliver comes from a working-class background and community, and while at times theorists can sometimes essentialize such differences, there are real cultural divisions between class experiences. Schools are fundamentally middle-class institutions, and the types of

²⁹ Ibid., 201.

³⁰ Ann Locke Davidson and Patricia Phelan, “Students’ Multiple Worlds: An Anthropological Approach To Understanding Students’ Engagement With School,” *Advances in motivation and achievement: Role of context* 2 (1999): 233-268.

³¹ Ibid., 238.

³² Ibid., 238.

language (academic language, sometimes portrayed as “proper English”), ways of working, and social habits of being they propagate are those that are seen as legitimate by those with power. By contrast, the language patterns of students like Oliver, who speaks in a certain way (i.e. “got” instead of “have”, etc.), and expresses himself through writing in a certain way, is seen as not as worthy as those of the school world (and by implication, the middle class world). This does not always have to be verbal (though it sometimes can be, as when teachers correct spoken English in a way that implies inferiority), but is part of the institutional functioning of the school, through how assessments are created and graded, and part of the subconscious workings of what is seen as indicative of intelligence. Structurally, the expectations surrounding homework and outside study time conflict with Oliver’s reality of having to rely on public transportation, which leaves him with little free time.

From interviews and observations, I would argue that Oliver could be classified as a Type III student, according to Davidson and Phelan’s multiple worlds typology³³. This means that he finds the transitions between different worlds to be difficult, though not resisted. While in the past, Oliver often was described by teachers as defiant and prone to aggression towards other students and those with authority, this is not an accurate description of his current situation. Oliver describes leaving his past school, due to “getting in trouble”, and that when his mother found his current school, he “...didn’t want to come here, I wasn’t feelin’ it...” because it was far from home and his old group of friends. He threatened to move out after the year was over and leave his family if he had to keep going to the school. However, after visiting a prestigious university in the local area, and being part of the College Prep program at his school, according to Oliver, “...that’s what made me change”. Therefore, he no longer resists the transitions between his different worlds. However, it appears that they are still difficult, due to his academic performance, inconsistent homework completion, and the ways in which he is often reprimanded or cajoled by teachers. His use of academic goals, and success in improving his grades each semester, indicates that he is attempting to find strategies to manage the transitions, with varying levels of success.

³³ Ibid., 246.

From the perspective of Oliver's mother, the transfer to a new school helped turn around his behavior and mindset. Her hope was that a smaller school in a new community would help Oliver to avoid the conflicts and fights that had plagued him in the past. The access to resources in the school's community, such as college prep programs, also was an important asset. She has seen the growth in Oliver, and movement towards a new maturity and sense of responsibility. It seems that she strives to provide a stable and supportive environment for him, one that could possibly serve the purpose of providing a space for the "moratorium" advocated for by Erikson.

One area that remains as a question is the factors that constitute resiliency. Oliver's childhood was marked by physical abuse, under a parent who was likely authoritarian. Research indicates that "Abused adolescents are more likely than other adolescents to engage in antisocial behavior..."³⁴. While this seemed to be the case in middle school and early high school, Oliver seems to have moved past his aggression and "antisocial behavior". What enabled him to make this transition? One factor could be his transfer from one world, his birth home, to a new world, his foster home, one that seems to be of a slightly higher socioeconomic status and level of stability (this does not mean that lower socioeconomic status homes cannot provide a stable or supportive environment, just that his particular home was not either of those things). While this did not immediately change his emotional circumstances, it may have had a long-term effect. Moving to a new, smaller school and being exposed to new models of adulthood and "success" may have also helped in promoting resiliency in Oliver. The opportunity to be involved in sports, which occupies much of his non-school time, seems also to have had a positive effect. Finally, his own psychological make-up cannot be disregarded. Still, one of the key questions remains. What enables some adolescents, like Oliver, to seemingly move past backgrounds marked by abuse, poverty, and trouble with school authorities and the law, while others fall into less beneficial outcomes?

Peers and Friendships

Oliver defines a good friend as "somebody who don't judge you", and who is "always there, listens to you and hears you". This seems to correlate directly with

³⁴ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Adolescence*, 230.

Arnett's finding that "...adolescents enjoy their time with friends so much more than their time with parents... [because] adolescents feel free and open with friends in a way they rarely do with parents"³⁵. It is notable that this was the first characteristic of friendship that he mentioned, before such things as shared activities or shared background. He has one particular best friend that he singled out someone is important to him. They went to school together at Oliver's old high school, and both ended up eventually at Bayview. As they both live in the same community, they ride the bus together both to and from school each day, and he says that his friend sometimes spends the night at his house. Oliver added that they have been "playing basketball together since 6th grade", which signified to me that this was a friendship that had endured many transitions, as Oliver had endured much turbulence since that time in his life. While I can only speculate about the life of Oliver's friend, it is possible that shared or at least similar experiences is what has created a bond of intimacy, one in which neither will "judge" the other. Judy Chu references a study of "...urban, ethnic-minority adolescents that while there was implicit and explicit pressure from family members and from the larger school culture not to trust nonfamilial peers, most of the adolescent boys and girls...resisted these pressures and engaged in emotional intimate and satisfying same-sex friendships"³⁶. This emotional intimacy, found in friendship, is perhaps an important component of resiliency, allowing a forum for marginalized students to work through and cope with issues of identity, power, and the transition between unequal worlds.

Oliver's friend group, other than his best friend, mostly consists of people at his current school, especially those who are on the soccer and basketball teams. Sports are a large part of Oliver's identity and daily schedule, and it is no surprise that those who share these activities constitute his main group of friends. Unlike adolescents who spend their free time after school hanging out with friends, Oliver's schedule ensures that it is his after school activities that serve as his main "hanging out" time. This also means that most of his current friends reside in a different community than he does. Oliver mentions that he still is friends with some of the people at his school, but he

³⁵ Ibid., 214.

³⁶ Judy Y. Chu, "Adolescent Boys' Friendships and Peer Group Culture," *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 107 (Spring 2005): 19.

rarely has the time to see them. His weekends are often filled up with sports of some kind, family activities, or church.

Oliver believes that the small size of his school prevents the development of the kinds of crowds and cliques described by Arnett in his chapter on peers and friendships, and it seems that they are more prevalent and have more power in large comprehensive high schools. What Oliver does notice is some grouping by race/ethnicity, as he comments that the “Blacks don’t really hang out with Mexicans, but I got friends from both sides”. He does not explain this in terms of mistrust or racial conflict, rather he feels that people group together possibly because of language, if they “...want to communicate in Spanish...”, or because they “...understand each other, they been around the same thing”. In Oliver’s view then, racial identity seems to form a distinct experience of life, that can best be understood by those who share that same identity. However, Oliver sees himself as a representative of two worlds and two experiences, and feels that he is able to seamlessly cross over.

While “[t]eens are heavy users of new communication forms such as instant messaging, e-mail, and text messaging, as well as communication-oriented Internet sites such as blogs, social networking, photo and video sharing sites such as YouTube...”³⁷, Oliver is notable in not integrating such new forms of technology as a fundamental component of his peer relationships. This is not to say that he does not use new media. He has a cell phone, an e-mail address, and is familiar with the use of computers and the internet. However, he is not the type of student who needs to be constantly reminded by teachers to not text in class. In fact, I have never seen him use his phone in my class, nor did I observe such use during my shadowing experience. It seems that Oliver’s social orientation is mostly directed towards the peers who are directly around him. Whether this is a personal preference or a reflection of his peer group consisting mostly of other students at his school (it is likely that the former is more accurate, as several of those students I know to be his friends do text in class quite frequently). The fact that his schedule is so consumed throughout the day by traveling

³⁷ Kaveri Subrahmanyam and Patricia Greenfield, “Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships,” *The Future of Children* 18 (Spring 2008): 119.

to and from school, school itself, and athletics probably plays a part in his relatively limited new media use.

Oliver does not have a Facebook profile, and in general his “social networking” is of a more traditional variety. If it is true “...that teens now conduct a higher *proportion* of their communication through writing in an electronic medium...relatively depersonalizing the process of interpersonal communication...”³⁸, then it could be argued that Oliver’s peer relationships are *more* personalized than the average teen. However, it must be said that skills developed by peer electronic communication may form the basis for necessary and useful skills in the future. How can a student like Oliver maintain a healthy commitment to personalized relationships while developing skills in the new media? Bayview does integrate technology in many ways, using laptops in the classroom, Smartboard technology, document cameras, etc. Continuing to use these means to teach students, as well as allowing students to manipulate such technology would seem to be ideal for a student like Oliver.

One point to note is the way in which the choices of Oliver’s mother have influenced his friend and peer groups. Arnett explains that “Through parents’ choices of where to live, where to send their adolescents to school...and where to attend religious services...parents influence the peer networks their adolescents are likely to experience...”³⁹. By choosing a school that is both small, and located far away from Oliver’s community and his old friend group, Oliver’s mother made a conscious decision to find a new peer community for him that might be more beneficial (this was related to me in an interview with her). Thinking about issues of friends’ influence and selection of friends, it is likely that Oliver’s old friend group likely consisted of those who made similar choices about school, fighting, and risk-taking⁴⁰. In a new environment, it seems that his friend selection is now based more on shared activities (sports), but another important operating factor is the weak influence of cliques and crowds at his current school. Perhaps in a bigger school, Oliver would feel the need and necessity to be associated with a certain clique/crowd, a choice which often becomes cemented as destiny. By contrast, one of the themes that recurs constantly in interviewing Oliver, is

³⁸ Ibid., 136.

³⁹ Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, *Adolescence*, 213.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 220.

his apparent ability to transition smoothly between different kinds of groups and people. It is clear that he seems to enjoy this fluidity, and takes pride in his ability to cross between worlds. It is quite possible that this more open world has enabled Oliver to experience and experiment with different possibilities (again, shades of Erikson's "moratorium"), which in turn has allowed him to find and develop a new identity for himself. Under different, more closed circumstances, this might not have been as feasible, or at least as easy, an undertaking.

Social-Emotional Development

The emotional development of Oliver, and continued struggles in that domain, is one of the key themes that emerged in interviews and observations. Daniel Goleman describes emotional intelligence as "...abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope"⁴¹. Oliver's past seems to be a story of struggling to control impulse or emotion, and persevere through frustration in a way that does not lead to unproductive outcomes for himself and others (i.e. fighting, suspension, expulsion, etc.). In reading his cumulative folder, the suspension reports cover a wide range of incidents, most of which ended in violence. During one incident in middle school, Oliver was being verbally teased by a student on the playground, until he apparently reached a breaking point where he uttered the words, "You play too much", before attacking the student. Another report explains that Oliver apparently punched a student in the back of the head, because another student had bet him that he wouldn't. This tendency towards aggression thus seemed to include both reactive attacks due to emotional stimulus and more demonstrative acts to perhaps prove a point in a certain social context. The fact that Oliver was abused as a young child can not be discounted as an important factor, as abused children tend to "...treat others as they themselves have been treated. And the callousness of these abused children is simply a more extreme version of that seen in children whose parents are critical, threatening, and harsh in

⁴¹ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 34.

their punishments”⁴². It would perhaps be too simplistic to say that aggression breeds aggression in a convenient cause and effect formula, yet it seems likely that Oliver’s history of being abused had something to do with his later tendency towards violence in adolescence.

Even as early as last year (his sophomore year), Oliver threw a chair at his humanities teacher (the same teacher who he has a close relationship with in the present, she told me about this incident in an informal conversation). His advisor reported to me that during his freshman year, Oliver demonstrated an aggressive attitude towards teachers as well, confronting her at one moment, saying “Do you want to step to me?” Still, both staff members expressed an affection and admiration for Oliver and his development. His humanities teacher remarked that given what Oliver had gone through in his life, he would’ve been justified in throwing “a whole desk” at her. Such stories are mixed with more humorous/joyful moments, such as when Oliver was working on an assignment in the teacher’s lounge, all the while singing a song in the apparent hope of flirting with some female students who were in the same area. Oliver’s student teacher showed me a video of him standing in front of class, dancing and joking around with other students as he helped demonstrate an experiment for the class. It is this ability and tendency to express himself, his emotions, and perform for himself and others that both symbolizes his resiliency and possibly contributes to it.

The fact that Oliver has not been in a fight or the subject of major discipline (i.e. suspension) since coming to Bayview is indicative of growth and the development of a higher degree of emotional intelligence, as defined by Goleman. It is in moments of stress that self-restraint is truly tested. During the first month of school I witnessed an incident that was definitely a moment of stress for Oliver. He was brought into my room by another teacher in a state of agitation, and through listening to the conversation between the two I was able to gather the gist of what had happened. Apparently, Oliver had confronted another student during the brunch period, and the two were quickly separated. Both Oliver and the other student are on the basketball team, and Oliver had heard that the other student was speaking derisively about his skills to members of a rival team. In Oliver’s eyes, this was disrespectful and disloyal. The teacher was able

⁴² Ibid., 198.

to quickly calm Oliver down by explaining that it would be more productive to prove himself not through aggression, but through his skills on the basketball court. This seemed to resonate with Oliver. Whether or not this confrontation would have escalated into violence without intervention is unclear. However, the fact that Oliver was able to rein in his emotions in such a quick fashion, and that the issue never came up again (oftentimes such confrontations, even if defused, later erupt) is a signal of emotional development. “Handling feelings so they are appropriate is an ability that builds on self-awareness...the capacity to soothe oneself, to shake off rampant anxiety, gloom, or irritability...”⁴³ is one that Oliver seems to be improving over time, yet the incident itself shows that it is still a struggle. In the social context of Oliver’s community and Bayview itself, the skills and tendencies held up by Goleman as examples of exemplary emotional intelligence sometimes conflict with basic survival adaptations (for example, the need to prove oneself as a protective measure, the need to confront disrespect in order to uphold status, etc.). The ability to understand and employ “code-switching” thus becomes vital.

One of my continual impressions is that Oliver is socially-oriented. However, what does this consist of, beyond just being outgoing or conversational? Goleman’s description of what he calls the “social arts” helps provide a more detailed analysis of what actually constitutes interpersonal and social skills. Oliver is skilled in “handling emotions in someone else - the fine art of relationships”⁴⁴, as I observed several times in shadowing him and watching his interactions in my own class. He often sets the terms for the emotional state of those in his group. For example, I have noticed that when he is feeling jovial or energetic, this tends to be adopted by others around him. On the other hand, when he is expressing a more reserved attitude, the rest of his group will often be more quiet as well. However, my observation is that this influencing of others’ emotions seems to be more subconscious than conscious.

In other ways, Oliver’s social abilities, in terms of handling relationships, are more mixed, at least as defined by Goleman. One concept that Goleman addresses is that of “display rules”, or “...the social consensus about which feelings can be properly

⁴³ Ibid., 198.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 112.

shown when”⁴⁵. Often Oliver will express emotion, such as excitement, anger, or sadness, in a way that is seen as too exuberant or generally inappropriate for a classroom environment. An interesting point is that such display rules are not universal amongst a culture. For example, Goleman describes the display rules of Japanese culture as consisting of a tendency to minimize the expression of strong emotions in public, especially in front of authority figures. However, it is likely that such display rules show variation amongst different subcultures or classes in that society. Similarly, in the United States, display rules vary among the different “worlds” contained within the country. For Oliver then, it is not that he is deficient in the knowledge of display rules, it is more likely that display rules in his life are different in his home, his community, among peers, and inside the school. Again, the idea of “code-switching” becomes salient here, as it becomes necessary to understand explicitly and implicitly the display rules that are operative in any given social space. Oliver seems to still be struggling with integrating a knowledge of school display rules into his daily activity, though his skills in this area seem to have improved over time. However, how this struggle is dealt with by teachers and staff can affect the development of this aspect of emotional intelligence. For example, if the violation of school display rules is met with verbal reprimand and punishment, then it is likely that very different lessons will be learned than if it is dealt with through discussion and explanation of display rules and the different codes operative in different environments. In Oliver’s experience, it seems that he experiences some of the former (i.e. I have witnessed verbal admonitions by teachers for him to be quiet or to “act right”). On the other hand, discussion with his previous teachers provides the other part of the picture, one in which his growth in this area has been stimulated by discussion and emotional support.

Where does empathy fit into this picture of emotional development? Goleman refers to empathy researcher Martin Hoffman, “...who argues that the roots of morality are to be found in empathy, since it is empathizing with the potential victims...and so sharing their distress that moves people to act to help them”⁴⁶. In the past, Oliver displayed a distinct lack of empathy, when he acted in moments of violence to harm

⁴⁵ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 105.

others. At the same time, evidence suggests that "...when the emotional brain is driving the body with a strong reaction...there can be little or no empathy"⁴⁷. It could be argued that it was not a lack of empathy, but rather a struggle with impulse control and anger management that was most influential on Oliver's actions. In other words, feelings of aggression clouded the process of empathy, making it easier to engage in acts of violence.

The present paints a different picture. One day in Oliver's advisory, the class was discussing a Halloween party, which they would be holding after school the weekend before Halloween. Oliver offered to spend his birthday money on the movie, "Paranormal Activity", so that they would have something scary to watch. What was notable was how persistent Oliver was in this offer. While his advisor continued to discuss other options with the group, perhaps not wanting him to spend his money in that way, he repeated the offer five or six times. Upon his first offer, the class responded with a collective "Awww", some seemed to be serious, some sounded a bit more sarcastic. This display of generosity on Oliver's part, in wanting to spend his birthday money for the good and enjoyment of the class as a whole, is a reflection of empathy, in the sense of reading and attempting to meet the needs and desires of others. This incident was also significant in that it seemed to represent the collective sensibilities and orientation of Oliver's approach to school. Individual work seems to often leave him unmotivated or emotionally frustrated/reserved. On the other hand, when working cooperatively or interacting in larger groups, even to the point of volunteering often to be in front of a whole class to do some type of modeling or presentation, his motivation levels and emotional expression is much higher. I would venture the hypothesis that Oliver's emotional development can best be supported through social interaction and practice in cooperative environments.

Conclusion

During the school year so far, approximately five members of the junior class have left the school, largely because of discipline issues and/or extreme academic

⁴⁷ Ibid., 104.

difficulties, which meant that they were “encouraged” to transfer to other high schools or even adult schools. Most of these students had background stories similar in intensity to Oliver’s, if different and unique in the details. Oliver is not currently in danger of such a fate, and has improved his grade point average every semester, while, as previously mentioned, he has avoided major discipline incidents. This case study has focused on the concept of resiliency, exploring the factors that have both hindered Oliver’s social, emotional, and academic development, but especially examining those factors which have contributed to his ability to succeed at the school and transcend a troubled past.

The reality is that there is no magic formula for such resilience. A society that is founded on structural inequalities, organized around the categories of race, class, and gender, has produced an educational system that replicates these uneven outcomes. Adolescent development and its assorted components, such as identity development, social-emotional development, family and community context, etc., are shaped by this reality. Defined in this broader context, resilience can be explained as the ability of individual students, who have been assigned to the lowest strata of society due to their race, class, and/or gender, and suffered the associated ill effects, to marshal internal and external resources to find success (as defined by the society at large). It appears that Oliver is on course to achieve this outcome, though one of the hallmarks of marginalization is contingency, meaning that even when one seems to have escaped one’s societal destiny, it is still possible to “fall back” down.

I would like to believe that what I have defined as resilience in Oliver cannot be contained just in a narrow definition or concept of “pulling oneself up by the bootstraps”. On the contrary, Oliver’s resilience is social, both in the sense of being shaped by family, school, and community contexts, and with the sense that he constructs a supportive reality for himself and others through interaction with peers and adults. It is also a phenomenon of joy as much as it is one of stubborn determination. This is not a utopian reality or “happily ever after” story, however, where all problems miraculously dissipate, but a process of struggle and choices in uncertain circumstances. In the same way, Oliver’s seemingly successful transition to a more positive path does not mean that his story comes to a close. Understanding resilience does not mean that it can be bottled and sold as a magic formula to steer “troubled” working-class students of color

off the “wrong path”. Rather, it should be a call to understand and redefine the standards of success and intelligence that define our society and its schools. How can Oliver and other students be encouraged in their resilience in order to survive and thrive in the present, while using their everyday lives and lived experiences as the basis for a school environment that affirms as much as it challenges, that is shaped as much by students as it is shapes them?

Bibliography

Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen. *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach*.

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009.

Blumenfeld, Phyllis C., John R. Mergendoller, and Pamela Puro. “Translating Motivation

into Thoughtfulness.” Chap. 8 in *Redefining Student Learning*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1992.

Bransford, John, Sharon Derry, David Berliner, Karen Hammerness, and Kelly Lynn

Beckett. “Theories of Learning and Their Roles in Teaching.” Chap. 2 in *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Chu, Judy Y. “Adolescent Boys’ Friendships and Peer Group Culture.” *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 107 (Spring 2005): 7-22.

Cole, Michael, and Sheila R. Cole. *The Development of Children*. New York: Worth Publishers, 2001.

Cushman, K. *Fires in the bathroom: Advice for teachers from high school students*.

New York: New Press, 2003.

- Davidson, Ann Locke, and Patricia Phelan. "Students' Multiple Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Understanding Students' Engagement With School." *Advances in motivation and achievement: Role of context 2* (1999): 233-273.
- Dweck, Carol. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2006.
- Eccles, Jacquelynne S., Carol Midgley, Allan Wigfield, Christy Miller Buchanan, David Reuman, Constance Flanagan, and Douglas Mac Iver. "Development During Adolescence: The Impact of Stage-Environment Fit on Young Adolescents' Experiences in Schools and in Families." *American Psychologist* 48 (February 1993): 90-101.
- Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books, 2006.
- Hammond, Linda Darling, Jacqueline Ancess, and Susanna Wichterle Or. "Reinventing High School: Outcomes of the Coalition Campus Schools Projects." *American Educational Research Journal* 39 (Fall 2002): 639-673.
- Nakkula, Michael. "Identity and Possibility: Adolescent Development and the Potential of Schools." Chap. 1 in *Adolescents at School: Perspectives on Youth, Identity, and Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2008.
- Noguera, Pedro. "'Joaquin's Dilemma': Understanding the Link between Racial Identity and School-Related Behaviors." Chap. 5 in *Adolescents at School: Perspectives on Youth, Identity, and Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2008.
- Pope, Denise Clark. "'Doing School'": How We Are Creating a Generation to Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students." New Haven, CT: Yale University

Press, 2001.

Subrahmanyam, Kaveri, and Patricia Greenfield. "Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships." *The Future of Children* 18 (Spring 2008): 119-146.

Tatum, Beverly. *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

APPENDIX

Cumulative Folder Notes

- *CST Scores (Spring 2009)*

* ELA - 294 (Below Basic) * Algebra I - 284 (Below Basic)

* Int. Science I - 296 (Below Basic)

- *High School Exit Exam: CAHSEE*

* ELA - 342 * Math - 345 Passing Score = 350

* *Fluent in Spanish - 3rd grade, Beginning in English (CELDT results)*

- *Grades*

9th:	Semester 1	Semester 2
Advisory	D+	C+
Academic Literacy	C-	C-
Algebra I	NC	C
English I	NC	D+
Foundations in Science	B-	B-
Intro. World History	NC	D+
6th:		
Language Arts	B	B
Reading	D	D-
P.E.	B	A
Social Studies	D-	D
Math	C	C
Science	B-	A

* Transferred from San Lorenzo High School November 9th - 9th grade

- *Discipline Record*

- * November 8th: "Attack on two students that resulted in arrest... No prior reason for attack." [Suspension]
- * November 8th: "Yelling battle with another student. Threatening each other." [Put up for expulsion]
- * October 8th: "Fight with another student." [Suspension]
- * September 8th: "Very talkative student. Exploded in front of class." [Saturday school]
- * November 17, 2008: Recommended for expulsion. Meeting with foster mother, social worker, Oliver, and administrators
- * SST - Middle School - 7th grade: "failing...doesn't do class work...gets mad when told to move...lack of interest in academic success...socializing...lack of focus...does work but doesn't turn it in..."
- * 8th grade: suspended for "threatened violence/verbal confrontation with female student"
- * 7th grade: suspended for "interfering with investigation by campus security"
- * 8th grade: suspended for "sexual harassment...hugged female student and touched her butt..."
- * 6th grade: "made bet to punch another student...punched student in back of head..." [suspension]
- * 6th grade: "mutual fight with another student" [suspension]

- *Teacher comments*

- * 5th grade summer school: "I see no reason that Oliver cannot be at grade level. His only problem is his behavior. He has no respect for himself, teachers or classmates."
- * Summer school 06-07: "easily off-task...needs environment where he can focus..."
- * 2003: "aggressive...needs a great deal of teacher time...abused by mother, father is dead..."
- * 4th grade: "early reading stage...adequate comprehension...no problem solving techniques...little intonation..."
- * elementary: "often distracted...doesn't accept responsibility..."
- * 5th grade: "can be disruptive...crosses social boundaries...responds well to correction...near grade level...writing needs work..."
- * repeated 5th grade
- * "straight A's in Honduras"

- *Family history*

- * three foster brothers
- * June 20, 2005: notice of dependent status of superior court of the county
- * March 2003: placed in transitional foster care "always smiling, rarely absent from school, no record of discipline"
- * July 24, 2003: placed in foster care. "severely abused, can be defiant and oppositional, emotionally disturbed"
- * hospital stay, 2003: "injuries from child abuse"

Oliver's Current School Schedule and Grades (as of 12/07/10):

A Block: Intermediate Algebra - EC (68%)

B Block: Arts 3 - Painting - MS (85%)

Name [REDACTED] Date 4/2/11
 Hist 11: Neuberger/Martin Enlightenment Organizer _____

Philosopher Name	Key Text	Main Beliefs	Influence on American Social/Political Thought
Baron de Montesquieu	the spirit of the law	Beliefs in many forms of government might be perverted corruption Separation of power	leg exe c judic Branches of gov
Thomas Hobbes	Leviathan	the belief in a monarch = best // person rules	don't give too much power to man A little people should not be trusted lets have many ppl with limited power
Jefferson	Decl of Ind	Freedom of Religion No National religion in the USA	he influenced a certain religion

Name: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
 Hist. 11: Neuberger/Martin

Date: 9/23/10
 Vocabulary Check In 1

#19

Instructions: Write a definition/description of the following words.
 For XS: write a sentence for the words.

12/19

American Dream	Ideal	Barrier	Sentiments	Objective
Liberty	Petition	Grievance	Declaration	Dissenting
Amendment	Unalienable		Natural Rights	Intolerable
Colony	Preamble	Legislature	Executive	
		Judicial		

Ideal: DEF A standard of perfection

Dissenting: to differ in opinion

executive DEF: one who holds a position of administrative or managerial responsibility

AMENDMENT: DEF. A change to the constitution

Barrier: A barrier is a obstacle that people pass through

UNALIENABLE: NOT capable of being taken away, given up, or transferred

PETITION: the right to protest w/out violence

GRIEVANCE: A cause of distress (as an unsatisfactory working condition)

OBJECTIVE: A GOAL

COLONY: distant territory under control of a nation ex US - eng/amer (0)

DECLARATION: the act of declaring something declared.

Name ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Date 9/20/10

Hist 11: Neuberger/Martin

Prep Sheet for Bill of Rights

Imagine that you have the opportunity to create your own Bill of Rights for EPAA. This document will list all the freedoms that you think students or teachers should have. These questions will lead you through writing your own Bill of Rights. Be specific.

1. Who does this Bill of Rights apply to? Who will agree to it? (Preamble)

The students from EPAA high school

2. What kinds of things should students be free to say? How much freedom should be given to speech at EPAA? (1st amendment)

Students should be able to say what they want but in a respectful way

3. What kinds of things should students be able to do? (2nd amendment)

go to the store during lunch
be able to wear any colors they want

without getting any negative comment from the teacher

4. What rights do you want students to have if they are being punished for something? (3rd amendment)

if they fight they should get suspended it for 3 to 4 days if you not following instruction in class get hold up for lunch or break.

5. List one more freedom that you think students should have. (4th amendment)

They should have cellphones on in case of a emergency out in the field

Bill of Rights

Amendment	Freedom, liberties, Protections, etc.
First Freedom of speech	Freedom, Religion, press Assemble
Second Free state	Having permission to carry a gun is on but you got to have licenses
Third consent prescribed	soldiers should not live with people in the house unless is permission by the law and have to pay the person he lives with
Fourth Search warrants	protect others properties that police tries to go into with out permission. 9/5
Fifth	people cant get in trouble twice for the same thing the done ones

	According to this person, was slavery a problem?	If no, why not? If yes, what was more important than ending slavery?
Mr. Rutledge	It wasn't a problem because slaves were bringing money to the people	Slave brought them money because they work for free
Mr. Elsworth	It wasn't a problem because that wasn't how off their business	because slave he felt slavery over state should do what they want.
Mr. Williamson	but he doesn't care because he is getting money from the southern profit.	he don't care because he's getting money.
Benjamin Franklin	He did not have a problem if	simply because he felt that of course the constitution will have some flaws but they have to accept it
Historian 1 (Kaminski)	to the historian slavery has a problem	getting rid of slavery was never a option. Govt was just selfish
Historian 2 (Freehling)	the historian did have a problem	Jefferson and many other white man felt that if slaves were free is going to lead to tyranny
Historian 3 (Hall)	the historian did have a problem	Because getting more money and buildings things were more important than freeing slaves

Why were the British taking advantage of the American colonists? In the 1700s King George was taking advantage by taxing American colonists on basic items. The colonists were unhappy about this, they were some small boycotts. Since British soldiers were in the street the colonists had to do their jobs. The American colonists started to form groups that wanted to fight against the British. They were the loyalists and the patriots, John Locke, the Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, and the Bill of Rights helped the American colonists to gain their own rights.

An important enlightenment thinker who influenced the American political and social thought was John Locke. He came up with 'state of nature.' 'And that all men may be restrained from invading others rights, and from doing hurt to one another.' (Pg 2) John Locke imagines people being free, completely free able to be their own police, judge for themselves. Also the rights to take care of themselves and respect other people's rights to life, liberty and property.

Some events that surrounded the founding of the nation was the Boston tea party and the Boston Massacre. On December 16 some men dress up as indians, then they enter the British tea ships in Boston Harbor and dumped 90,000 pounds of tea into the water. By dumping the tea they couldn't make the profit they desired. Another important event was the Boston Massacre, on March 1770 a group of residents confronted British soldiers, ^{and} because they did that a fight broke out causing the British to kill 5 colonists. This was called a massacre because the citizen was unarmed.

An important document that influenced the American political plus social thought was the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments that protect the citizens rights. "No soldiers shall in time of peace be quartered in any house without, the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law!" This quote proves that the government can't ~~send~~ ^{send} a soldier to a house unless they have permission. Another important document is

