2017

The Needs of Custodial Grandparents in Helping Their Grandchildren Experience School Success

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2017

Abstract

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Rex S. Ward

EdS, Clemson University, 2006

MS, Clemson University, 2003

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

At a local middle school, twice as many students were being reared by their grandparents than in each of the other 3 schools in the study district. Most of these students were experiencing academic and social issues; increased understanding of the issue was needed to address these problems. Using a phenomenological approach, this project study explored the lived experiences of grandparents of skipped-generation households and school employees who interact daily with skipped-generation households. Epstein's theory of parental involvement undergirded this study, and semistructured interviews were used to gather data from 15 grandparents and 15 school employees. Interviews were transcribed, open coded, and themes were generated. Findings revealed that grandparents often did not understand the grandchildren's generation, 21st-century parenting skills, or how services from community agencies could make the rearing process easier. Also, school employees often did not understand the challenges faced by skipped-generation households, the importance of grandparent-friendly school environments, and the value of sharing internal information. Based on the findings, the Educators Impacting Skipped-Generation Household seminar was designed to inform school employees of strategies to assist grandparents in addressing their challenges, and create grandparent-friendly school environments. This study should improve the lives, relationships, and communication of members of skipped-generation households and school employees, while increasing the number of successful students and citizens who can break this parenting cycle.

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Dedication

To my wife, Terri, whose support and encouragement is immeasurable in all my life's endeavors. To my daughter Tess and grandson Rowan, you only achieve your dreams and goals through hard work and perseverance. To my family members, who sacrificed my attendance in many family activities while I worked on this project study, thank you for your sacrifice.

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Introduction

In a perfect world, a grandparent's home should be a place where grandchildren can come and visit, a place where grandchildren enjoy a break from everyday routines and experience unconditional love that includes treats and activities not available at home. For grandparents, the visits are a time to spoil their grandchildren and then send them back home to their parents. But in the real world, some parents are not fulfilling their parental responsibilities of providing suitable living conditions for their children. In some of these cases, grandparents feel an obligation to provide their grandchildren with a good home environment while sacrificing their future plans, income, maintenance of health, and social interaction (Collins, 2011).

Because of this feeling of obligation, the number of grandparents rearing grandchildren is increasing (Day & Bazemore, 2011) and spans many different ethnic groups. AARP, The Brookdale Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generation United (n.d.a) reported that 5.8 million households house 7.9% of all grandchildren 18 years old or younger. Skipped-generation households make up 2.9% of these households, which equates to 1 million children living in households without the presence of a parent (AARP et al., n.d.a). Table 1 shows the ethnic breakdown of the percentage of households headed by grandparents (AARP et al., n.d.a).

The percentage of European American grandparents rearing their grandchildren was more than double the percentage in each of the African American and Hispanic/Latino subgroups. Increasingly, biological parents find themselves in

circumstances that create the need for grandchildren to live with their grandparents. Some of the issues included "substance abuse, divorce, desertion, mental and physical illness, incarceration, AIDS, domestic violence, death of parent, and child abuse and neglect" (Collins, 2011, p. 454).

Table 1

Ethnic Group Breakdown of Grandparent-Headed Households in the United States

Ethnic group	%
European American	51.1
African American	24.2
Hispanic/Latino	18.7
Asian	2.9
American Indian/Alaskan	2.0
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	.3

Note: Data obtained from *GrandFacts: National Facts Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children*, by AARP, The Brookdale Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, and Generation United, n.d.). Retrieved June 10, 2013, from http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/relationships/friends-family/grandfacts/grandfacts-national.pdf

Equally important, grandparents who agree to rear their grandchildren take on the responsibility of helping solve the physical and emotional problems caused by the separation from their biological parents (Robinson & Wilks, 2006). Grandchildren benefit from living with their grandparents. Edwards (2006) explained that grandchildren who are reared by their grandparents experienced a better quality of life and more successes than if they had continued to live with their biological parents. Also, Backhouse and

Graham (2012) stated that grandchildren benefitted from being reared by their grandparents by having a "feeling of security and stability, knowing they could rely on their grandparents, as well as a marked improvement in school-work because of the time and effort grandparents are able to spend to ensure grandchildren's success at school" (p. 311). When grandchildren officially move in, grandparents need to rely on the grandchildren's school as a resource in the rearing of their grandchildren.

Schools can provide opportunities for grandparents to discuss their experiences with other skipped-generation grandparents, reduce their feelings of isolation, teach grandparents how to maintain high expectations, and connect them with community resources (Edwards, 2006; Hayes, 2011; Smith & Dannison, 2001). Also, the teachers and other school employees impact the development and success of students living with their grandparents. Edwards and Sweeney (2007) stated some children who experience problems early in their lives struggle academically. To help these students succeed academically, teachers can modify the curriculum or adjust classroom instructional strategies to impact student learning (Smith & Dannison, 2001). Effective teachers find ways to create an environment to increase school success.

School success is defined as a process in which students gain lifelong skills along with academic knowledge. For students to meet this definition of school success, schools and administrators must design an environment with specific purposes. Bowen (2009) stated that schools must promote a "positive attitude toward school and learning, attendance, trouble avoidance, extra-curricular participation in school, completion of homework assignments, and satisfactory grades and achievement" (p. 4). In addition, Bowen explained schools must have high academic expectations while providing

academic resources and support that students need to be successful. Drysdale, Goode, and Gurr (2009) described the ideal school environment as a place where students feel comfortable enough to take risks while improving their academic knowledge base. Bachay and Buzzi (2012) reported that school personnel should reach out beyond the walls of the building and "support and nurture parents/grandparents who are raising their grandchildren" (p. 64). In this study, school success consisted of the previously mentioned characteristics with the participation of both schools and families working together to support students' success.

This study investigated issues that skipped-generation households experience and identified strategies that will help grandchildren experience school success. Grandparents have limited knowledge and resources concerning rearing children in the 21st century. They need assistance and guidance from a dependable source. The most logical resource available to the grandparents was their grandchildren's school. It was vital to the success of the grandchildren that grandparents collaborate and maintain a positive relationship with their grandchildren's school and teachers.

<p align="center">**Definition of the Problem**</p>

There was a problem in a middle school in the northwestern part of South Carolina. The problem, specifically, was that increasing numbers of students who were being reared by their grandparents were struggling academically. This population included 23 students being reared by their grandparents out of 439 students. This was double the amount enrolled in each of the district's other three schools.

According to the school's guidance counselor, grandparents were experiencing medical, mental health, and behavioral issues with their grandchildren and lacked the

knowledge of where to find external assistance (personal communication, May 29, 2014).

These grandparents were unfamiliar with ways to locate counseling for their

grandchildren to correct issues including eating disorders, acting out, and handling

problems with their parents being incarcerated. These students were also having difficulty

meeting academic goals. To help their grandchildren experience academic success, these

grandparents needed to locate external assistance to address these psychological problems

and academic assistance so their grandchildren could meet their academic goals.

In this school setting, the 23 middle school students who were reared by their

grandparents in skipped-generation households were identified from information

provided on the students' registration forms turned in at the beginning of the school year.

The student breakdown was as follows: seven students were sixth graders, six students

were seventh graders, and 10 students were eighth graders. Of the 23 students, 10 were

males and the other 13 were females. The grandparents of six of the students had legal

documentation from the judicial system granting custody. Reasons why the grandparents

had custody included incarceration of the mother, death of the mother, father and his

parents had custody of the student but the student lived with the grandparent, and mother

had primary custody but the student lived with the grandmother. Approximately 16 of the

students were reared by either one or both of their grandparents without any legal

documentation.

These students were struggling with both teacher-created assessments and high-

stakes tests. Of the 23 students at the subject school, 12 earned F grades as 9-week grades

in classes as either sixth or seventh graders and 11 students failed 15 classes for the year

in either sixth or seventh grade. In this situation, approximately 50% had made a failing

grade for either 9 weeks or for the entire course.

High-stakes testing reflected academic issues as well. In South Carolina, students in Grades 3-8 took the annual Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) test. English/language arts and math were administered every year, and science and social studies alternated every other year. Writing was administered in both the sixth and eighth grades but not in the seventh. Scores were classified as exemplary, met, or not met. Table 2 compares the percentage of middle school students from skipped-generation households to the rest of their classmates who scored "not met" on their sixth- and seventh-grade PASS sections.

Table 2

Progression of Skipped-Generation (SG) Students Versus All Grade-Level (AGL) Students Who Scored "Not Met" on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS Test) for Subject School District (2011, 2012)

	WRITING		ENGLISH		MATH		SCIENCE	
Grade	SG	AGL	SG	AGL	SG	AGL	SG	AGL
6	I/D	31.0	20.0	25.6	33.0	16.2	50.0	50.8
7	NT	NT	20.0	30.6	60.0	19.8	20.0	18.2

Note. I/D = insufficient data; NT = not tested; all numbers are percentages.

Insufficient data prevented an accurate picture of the skipped-generation sixth-grade writing skills on the PASS test, and seventh graders were not required to take the writing section. In English/language arts, sixth-grade (20.0% compared to 25.6%), and seventh-grade (20.0% compared to 30.6%) skipped-generation students scored better than

the rest of their classmates. In math, sixth-grade (33.0% compared to 16.2%) and seventh-grade skipped-generation students (60.0% compared to 19.8%) showed higher academic deficiencies than the rest of the students in their grade level. In science, the number of sixth-grade skipped-generation students who scored "not met" was equal to the same percentage of their classmates, but half of all students were not meeting the state standards. The seventh-grade science scores showed that more skipped-generation students were deficient in the science standards (20.0% compared to 18.2%) than their classmates (see Table 2).

Students had challenges in other areas of their lives besides academics. In addition to poor academic performance, children who were separated from their biological parents experienced more emotional and behavioral issues (Day & Bazemore, 2011). Of the 23 students who lived with their grandparents, three had been suspended for fighting and disrespectful behavior. Other discipline referrals incurred by these students included refusal to obey, stealing, possession of drugs, lying to a school official, and endangering self or others.

With this in mind, teachers, other school employees, and school services were vital to the grandparents for providing assistance to help their grandchildren be successful academically. Smith and Dannison (2001) explained that the most supportive environment grandparents and grandchildren had was the school environment. This phenomenological study sought to identify issues grandparents and grandchildren experienced and helped to determine how the school assisted in improving academic achievement while providing assistance with behavioral and curricular issues.

Rationale

Children do not choose where or with whom they live. Their fate is determined by the decisions of adults. Grandparents have to make difficult and sacrificial decisions when contemplating rearing their grandchildren. The decision to rear their grandchildren is more than just moving the grandchildren into the house. Grandparents have to consider the economic, health, and social isolation ramifications of the new living arrangements before allowing the grandchildren to move in (Collins, 2011; Day & Bazemore, 2011; Edwards & Sweeney, 2007). Neely-Barnes, Graft, and Washington (2010) explained that grandparents incur physical and mental issues when they rear their grandchildren. Grandparents decide whether to raise their grandchildren or allow them to become part of the foster care system. Grandparents decide if the sacrifice is worth the physical and emotional issues they will experience. More important, grandparents have to realize that they need to maintain their health and friends while they raise their grandchildren.

When grandparents accept the role of primary caregivers for their grandchildren, they sacrifice the freedom to live their lives without parental or additional responsibilities, incurring the financial demands of making sure the children have the necessities (food, clothing, medical, dental, and emotional support), and the stress of making sure the grandchildren are well educated. Smith and Dannison (2001) noted that "all grandparents share a strong desire to provide grandchildren with a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment" (p. 47). While providing this type of environment, grandparents also face other issues. Smith and Hancock (2010) noted that the stress of rearing their grandchildren could cause marital issues between the grandparents. They added that financial problems, isolation, intimacy, and lack of current parenting strategies

were the major issues that created tension. In addition, Smith and Dannison (2001) stated that some of these grandparents were in the process of taking care of their aging parents while trying to raise their grandchildren. Because of these reasons, additional stress was placed on the grandparents. Grandparents benefited from all the assistance and support they obtained.

Schools, for instance, were resources grandparents used to assist in rearing their grandchildren. Smith and Dannison (2001) called schools a valuable resource that had the ability to connect grandparents with supportive services to benefit the skipped-generation household. Grandparents needed help from support services to make sure the outcome of the living arrangement was successful (Neely-Barnes et al., 2010). Schools were the logical resource because they were staffed with adults who had a variety of educational degrees and specialized training (e.g., psychologists, guidance counselors, teachers, etc.) that benefited both the grandchildren and the grandparents.

This phenomenological study provided insight into the relationships between the local school and grandparents who were rearing their grandchildren. It also provided recommendations that foster improved practices for schools and teachers to support grandparents that help caregivers feel more confident and provide services to facilitate grandparents' ability to help their grandchildren be academically successful.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Based on 2012-2013 student registration forms, 60 out of 1,600 students in the school district were being reared by their grandparents. The middle school in this district had 23 students in a grandparent-headed household. This was twice as many students per school as the primary, elementary, and high school had documented as living in

grandparent-headed households. The city, county, state, and federal government data indicated a large number of grandchildren being reared by their grandparents. Table 3 shows the number of grandchildren living with their grandparents within the local zip code, county, state, and nation. Categories in Table 3 include the number of grandchildren younger than 18 years of age who lived with their grandparents, number of grandparents who were the grandchildren's legal guardian, number of grandchildren who lived with either a single grandparent or married grandparents, and a breakdown of grandchildren who lived with their grandparents for a specific amount of time.

Students who lived within the local zip code of the school district had 104 school-aged children who lived in a grandparent-headed household with only 37 grandparents who had legal guardianship of their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a). The 2010 census results showed that 28 of these grandchildren lived with a female grandparent, while 18 of these grandchildren lived with grandparents who were married.

The numerical demographics showed 28 of these grandchildren lived with the grandparents for 5 or more years compared to only nine who lived with their grandparents less than 1 year. Although the local school district had enrolled 60 grandchildren who were reared by their grandparents, 44 additional students were unaccounted for and not enrolled within the district's schools. Table 3 compares the number of grandchildren reared by their grandparents by the local zip code, the local county, the state of South Carolina, and the United States.

In the local county, 1,913 grandchildren lived in grandparent-headed households, and 814 were the responsibility of their grandparents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b). Of the 1,913 grandchildren, 580 lived with their grandmothers and 519 lived with

grandparents who were married. The trend of the data showed that most of the

grandparents had kept their grandchildren for 5 or more years. Within the county, 899 of

Table 3

Population of Grandchildren in Skipped-Generation Households

Status	School district	County	South Carolina	United States
Reared by grandparents	104	1,913	107,938	2.6 million
Legal guardianship awarded to grandparents	37	814	53,747	
Live with single grandparent	28	580	35,054	1.6 million
Live with married grandparents	18	519	37,701	1.9 million
Lived with grandparent				
< 1 year	9	363		601,000
1 to 2 years			20,508	642,000
3 to 4 years				
5 or more years	28	899	44,254	999,000

Note. Data from *American Fact Finder: 29666 American community survey*, by U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a. Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml

the grandchildren had lived with grandparents for 5 or more years followed by 363 of the

grandchildren who had lived with the grandparents less than a year (U.S. Census Bureau,

2011b).

In the state of South Carolina, 107,938 grandchildren lived in grandparent-headed

households (AARP, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, Child

Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, & Generations United, n.d.b). Of these, 53,747 grandchildren were the responsibility of their grandparents. Of the 107,938 grandchildren, grandmothers reared 35,054 while married grandparents reared 37,701 of these grandchildren. Furthermore, 44,254 of the grandchildren had lived with their grandparents for 5 or more years and 20,508 grandchildren had lived with their grandparent for 1-2 years (AARP et al., n.d.b).

More than 2.6 million American grandparents reared their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011c). Over 999,000 grandparents reared their grandchildren for more than 5 years while the number of grandparents who reared their grandchildren between 1 and 2 years was the next highest category (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011c). Additionally, the census results also showed that approximately 1.9 million grandchildren were reared by married grandparents, and approximately 1.6 million single grandparents had the same responsibility.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

Hegar and Scannapieco (1995) noted that kinship care, which includes grandchildren reared by grandparents, dates back to the late 1800s. Hegar and Scannapieco explained how the children of slaves were reared by family members when "their parents died or were incapacitated, or if they or their parents were sold, slave children often were cared for within the slave community" (p. 204). Hegar and Scannapieco continued that the Latinos and Native Americans experienced the same difficulties as the African Americans in the 1920s and 1930s. Hegar and Scannapieco also stated that in 1935, the U.S. Congress realized there were not enough places for displaced children and provided funding for shelters in rural areas for these children.

Although places were built to care for these children, grandparents who reared their grandchildren were excluded from receiving financial assistance.

Between 1935 and 1998, Edwards and Sweeney (2007) noted that grandparents received no financial or social service support for rearing their grandchildren. The biological parents retained legal custody and were the only adults with legal authority to make decisions for their children (Collins, 2011; Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). In 1961, amendments were added to the Social Security Act of 1935 to provide foster care parents with federal funds for children assigned to them by the state (Hegar & Scannapieco, 1995). However, Hegar and Scannapieco (1995) explained how these funds were not available to family members of the children. Finally, in 1998, Congress made it easier for grandparents to obtain legal custody of their grandchildren and allowed them to make financial, educational, and medical decisions for their grandchildren (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). Over the past 150 years, laws have been implemented to support grandparents in the role of primary caregivers. This led to an increased number of grandparents rearing grandchildren, which influenced the national law makers to change these laws.

Scommegna (2012) noted that the number of grandchildren living in grandparent-headed households more than doubled between the years of 1970 and 2010. Scommegna reported that from 2005 to 2010, there was a 16% increase in the number of grandparent households rearing their grandchildren. The 2010 U.S. Census stated that 7 million people under the age of 18-years-old lived with at least one grandparent and 2.7 million of these were reared by one or more of their grandparents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011c). Saxena and Brotherson (2013) explained that 40% of American grandparents were rearing grandchildren. Data indicated that grandparent-headed households had increased

and grandparents had accepted the responsibility of meeting their grandchildren's basic needs, which included their educational experience. With this responsibility came the need for updated knowledge.

Robinson and Wilkes (2006) pointed out that grandparents "are twice removed from any school setting" (p. 170). Furthermore, Smith and Dannison (2001) noted that the school environment had changed since the last time grandparents were associated with the school environment; therefore, grandparents were overwhelmed with the new practices and terminology. Glass and Honeycutt (2002) stated grandparents felt incompetent to help children with their schoolwork. In today's school setting, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and 21st century soft skills are being emphasized. Along with parents, grandparents face a paradigm shift in education. Schools are the source of information and a resource for all.

Grandparents and grandchildren benefit from a school's resources. Most grandchildren enter their grandparents' homes with more internal and external problems than their peers (Collins, 2011). Additionally, Smith and Dannison (2001) explained that a grandchild's learning was affected by behavioral and emotional challenges. Schools and school districts were beneficial in these cases because they had trained personnel who assisted with these issues. For issues they could not assist with, they had a working relationship with external public and private agencies that were referred to the grandparents for additional assistance.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and phrases are defined as used in this study.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Waiver (ESEA): South Carolina's Department of Education's waiver application was approved to grant greater flexibility from No Child Left Behind by the U.S. Department of Education. Schools and school districts in South Carolina received a grade of A through F (E excluded), which provided all the stakeholders with a more accurate picture of how schools and districts were performing. In August, 2012, the first grades were issued. The waiver was approved for 2 years with a third-year option (South Carolina Department of Education, 2013d).

End-of-Course Exam: The South Carolina Educational Accountability Act of 1998 requires a state-developed final exam in the following middle/high school courses: Algebra 1/Math for the Technologies 2, English 1, U.S. History and Constitution, and Biology 1/Applied Biology 2. The exam counts as 20% of the students' final grade (South Carolina Department of Education, 2013a).

High School Assessment Program (HSAP): These are high-stakes tests students must pass to receive a South Carolina high school diploma. First administration of the test is in the spring of a student's second year of high school. The test consists of one section of English language arts and one section of math. Students may retake any section they fail once per semester afterwards. HSAP exams are used for federal accountability purposes (South Carolina Department of Education, 2013b).

Kinship care: This refers to a possible alternative placement for school-age children with a relative who is kin by blood, marriage, or with close family ties (Hegar & Scannapieco, 1995).

No Child Left Behind Act: The federal government's 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The purpose of this law was to close

the achievement gap between the different ethnic groups that included students with disabilities and those who receive subsidized meals (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS): High-stakes testing for students in Grades 3 through 8 that assesses the performance of students in writing, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Results from these tests are used for state and federal accountability purposes for schools and their school districts (South Carolina Department of Education, 2013c).

Skipped-generational household: Household made up of only grandparents and grandchildren only (Scommegna, 2012).

Three-generation household: Household made up of grandparents, adult children, and grandchildren (Scommegna, 2012).

Significance

As the number of skipped-generation households grows, developing a plan to increase the grandchildren's academic success is important to the students, grandparents, teachers, and to the schools. Improving the academic success of the grandchildren increases their chances of being college and career ready after they graduate high school. By graduating from high school, these grandchildren will be self-sufficient, which will take the financial burden for support off of the grandparents. Teachers will feel a sense of accomplishment generated from grandchildren being academically successful while schools receive positive recognition for improved graduation rates and high-stakes test scores. To reach this successful conclusion, grandparents must learn new and updated child rearing and communication strategies to improve their quality of life while rearing

their grandchildren. Schools and teachers must understand the difficulties skipped-generation households are experiencing and create a plan to support their challenges. Plans must be developed because skipped-generation households are created with little warning.

Dolbin-MacNab (2006) explained that most grandparents have "little or no preparation time to prepare for their grandchildren" (p. 565). With grandchildren in the home, grandparents face physical, emotional, and financial concerns (Collins, 2011; Cox, 2002; Day & Bazemore, 2011; Glass & Honeycutt, 2002; Kropf & Burnette, 2003). Without time to prepare for the arrival of their grandchildren, grandparents must seek help with new parenting strategies and find external support to navigate through their new living arrangement and problems that will occur. Schools and their employees are excellent resources for grandparents to use in this process.

Understanding reasons why grandchildren are living with their grandparents and how school employees, especially teachers, can be beneficial in the educational process of these grandchildren is significant. Teachers impact students each day. To make this impact, teachers must understand the dynamics of the situation. Educating the child is the most important part, but increasing the achievement of each student impacts the teachers and schools overall rating. With this in mind, the South Carolina Department of Education is piloting a teacher evaluation program where 30% of the teacher's final evaluation score depends on individual student growth. Assisting and increasing the student achievement of these grandchildren benefits the child's teacher and the school. In the world of high-stakes testing, schools are graded on improved test scores of all the subgroups within the school. No Child Left Behind and the South Carolina's ESEA rating

or grade is determined by the percentage of students who improve on the South Carolina PASS exam, the high school exit exam, and the end-of-course exams and are included in high school graduation rate. Grandchildren reared by grandparents are included in multiple subgroups and impact the teacher's and school's rating/grade. When a grandchild graduates from high school, the student has completed all the requirements of a basic education. By achieving this accomplishment, the student has access to the work force, college/universities, and the military.

Guiding/Research Question

Since the early 1970s, the number of grandparents rearing their grandchildren has more than doubled (Scommegna, 2012). Scommegna (2012) also explained that between 2005 and 2009, there was a 16% increase of number of children below the age of 18 living in a household where the grandparent was the primary caregiver. Upon arrival at their grandparent's home, the grandchildren were in need of love, encouragement, and additional support to become academically successful.

Schools have the resources to help students from skipped-generation households succeed academically and to provide grandparents with updated parenting and/or contact information for external agencies needed in the rearing of their grandchildren. Edwards (2006) explained how teachers noticed that students living with their grandparents experienced "significantly more emotional and behavioral problems than their similar schoolmates" (p. 565). Naturally, the most effective agency to provide support to both the grandchildren and the grandparents is the local public school system (Smith & Dannison, 2001). Smith and Dannison (2001) also noted that schools provide grandparents with "information, positive feedback, and referral to existing services" (p. 50). Schools are

able to identify issues students are experiencing and provide grandparents with the support and resources they need to help their grandchildren experience academic success.

In this study, the guiding question is, How can school personnel help individuals in skipped-generation households be successful? Jeynes (2011) stated that different geographical locations throughout the United States have "different expectations and level of parent engagement" (p. 109). Jeynes also explained how urban, suburban, and rural communities are different from each other. Because of these differences, researchers will be able to replicate this study in different geographical locations to answer the guiding question. Information gathered will contribute knowledge to society by addressing a growing issue across the United States and the world concerning how schools can help families living in skipped-generation households experience success.

Review of the Literature

An exhaustive literature search was conducted to identify challenges grandparents were facing in skipped-generation households, how grandparents could help their grandchildren obtain school success, and ways school personnel could provide a grandparent friendly environment and collaborate with grandparents to enhance their grandchildren's school success. The interdisciplinary nature of topics was highlighted as information was technology, counseling, criminal justice, and education. Table 4 lists databases and search terms included in this study. These sources yielded a spectrum of research on areas that impact skipped-generation households. Much of the literature provided insight into problems and possible recommendations to improve these families' circumstances; however, studies on specific strategies for collaboration between grandparents and schools were not found. Although Epstein's (n.d.) *Six Types of Parental*

Involvement was a guideline for parental involvement, it was a challenge for minority grandparent subgroups to visit the school and ask for help from school personnel. Bower and Griffin (2011) noted that language barriers, previous educational attainment, and prior negative experiences with school personnel were just a few reasons that low-income or minority grandparents were reluctant to deal with school personnel.

Some biological parents with children made poor choices, which placed their children in bad home environments. In many of these cases, children left the home of their biological parents and relocated to a different home. Grandparents in these situations made tough decisions and sacrifices which were in the best interest of their grandchildren. Many grandparents chose to rear their grandchildren to provide them with a safe and loving environment. Ruiz (2008) stated that most grandparents took custody of their grandchildren because of their fear of losing their grandchildren to the foster care system. Other grandparents desired for their grandchildren to stay familiar with family history and believed they could provide their grandchildren with the best opportunity to experience success (Edwards, 2006; Edwards & Sweeney, 2007).

It was not until the 1970s people began realizing that children benefited from living with relatives. Finally, in 1980, P.L. 96-272 was passed by the U.S. Congress that encouraged agencies who placed children in foster care homes to begin placing these children in kinship care homes (Hegar & Scannapieco, 1995). To understand how this living arrangement affected a student's ability to succeed academically, the home environment and the issues that created barriers that prohibited grandchildren from

Table 4

Databases and Search Terms Included in Study

Database	Search Terms
Education Research Complete	Skipped-generation households
SocIndex	Custodial caregiver
Eric	Grandparents as parents
PsycoInfo	Family relations
PsycArticles	Kinship care
	Curriculum/parents/secondary
Computers and Applied Sciences Complete	Parent involvement/secondary school
	Secondary school parents
ProQuest Central	Middle school parents
	Gerontology/grandchildren
	Generation gap
	Parenting skills/grandparents
	Parenting skills/skipped-generation
	School success
	Grandfamilies
	21st century challenges
	Surrogate parent
	Household grandparents
	Technology
	Social media
	Millennials
	Phenomenological

excelling academically need to be understood. Incidentally, one of the barriers was the comfort level of the grandparents with the new living arrangement.

Closing the Generation Gap

Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and the millennial generation (1982-1991) are the two groups that most likely compose skipped-generation households. Baby boomers were not raised during the computer age and are unfamiliar with today's technology. Kulesza

and Smith (2013) stated that baby boomers are frightened by technology while Jobling (2014) noted that they are scared of computers. Kulesza and Smith continued by stating that technology is a "daunting challenge" (p. 21) for baby boomers, especially at the rate technology is changing. On the other hand, Ling (2008) noted that technology, especially mobile communication and the Internet, are the life line for the millennial generation. The millennial generation thrives on social interaction and these technological devices provide them with instant information (Ling, 2008). The knowledge gap between the baby boomers and the millennial generation places the older generation at a disadvantage of trying to supervise the younger generation and their technology usage.

A major difference between the two generations is the frequency with which the communication devices are used and the different formats being used by the younger generation. Baby boomers and people from previous generations talk with family or friends only once a week (Ling, 2008). Ling (2008) also explained how this age group prefers to talk on a phone instead of using the Internet or other social media outlets. In the 21st century, the younger generation can use many formats to communicate or gather information. Allen (2014) noted that the millennial generation uses all types of communication devices and forums to communicate (texting, Internet, Facebook, Twitter, other social media outlets). Ling also explained that texting does not have the same importance for older adults as it has for the younger generation. Bibby (2009) stated that sometimes the millennial generation's need for social interaction leads to the "exchange of information, photos, and video clips" (p. 4) that increases the chances of sexual activities including sexting. Bibby explained that grandparents may be less likely to

monitor their grandchildren's use of these devices due to their inability and lack of motivation to use electronic devices.

Home Issues Faced by Grandparents and Grandchildren

Since the 1970s, skipped-generation households increased each year (Scommegna, 2012). All ethnic groups had a high percentage of grandchildren being reared by their grandparents (see Table 1). Issues that biological parents faced to create the need for grandchildren to live with their grandparents were "substance abuse, divorce, desertion, mental and physical illness, incarceration, AIDS, domestic violence, death of parent, and child abuse and neglect" (Collins, 2011, p. 454). Regardless of what problems existed, children needed another place to live. Living with the grandparents was the logical choice in most of these situations.

Prior to moving in with their grandparents, some grandchildren had already developed behavioral and emotional issues. Glass and Honeycutt (2002) noted that grandchildren moved in with grandparents with problems that had developed over time. Before moving in with their grandparents, the grandchildren had already learned "dysfunctional behavior patterns by simply observing their caregivers" (Smith & Hancock, 2010, p. 55). More importantly, Robinson and Wilkes (2006) explained that some of the biological parents had already caused "psychological and physical injuries" (p. 171) to the grandchildren.

Grandchildren bring many issues into their relationship which their grandparents have to address. Psychological distress caused by the biological parents cause the grandchildren to demonstrate characteristics of anger and stress (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009). Grandchildren exhibit anger and stress for many reasons. Sometimes they feel

they are an inconvenience and a problem for their grandparents or feel responsible for the

feud between their biological parents and grandparents (Edwards & Ray, 2010; Strom &

Strom, 2011). The biological parents are unable to fulfill promises, live in poverty, or are

deceased (Smithgall, Mason, Michels, LiCalsi, & Goerge, 2009; Templeton, 2012).

Grandchildren have fears about the future and struggle with the idea of moving away

from their friends (Edwards & Ray, 2010). Also, Day and Bazemore (2011)

acknowledged that grandchildren may face "depression, negative outlook, and low self-

esteem" (p. 103) after being separated from the biological parents. In addition, Cripps and

Zyromski (2009) stated that grandchildren's "level of confidence in relationships and

level of security are affected by a parent's emotional unavailability or other behaviors

expressed through parenting styles or negative life events" (p. 4). Downie, Hay, Horne,

Wichmann, and Hislop (2009) explained how some grandchildren experienced anger and

stress when they moved into a more structured and controlling environment after being

raised in a home environment without many rules and with unlimited freedom. These

types of issues carried over into the academic setting.

Behavioral and emotional challenges impacted student learning. Edward and

Sweeney (2007) noted that grandchildren reared by the grandparents were more difficult

to educate because the emotional and behavioral challenges of these students often

created barriers to learning (Smith & Dannison, 2001). Edwards (2006) also reported that

grandchildren reared by grandparents were more often referred to administrators and

guidance counselors than other students because of these reasons. Moreover, Strom and

Strom (2011) observed that children redirect anger they have toward their parents to other

students. In these situations, grandchildren reared by grandparents need more attention in

the educational environment. To ensure the success of their grandchildren, grandparents have to find ways to help them.

Living with their grandparents is beneficial for the grandchildren. Edwards and Sweeny (2007) stated that grandparents have the ability to improve the grandchildren's functioning depending upon the type of parenting and "sensitive care" (p. 184) provided toward the grandchildren. More importantly, Edwards (2006) explained that grandchildren reared by grandparents are more successful than children raised by their biological parents.

When children move in with their grandparents, they lose not only the relationship with their biological parents but also lost the loving and special relationship between the child and the grandparents (Bernal & Anuncibay, 2008). Winefield and Air (2010) described the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents as being one that is "dynamic, evolving, and responsive to circumstances" (p. 277) and Dolbin-MacNab (2006) stated that grandparents may have a hard time distinguishing between their roles of the parent and the grandparent. Equally important, Dolbin-MacNab (2006) explained that grandparents must create strategies to balance both roles. Once the grandchildren move in with the grandparents, the grandparents become the parents. The grandparents become the ones who teach the life lessons and are the disciplinarians. Ironically, the grandparents' age plays a role in the type of parenting style and discipline used. Smithgall et al. (2009) explained how the advancing age of grandparents limits the effectiveness of parenting practices while Viguer, Melendez, Valencia, Cantero, and Navarro (2010) discussed how the disciplining of grandchildren by grandparents is

ineffective because their situation impacts their judgment and causes them not to be demanding enough.

Understandably, the transition for the grandparents is just as difficult as the one for the grandchildren. Once grandparents take on the responsibility of rearing their grandchildren, they are afraid something would happen and they would lose the opportunity to rear them. Legal custody is only granted through the legal system and the grandparents must prove that the biological parents are unfit to gain custody (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). Also, Glass and Honeycutt (2002) also explained that until the courts provide custody to the grandparents, the biological parents are the only ones who can make major decisions for their children. Without custody, grandparents have no rights and biological parents may return and remove their children from the grandparents' home (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). Thus, grandparents rearing grandchildren with or without custody live in stressful situations.

Limited financial resources are another cause for these stressful situations. Glass and Honeycutt (2002) explained that some grandparents are financially punished for rearing their grandchildren. Grandparents are unable to pay all the monthly expenses for the entire family. Day and Bazemore (2011) noted that children who do not live with their biological parents usually live in poverty because they live with their grandparents who are on a limited income. Unfortunately, grandchildren who live with a single grandparent usually live with public assistance (Cox, 2002). Even though grandparents receive assistance from the national, state, and local agencies, biological and foster parents receive more financial assistance than grandparents (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). For grandparents, the low amount of income received per month causes undue stress.

Most of the grandparents who rear their grandchildren live on limited income and receive monthly income through job earnings, social security, and/or retirement income (Collins, 2011). Low job earning is the result of a grandparent's low educational level, which increases their chances of living in poverty (Baker & Mutchler, 2010). Depending on the age of the grandchild, additional costs incurred when grandparents decide to rear grandchildren are daycare costs or medical bills. Collins (2011) and Ruiz (2008) explained that grandparents either need to return to work to pay for daycare, quit work because they are unable to afford daycare, or find a balance between work and the rearing of their grandchildren. When it comes to medical coverage, "grandparent households are the least likely to have health coverage" (Day & Bazemore, 2011, p. 104).

Glass and Honeycutt (2002) reported that grandchildren reared by their grandparents are eligible for Medicaid benefits, but the grandparents may be unable to pay the copayment for medical appointments or to refill their prescriptions (Cross, Day, & Byers, 2010). Grandparents avoid trips to the doctor because they want to keep their health issues confidential so their grandchildren will not be taken and placed in other homes (Robinson & Wilks, 2006). Along with health issues, grandparents incurred emotional issues which caused stress. Bigbee, Boegh, Prengaman, and Shaklee (2011) explained that to improve the health of the grandchildren, grandparents need to monitor and improve their own health. Because of this, grandparents need an outlet to express their frustrations and fears, consequently, they need friends.

Grandparents interact with friends their own age. This support system allows grandparents the opportunity to fellowship and participate in social activities. Neely-Barnes et al. (2010) stated that having a support system "contributes to grandparents'

positive well-being and reduces stress" (p. 88). When grandparents take on the responsibility of rearing their grandchildren, the time used for these social interactions is replaced with parenting responsibilities (Edwards & Sweeney, 2007). In spite of this, Neely-Barnes et al. noted how the social support system for grandparents is important. In addition, Neely-Barnes et al. explained how being able to interact with people who have the same interests enhances the lives of the grandparents. Being unable to maintain relationships with their friends causes social isolation of the grandparents. Cox (2002) described how social isolation leads to the decline of emotional health of the grandparents. In addition, Edwards (2009) explained these relations are important to rear their grandchildren successfully. Grandparents need to find ways to connect with their peers during this new parenting stage of their lives. Lack of social interaction causes frustration among married grandparents.

Rearing grandchildren places stress on the grandparents' relationship. Smith and Hancock (2010) observed that in grandparent-headed households, the grandmother plays the primary role in the parenting tasks while the grandfather provides invaluable support. Also, Smith and Hancock also identified specific issues that occur between the grandparents including, but not limited to, "jealously over time spent with the grandchildren, decreased privacy, less sexual activity, and increased tension" (p. 47). Grandparents need to take time to work on their relationship with each other in this new child rearing opportunity. Maintaining a balance between the responsibility of rearing their grandchildren and spending quality time with their spouse is a must. Grandparents need to focus on the positives of their situation instead of the negatives.

Finding Ways to Help Their Grandchildren

Before they can help their grandchildren, grandparents must work on possible challenges of taking over the role of caregiver. One of the major issues is that grandparents become consumed with supporting the welfare of their grandchildren and lose focus on their own needs, such as personal health. Knowing this, Collins (2011) reported the necessity of grandparents focusing on their health while rearing their grandchildren. To help their grandchildren, grandparents need to take care of themselves. Unfortunately, Saxena and Brotherson (2013) found that grandparents rearing grandchildren experienced a higher stress level than other kinship or foster caregivers. Collins stated that the physical and emotional demands of rearing their grandchildren along with financial and legal burdens lead to higher stress. Also, Collins noted that grandparents experience depression along with other physical health problems. In many cases, the lack of insurance coverage and living below the poverty level prohibits grandparents from seeking the proper health coverage (Collins, 2011). Grandparents need to take care of themselves and establish healthy relationships to be able to assist their grandchildren in achieving academic success. Grandparents must understand the need to make health and life style changes when they assume the responsibility of rearing their grandchildren.

To help their grandchildren process through their negative experiences with their biological parents, grandparents need to adjust to the new living arrangements and learn coping strategies to overcome the loss of freedom to participate in activities and opportunities to socialize with friends without any obligations (Neely-Barnes et al., 2010). Knowing this, Neely-Barnes et al. (2010) explained how the reduction of freedom

and interaction with other people their age results in the need of counseling for depression and social isolation. Counselors are trained professionals who can assist in providing strategies to help grandparents overcome issues they are experiencing. Grandchildren can benefit from counseling.

Providing counseling opportunities for the grandchildren eliminates emotional issues they are facing so they can focus on their educational objectives. Grandchildren come into the new living arrangement with anxieties and emotional frustrations (Collins, 2011). Edwards and Sweeney (2007) explained these issues impact a grandparent's ability to take care of and educate these grandchildren if they were not addressed properly. Counselors can introduce coping strategies for grandchildren to reduce anxieties and emotional frustrations so they can live a more normal life. Additionally, grandparents may benefit from counseling just as much as their grandchildren; moreover, seeking advice from friends may be as therapeutic as meeting with a counselor (Robinson & Wilks, 2006).

Participating in a support group with other grandparents rearing their grandchildren improves the grandparents' ability to rear their grandchildren. Support groups reduce the amount of social isolation the grandparents experience and provide a forum to identify community resources beneficial in the rearing process (Collins, 2011). In many cases, grandparents became totally engaged in the rearing of their grandchildren and lose contact with their support groups or friends (Edward & Sweeney, 2007). With this in mind, being able to share ideas with others in similar situations and talking about strategies that have or have not worked for them will be valuable information in the

rearing of their grandchildren. In some of these conversations, grandparents can learn how to approach and address sensitive issues in healthy ways (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006).

Grandparents should learn how to handle sensitive conversations. Dolbin-MacNab (2006) explained how grandparents need to be trained in the art of handling sensitive conversations. Furthermore, Edwards and Sweeney (2007) stated grandparents' ability to handle sensitive issues impacts their grandchildren's ability to function successfully within the home. To be effective, grandparents need to understand ways to approach their grandchildren and how to maintain a positive relationship between the two. As well, learning new parenting techniques will be important.

One way grandparents can focus on the positives is to learn updated parenting strategies that will help with the rearing of their grandchildren. Dolbin-MacNab (2006) noted that updated parenting strategies can help grandparents reduce some of the stress of rearing their grandchildren. Furthermore, Robinson and Wilkes (2006) stated that because of the generation gap, grandparents are not as effective using the same parenting strategies to rear their grandchildren they used to rear their own children. Grandparents attempt to use the same parenting strategies because they are comfortable and feel competent using the old strategies (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006). For this reason, grandparent caregivers face difficult challenges (Strom & Strom, 2011). With their grandchildren, grandparents benefit from parent education classes or workshops that included understanding the stages of child development at all ages, effective discipline strategies, and how to handle sensitive conversations (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006; Edward & Sweeney, 2007). Meanwhile, grandchildren learn how to communicate with their grandparents in different situations to create a successful relationship (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009).

Grandparents practice one of the three types of parenting styles: authoritarian/autocratic, authoritative/democratic, or permissive/laissez-faire (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009). Cripps and Zyromski (2009) stated that the authoritarian/autocratic parenting style occurs when parents give the commands and expect the child to follow their instruction without any comments or disagreements. Cripps and Zyromski (2009) also defined permissive/laissez-faire as the parenting style where the parent talks to the child but concedes to the child's wishes. With the authoritative/democratic parenting style, parents are "consistent with flexible limits along with warmth and nurturance" (Monaghan, Horn, Alvarez, Cogen, & Streisand, 2012, p. 256). Meanwhile, Kerr, Stattin, and Ozdemur (2012) stated that the authoritative/democratic parenting style allows children to be independent in their thinking and functioning and held accountable for their actions. Kerr et al. (2012) also explained there is mutual respect between the child and parent with the parent responsible for distributing the consequences for inappropriate behavior with a warm and nurturing attitude.

In addition, Ishak, Low, and Lau (2012) noted the authoritative/democratic parenting style has a positive impact on "social confidence, academic performance, and psychological development of the individual" (p. 489). Thus, using the authoritative/democratic parenting style benefits both the grandparents and the grandchildren (McKinney, Milone, & Renk, 2011; Viguer et al., 2010). Allowing grandchildren the opportunity to express their feelings while grandparents maintain a receptive and caring attitude toward their relationship with their grandchildren is beneficial to both sides. The ability to communicate effectively helps on days when the

emotional tension is elevated. There are workshops grandparents can attend to improve their parenting skills.

Parenting education and training classes update the grandparents' knowledge of how to rear 21st century grandchildren. Parenting strategies have changed since the grandparents raised their children in a previous generation. There have been many new parenting practices and discipline strategies recently discovered to benefit and inform the grandparents (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006). Following this, Saxena and Brotherson (2013) noted that grandparents should understand the "best parenting and guidance practices" (p. 6) to meet their grandchildren's needs. Social issues faced by today's young children, such as drug use, sexual activities and games, peer pressure, gangs, and youth violence, may cause problems as well. Some of the grandparents are unfamiliar with those social pressures their grandchildren face or will encounter as they grow older (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006). Understanding the culture and social pressures their grandchildren face on a daily basis will improve the chances of a positive and successful outcome for the grandchildren.

Grandparents of skipped-generation households are unfamiliar with how to find assistance for their new living situation. Williams (2011) explained that grandparents are unaware of where to locate assistance for their grandchildren and themselves. In addition, Baker and Mutchler (2010) stated that grandparents who raised their grandchildren have faced unique barriers because the U.S. government does not recognize this type of family structure. Langosch (2012) noted that grandparents lack the knowledge to start looking for assistance and cannot find help on their own because the "services are so fragmented" (p. 164). Baker and Mutchler agreed, noting assistance was found on either the local or

state level and was "piecemeal in nature" (p. 961). Schools can be the starting point where grandparents begin looking for information to find assistance for both their grandchildren and themselves.

Collaboration Between Grandparents and the School

Collaboration is a two-way street. Corngold (2009) observed that to have effective collaboration between grandparents and a school, both parties must be involved in a "give-and-take relationship" (p. 127) instead of a one-sided relationship. Fedewa and Clark (2009) explained that both parties should work together as a team by sharing information so grandchildren can excel academically. Schools usually set the agenda and grandparents go with the schools' suggestions without questioning them (Corngold, 2009). Bower and Griffin (2011) observed that schools focus more on parental strategies to promote the success of the school instead of implementing strategies that strengthen families. Montoro-Rodriquez, Smith, and Palmieri (2012) noted grandparents are not as forceful with teachers or school personnel because of their lack of knowledge or their negative experience as students. Schools and grandparents must be willing to collaborate with each other before the grandchildren can experience success.

Two ways to improve collaboration between the grandparents and the schools are first for grandparents to become involved in extracurricular events (parent-teacher association, volunteer at school, and/or run for the school board) and, second, for grandparents to create a dialog with their grandchildren's teachers (Corngold, 2009). Montoro-Rodriquez et al. (2012) stated that schools hold regularly scheduled support groups, and Kirby and Sanders (2012) suggested schools implement parenting programs

for both grandparents and grandchildren. Such communication strategies benefit both the grandparents and the school.

Grandparents are hesitant to communicate with their grandchildren's school, in spite of the fact that most students are academically successful when parents/grandparents and schools communicate (Heydon & Reilly, 2007). Smith and Dannison (2001) explained how grandparents feel the need for "information, positive feedback and referrals to existing services" (p. 50). Incidentally, Patel and Stevens (2010) noted that communication between the home and school declines from the elementary to middle school years. Communication with their grandchildren's teachers and school is a step in the right direction to supporting academic success. Grandparents should work on home and school relationships. Meeting with and maintaining consistent contact with school personnel is an important function on which grandparents should focus to help their grandchildren improve academically (Tveit, 2009). Furthermore, Olmstead (2013) stated that grandparents have easy access to their grandchildren's grades with parent portals and are able to communicate with teachers easier because of e-mail. Unfortunately, most grandparents are technologically deficient unless their grandchildren teach them how to use current technology (Correa, Straubhaar, Chen, & Spence, 2013; Mori & Harada, 2010). In addition, Williams (2011) acknowledged that insufficient communication between the home and school will eventually lead to problems. Schools should make an effort to communicate with the grandparents as well.

To attract grandparents into a school, it is important grandparents perceive the school as inviting and receptive. Haynes (2011) explained that school receptivity is the number one factor that increases parent involvement. In addition, Lloyd-Smith and Baron

(2010) noted that parents/grandparents do not feel comfortable visiting the school unless they receive an invitation. Primary caregivers of students should be welcomed so they will feel comfortable enough to visit or communicate with the school. Grandparents rearing their grandchildren are hesitant because of their age.

Age plays a role in grandparents' willingness to attend school functions. Robinson and Wilks (2006) noted the difference in the age of the grandparents and the parents of other students creates a feeling of discomfort. Depending on the age of the teacher, grandparents feel uneasy with that relationship. Schools should find ways to make their school environment more welcoming for grandparents.

Edwards and Sweeney (2007) stated some children exposed to rejection at an early age are difficult to rear and educate. As well, Edwards (2006) explained that behavioral issues of students from grandparent-headed households outnumber those reared by biological parents. More importantly, more intervention services are needed for these students (Edwards, 2006). As a result of this information, Edwards (2006) noted students reared by their grandparents are high maintenance students. In addition, Smith and Dannison (2001) suggested that schools create innovative strategies to assist students living in grandparent-headed households. Students reared by grandparents bring more issues to classrooms than the lack of academic knowledge. Grandparents have limited knowledge of what is actually being taught in 21st century classrooms (Biscoglio & Langer, 2011) and need assistance from external sources to help their grandchildren be academically successful.

Grandparents provide their grandchildren with limited support for the classroom because they are not as familiar with the current school curriculum that has changed since

they reared their children (Robinson & Wilkes, 2006). Williams (2011) explained that since grandparents last attended school, new education terminology, computers, and computer software have either been changed or invented. Education constantly changes. For example, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, 45 states implemented the new CCSS.

In 2010, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief School Officers adopted the CCSS (Rust, 2012). Rust (2012) stated that the CCSS are English/language arts and math standards that "identifies cognitive processes and learning strategies" (p. 32) and incorporate literacy strategies for history/social studies, science and career and technical education courses. The purpose of these standards is to have secondary school graduates both college and career ready (Rust, 2012; Stewart & Varner, 2012). Due to the implementation of the new curriculum, grandparents need assistance obtaining an understanding of the new CCSS to help their grandchildren with their homework, classroom assignments, and assessment preparation.

Grandparents have the best intentions and provide as much support as possible. Still, Smith and Dannison (2001) reported teachers were encouraged by the determination of the grandparents to make the best possible situation out of the most difficult circumstances. Grandparents decide to rear their grandchildren for the right reasons even though some have limited resources and abilities to help their grandchildren achieve at a high academic level (Collins, 2011; Edwards & Sweeney, 2007). Many factors hinder grandparents from helping their grandchildren become academically successful.

One of the common themes throughout the literature was grandparents' inability to help their grandchildren with their schoolwork and homework (Edwards & Sweeney,

2007; Glass & Honeycutt, 2002; Robinson & Wilks, 2006; Tveit, 2009). Some grandparents do not agree with their school's homework philosophy. Biscoglio and Langer (2011) noted that some grandparents hate the time homework takes away from families and how homework reduces the amount of time for children to participate in other activities, such as sports, sleep, play, and exercise. Biscoglio and Langer also explained how grandparents think most of the homework is busy work and has no significant purpose, but are totally in favor of quality homework that is beneficial to the grandchildren's learning, such as summer reading over the 2-month break.

Schools and grandparents must work together to increase the academic achievement of their grandchildren. Schools are dramatically different from when the grandparents sent their children to school. Specifically, Biscoglio and Langer (2011) explained there is a gap between the grandparents' knowledge of what schools previously taught and what is taught in the 21st century classroom. New teaching strategies have been implemented, terminology has changed (Smith & Dannison, 2001), and more complicated content has been moved to earlier grades (Robinson & Wilks, 2006). Other issues preventing grandparents from assisting their grandchildren with school activities are health issues, a reduced amount of energy, or other problems that consume their attention and time (Edwards & Sweeney, 2007). Because of this, assisting their grandchildren with homework is more difficult (Robinson & Wilks, 2006). Grandparents need to refresh their academic knowledge to help their grandchildren.

Grandparents who rear their grandchildren need help teaching their grandchildren. Glass and Honeycutt (2002) acknowledged that grandparents do not have the confidence and are uncomfortable with the idea of helping their grandchildren with schoolwork.

Cross et al. (2010) noted that grandparents do not have the educational knowledge to assist their grandchildren with homework or other academic assignments. In addition, Heydon and Reilly (2007) stated grandparents have "low language, literacy, and numeracy skills" (p. 158) and are unable to help their grandchildren with their schoolwork. In these cases, grandparents look for assistance outside of the home. Schools provide tutoring to help these students succeed and/or provide a support group for these grandparents to share information concerning available resources in the community to help their grandchildren improve their academic achievement level (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002; Smith & Dannison, 2001). Grandparents should be made aware of resources that will increase their grandchildren's chances of becoming academically successful.

Olmstead (2013) observed "home-based, rather than school-based, involvement in supporting learning has the greatest impact on student learning" (p. 28). Olmstead explained how discussing the school day with their child each day, monitoring academic progress, keeping up with the school's calendar and events, and assisting with homework are the key components to help students become academically successful. Additionally, Strom and Strom (2011) noted that schools should continuously encourage grandparents to be active stakeholders and encourage grandparent involvement with their grandchildren at home.

However, even with the additional encouragement, grandparents are not familiar with the latest psychological research. Psychological and learning disorders diagnoses were not common when the grandparents and their children attended school. Since they last attended school, these disorders have been researched, named, and have become highly recognized among parents, doctors, and educators. Examples of some childhood

disorders that have been identified are as follows: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), self-mutilation, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety disorder. ADHD occurs when students lose their focus because of their attention deficient and hyperactivity. Abikoff et al. (2013) explained how ADHD effects "organizational skills, insufficient motivation, lack of carry through, and/or task avoidance" (p. 114). Also, Anderson, Watt, Noble, and Shanley (2012) reported teachers have difficulties teaching students with ADHD until they learn more about ADHD and gain more teaching experience. Self-mutilation occurs when people cut or carve their skin. Nock (2009) stated that the reason people self-mutilate is unclear. Furthermore, Nock (2009) acknowledged there could be many reasons for self-mutilation, such as "manipulation of others, impulsiveness, low self-esteem, childhood abuse, or stressful events" (pp. 78-79). Meanwhile, PTSD is associated with soldiers of the U.S. military who return to the states from combat in active war zones. Research provided information describing how grandchildren moving in with grandparents have been diagnosed with PTSD. Margolin and Vickerman (2011) described PTSD and explained how PTSD could be caused by multiple traumatic actions. Margolin and Vickerman also reported that some of the side effects of PTSD are "depression, anxiety disorders, and academic difficulties" (p. 63).

Legerstee, Garnefski, Jellesma, Verhulst, and Utens (2010) discussed how students with an anxiety disorder focus more on the negative parts of their lives than nonanxious students. These are only a few of the new psychological and childhood disorders that grandparents face today. Even though grandparents are faced with these different psychological and childhood disorders, their grandchildren's schools provide services to assist their grandchildren with these disorders or provide contact information

of external agencies who could assist the grandparents (Montoro-Rodriquez et al., 2012; Smith & Dannison, 2001). Grandparents need to understand these disorders may provide learning challenges for their grandchildren while also understanding their involvement is the key to the academic success of their grandchildren.

Summary of Literature Review in Support of Research Question

The literature review revealed that substance abuse, divorce, mental and physical illness, incarceration, Aids, domestic violence, death of a parent, child abuse and neglect, and deployment were just a few reasons why skipped-generation households are developed (Collins, 2011). Grandparents provide grandchildren with safe and loving environments and opportunities to be successful (Edwards, 2006). Another reason grandparents agree to rear grandchildren is to maintain close relationships with biological family members to allow them to become familiar with stories of their family history (Edwards, 2006; Ruiz, 2008).

The literature review also supported the premise that grandparents sacrifice to rear their grandchildren. They give up their jobs, friends, and opportunities to live their lives without being responsible for children (Edwards & Sweeney, 2007). Grandparents focus more on the grandchildren's needs than their own physical and emotional needs (Robinson & Wilkes, 2006). Because they live on a fixed income, grandparents are limited in their ability to provide financially for their grandchildren (Collins, 2011). Some of these families live in poverty and are unable to provide the proper medical coverage (Day & Bazemore, 2011). Unless custody of the grandchild is awarded to the grandparents by the courts, grandparents are unable to receive financial and medical assistance for the grandchild (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). A disadvantage of the new

living arrangement is losing the traditional grandchild/grandparent relationship to a child/parent relationship (Bernal & Anuncibay, 2008).

Grandchildren bring behavioral and emotional issues with them when they move in with their grandparents (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). They are affected by leaving both their biological parents and friends (Day & Bazemore, 2011; Edwards & Ray, 2010). Both grandchildren and grandparents benefit from counseling to deal with the new living arrangements (Robinson & Wilkes, 2006).

Grandparents and grandchildren do not have much time to prepare for the move because most of these situations occur quickly. Grandparents need help finding assistance with issues they or their grandchildren are experiencing (Baker & Mutchler, 2010; Langosch, 2012). Schools are the most logical place to seek assistance and resources for help with problems they are experiencing.

Grandchildren experience issues when they begin new schools. Students from skipped-generation households are referred to the administration or counselors more than other students in the school (Edwards, 2006). Counseling benefits the students and helps them adjust to their new environments (Robinson & Wilkes, 2006).

Grandparents lack knowledge of the newest and best parenting skills to rear their grandchildren. The technology and communication gaps between them and their grandchildren place grandparents at a disadvantage in the rearing process (Bibby, 2009; Williams, 2011). As far as school is concerned, grandparents lack the confidence and knowledge to deal with the school (Glass & Honeycutt, 2002). Without the confidence and knowledge, they are not as aggressive with demanding services that help their grandchildren be successful (Montoro-Rodriquez et al., 2012). Grandparents are not

familiar with the new psychological research (ADHD, PTSD, etc.) of today's generation. They also lack the knowledge to help their grandchildren with today's school and homework (Edwards & Sweeney, 2007; Glass & Honeycutt, 2002; Robinson & Wilkes, 2006; Tveit, 2009).

The literature also revealed the issues that individuals in skipped-generation households are experiencing, which led to the question, How can individuals in skipped-generation households be assisted by school personnel? Answers may be different depending on whether a person lives in an urban, suburban, or rural area. How can educational practitioners identify and provide the resources needed to help individuals in skipped-generation households experience success? Jeynes (2011) stated that expectations and levels of parental engagement across the United States are different. This study can be replicated by educational practitioners in different geographical locations who need to identify and assist individuals in skipped-generation households.

Research Questions

Specific questions that guided this study and that educational practitioners need to explore in-depth to help individuals in skipped-generation households to be successful were as follows:

RQ1. What types of challenges are grandparents and grandchildren experiencing in local skipped-generation households and who can assist them with finding solutions to their issues?

RQ2. How can grandparents help their grandchildren experience success in the school environment?

RQ3. How can school personnel provide a grandparent friendly environment and

work together with grandparents to improve the chance of success for all individuals in the skipped-generation households?

Theoretical Framework

This study investigated the needs of custodial grandparents in helping grandchildren experience school success. To create positive and enriching home and school environments, Epstein's theory on parent involvement can benefit grandparents' daily lives. Epstein (n.d.) of Johns Hopkins University defined the six types of parent involvement that give parents a guideline to follow to increase involvement in the educational experience of their child and encourage family and school partnerships (Michigan Department of Education, 2012). Epstein (2010) outlined her six types of parent involvement as follows:

1. Parents should create a home environment that supports children academically.

2. Parents should create a conversation with school employees to discuss academic progress.

3. Parents should volunteer and become more involved on the school campus.

4. Schools should provide parents with learning activities so they can help students at home.

5. Parents should become more involved in school organizations that make decisions for the school.

6. Schools should partner with community resources and agencies to strengthen the school and families within the school.

Epstein's theory impacted this study by providing grandparents with strategies to increase the chances of their grandchildren being successful in the school environment.

One of the major problems at the local middle school was that grandparents were having issues locating external assistance with medical, mental, and behavioral issues for their grandchildren (guidance counselor, personal conversation, May 29, 2014). The guidance counselor also stated these students were having trouble with eating disorders, acting out, and handling problems with their parents being incarcerated. The guidance counselor also explained that grandparents were unfamiliar with resources for assistance and were consistently asking her for information. Epstein's sixth recommendation was for schools to partner with external agencies and provide grandparents with information so these external agencies could provide assistance to strengthen both the "student and family" (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002, p. 5). Schools should be the first place which grandparents can turn for help. The guidance counselor (personal conversation, May 29, 2014) stressed these grandchildren were also having difficulty meeting their academic goals.

Epstein's (n.d.) six types of parental involvement provide grandparents with strategies to help improve the academic achievement of their grandchildren. Regardless of the type of issues these grandparents have with their grandchildren, schools should be obligated to assist these grandparents. Bower and Griffin (2011) explained that schools focus on parent involvement strategies that promote the success of the school and do not reciprocate with strategies that help families of their students become successful. Epstein's six types of parental involvement promote strategies that help both the school and their families.

Empirical studies of Epstein's theory have been conducted in previous years. Sheldon and Epstein (2002) stated that promoting academic success and volunteering at school were the two most effective types of parental involvement. These two types of involvement (Categories 1 and 3) improved student behavior and reduced disciplinary referrals. In 2004, Sheldon and Epstein conducted another study on chronic absenteeism in 39 urban schools. Sheldon and Epstein (2004) concluded that parent orientation of the attendance policy, student recognition of improvement, and assignment or the student to a community mentor improved the attendance of students. These three activities were classified under Categories 2 (communication) and 6 (working with external resources) of Epstein's six steps of parental involvement. In 2005, Sheldon and Epstein conducted a study in 14 schools on the topic of parental involvement in mathematics. Sheldon and Epstein (2005) stated that Categories 1 (parents creating a positive home environment for academic success), 2 (communication), and 4 (parents assisting with learning activities at home) were effective in the increase of math scores. School leaders in these 14 schools agreed that communication and at-home learning activities were the major reasons for the increase in math scores.

In 1989, Dauber and Epstein conducted a study of eight inner-city schools for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. They concluded that information to help their children experience success was essential for parents (Dauber & Epstein, 1989). Dauber and Epstein also noted that expectations of parental involvement of the child's school dictated the amount of involvement parents provided at home. Using Epstein's six steps to parental involvement, Catsambis (2001) explained that Category 1

(parents creating a positive home environment) increased the chance by 46% that eighth graders would enroll in higher level classes during their high school tenure.

In this study, I planned to examine issues that grandparents were experiencing rearing their grandchildren and introduce ways grandparents helped their grandchildren become academically successful. Epstein's presumptions provided the foundational theory of ways to help children experience academic success. Putting Epstein's theory into practice will provide guidance for grandparents to assist their grandchildren in becoming academically successful.

Implications

The implications of this study were two-fold. First, by identifying issues the grandparents were experiencing, the middle school could develop a notebook of parenting strategies to assist the grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren and provide a contact list of external agencies for support or services. The second implication was to create a dialog between teachers and grandparents that led to the development of innovated strategies and plans to help all grandchildren experience academic success in the school environment.

Summary

Grandparents have been a source of refuge for grandchildren for over a century. When their biological children were faced with challenges in their lives and were unable to raise their children, grandparents made a decision to either rear their grandchildren or allow them to be placed in a foster care setting. Grandparents faced financial, medical, and emotional issues when they chose to rear their grandchildren. In the 1980s, the number of grandparents rearing grandchildren increased dramatically. Grandparents

found themselves rearing their grandchildren with limited financial assistance and lack of power to render health and educational choices for their grandchildren. In 1998, the U.S. Congress passed laws to make it easier for grandparents to rear grandchildren by providing federal government assistance and the authority to make quality of life decisions for their grandchildren. At the beginning of the 21st century, all ethnic groups, especially European Americans, saw an increase in the number of skipped-generation households. With the increased number of skipped-generation households, schools noticed that some of these grandchildren demonstrated both behavioral and emotional issues that prevented them from experiencing academic success in the school environment.

Section 2 describes a qualitative study that examined issues experienced by middle school grandparents who headed a skipped-generation household in the rearing of their grandchildren. Teachers of these students and other school employees (administrators and guidance counselor) were asked about the issues they were having with these students and identified strategies grandparents could incorporate at home to assist with the goal of helping their grandchildren obtain academic success in the school environment.

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Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Students reared by their grandparents in the local community were having academic and behavioral issues in the school environment. This phenomenological study was designed to identify issues grandparents and grandchildren were experiencing and to determine how the school could assist in improving academic achievement while providing assistance with behavioral and curricular problems. Providing grandparents with strategies and resources needed to ensure the academic success of their grandchildren was the focus of this study.

Research Design

I selected a phenomenological approach as the research method for this project study because it "seeks understanding about the essence and the underlying structure of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). Charles (2013) simplified the definition of a phenomenological study as a "study of experiences" (p. 144). Gee, Loewenthal, and Cayne (2013) described a phenomenological study as one looking for the "essential meaning of the phenomenon under study instead of creating abstract theories about the phenomenon through methods of quantification" (p. 52). In addition, Englander (2012) stated that phenomenological research "acknowledges there is a need to understand the phenomenon from the point of view of the lived experience in order to discover the meaning of it" (p. 16). Grandparents and their grandchildren's teachers provided quality information for this study because of their knowledge of the students' past and their daily interactions with the students

Participation

Participation in the study was voluntary. Obtaining permission from the middle school principal and the superintendent of the school district gave me access to student records, the grandparents, teachers, and other school employees. Potential participants were identified based on information provided on each student's enrollment form. Reviewing documents in the students' permanent recorders distinguished which grandparents had legal custody of their grandchildren.

The grandparents, teachers, and other school employees (administrators and guidance counselor) consented to the study by signing a consent form of participation. As the researcher, I contacted the grandparents, teachers, and other school employees by sending a letter/e-mail and by a follow-up phone call explaining the goals and objectives of the study. Before meeting with the grandparents, I mailed an overview of the study and the consent form so they had time to read and consider participating in the study. A $20 gift card to Walmart was provided to all participants for their time and effort.

Participants were aware they could withdraw from the study without repercussions. Confidentiality of the participants was maintained. Grandparents were identified by a letter of the alphabet in all notes and interviews with only me as researcher knowing their identity. Teachers, other school employees, and students were identified by a letter of the alphabet to maintain confidentiality and protect all involved. All research documentation was kept in a locked file cabinet in my home.

Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. Creswell (2009) stated that purposeful sampling allows researchers to choose participants who have first-hand

knowledge of the topic being studied and who can provide information that will enhance the study. Englander (2012) explained that the sample size should be determined to "seek the meaning of the phenomenon, not how many people experienced the phenomenon" (p. 21). Grandparents who had legal custody, had reared their grandchildren since birth, and/or who had raised their grandchildren for more than 3 years were interviewed. The grandparents (*n* = 15) and teachers/other school employees (*n* = 15) were interviewed to provide adequate data for this study to reach redundancy (Merriam, 2009). Table 5 describes the demographics of the grandchildren participating in the study.

Table 5

Demographics of Grandchildren in Study

Demographic	Age range of children		
	13-17	9-12	4-8
Number of grandchildren in age range	12	10	2
Males	4	4	1
Females	8	6	1
Average number of years grandchildren lived with grandparents	9.8	4.9	5.5
Number of grandparents who have custody of their grandchildren	5	5	0
Number of grandparents who have adopted their grandchildren	2	3	0

Data Collection

In a study using a phenomenological approach, Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006) stated that "open-ended interviews are the primary data collection tool" (p. 16). To create an accurate picture of the phenomenon, I examined my possible bias and the impact it may have had on the results of the study (Merriam, 2009). Removing bias from the study made the information more precise. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the grandparents, teachers of the students, and other school employees. Interviews lasted approximately 20 to 45 minutes. A brief script of information was read to all participants to guarantee all received the same material before beginning the interviews. In this semistructured interview, 10 researcher-produced, open-ended questions were asked with the possibility of posing other questions for more in-depth answers (see Appendix A).

Creswell (2009) noted the amount of open-ended questions in a qualitative study should be "few in number" (p. 181). Merriam (2009) concluded that interviews are the best data-gathering method to use in phenomenological studies. Also, Lodico et al. (2006) stated interviews reduce the amount of bias and allow the researcher to have a more concise picture of the participant's perception of the phenomenon.

The interviews were audio recorded on an iPad. Transcription of the interviews took place as soon as possible after the interviews were completed. Grandparents, teachers, and other school employees were provided opportunities to read the transcripts of their interviews to verify accuracy (Creswell, 2009). The participants had a chance to comment on their responses and make corrections as needed (Creswell, 2009).

The Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB) panel approved the collection process for this study. The official IRB number for this project study is 06-09-15-01711045.

Data Analysis

From the phenomenological approach that was used in this study, the data from the grandparents, teachers, and other school employees were analyzed to gain their perspectives of the issues they were experiencing with the grandchildren and the grandchildren's performance in the academic setting of the classroom. Research data were coded by identifying five to eight major themes embedded in the responses to "interpret and explain the data" (Lodico et al., 2010, p. 307). Triangulation of the data sources (archival data, face-to-face interviews, and researcher's reflection journal) assisted in the development of the themes (Creswell, 2009). NVIVO, the text-analysis software program, organized and supported the analysis of the data.

Merriam (2009) stated "a purposeful sampling is to examine a phenomenological study in-depth, not to find a generalization" (p. 244). The reliability of relating the findings of this study to all skipped-generation households in the world would be sporadic. This study investigated the experiences of 15 grandparent households and each situation was different.

The validity and credibility of this study had merit due to triangulation and member checking used in the data analysis portion of the study. Merriam (2009) explained that triangulation increases the internal validity of a study and member checks verify that the data provided during the interview process were accurate and consistent

with their perception of the individuals. In addition, Creswell (2009) listed triangulation and member checking as two strategies that increase the validity of a qualitative study.

As the researcher, I kept a reflective journal of my thoughts and noted additional questions that were asked of the participants. Lodico et al. (2010) stated that phenomenologists begin to "construct the reality of participants" (p. 271) during a time of reflection. This journal allowed me to review notes periodically to generate an in-depth thought process to understand fully the relationships between the members of skipped-generation households.

My role as the researcher allowed me to investigate issues that grandchildren and grandparents were experiencing when the grandparents decided to rear their grandchildren and identified ways that grandparents could improve the lives of their grandchildren. I also explored ways grandparents and schools could collaborate to improve the academic success of the grandchildren. The study's objective was to provide grandparents with strategies to help their grandchildren become academically successful.

Data Quality Assurance

In this study, the interviews were transcribed using the Dragon Naturally Speaking Premium Edition. All transcripts were reviewed by the grandparents and school employees for accuracy, to make revisions, or to add additional information if needed. Next, school report cards and standardized test scores from the 2013-2014 school year were obtained from the guidance secretary. Finally, I kept a reflective journal. During the data analysis, information gathered on each participant was entered into the journal and analyzed to guarantee the accuracy of the data.

Study Limitations

Limitations existed in this study. Each skipped-generation household was developed because of the different life experiences of the people involved in each situation. Findings of this study may be different from other studies because each skipped-generation household is different.

The small sample size was a limitation. With only 15 skipped-generation household representatives and 15 teachers/other school employees interviewed, the amount of data gathered was limited. Results from the data contributed only a small amount of knowledge of how grandparents impacted their grandchildren's academic achievement compared to a larger sample size.

Secondly, specific issues consistent with the geographical location of the study may provide data not compatible with other locations. Poverty, employment opportunities, and community resources may create issues in this community that are not prevalent in other locations throughout the world. Problems and issues urban grandparents experience may be totally different from those of rural grandparents who are rearing their grandchildren.

Finally, the perceptions of the grandparents, teachers, and other school employees of the situations may not be accurate or reflect reality. All the grandparents, teachers, and other school employees may have different views of reality. Hayes (2011) stated that parents, teachers, and other school employees may not have accurate perceptions of each other despite the expectation of both parties being reliable reporters. Dolbin-MacNab (2006) also noted that grandmothers may answer questions based on their "social desirability or distorted perception" (p. 573) of reality. Even with these limitations, this

study produced results upon which to build a comprehensive plan of strategies to increase the academic success of grandchildren reared by their grandparents.

Findings

Data gathered from the interviews of grandparents and school employees are listed below. Specific questions were asked to both groups of participants to understand better their experiences (see Appendix A). The data were analyzed and coded into themes. Themes are listed under the appropriate research question.

Research Question 1

What types of challenges are grandparents and grandchildren experiencing in local skipped-generation households and who can assist them with finding solutions to their issues? To help identify challenges grandparents were encountering in the course of rearing their grandchildren, they were asked if they received any type of financial, medical, or legal assistance in this process and how their grandchildren were doing academically. School employees were asked if they noticed any educational, social, or emotional differences between students reared by their grandparents compared to students reared by their biological parents. Although these questions were specific, grandparents and school employees expanded on their answers, which led to the identification of other challenges.

Generation gap. During the interviews, both grandparents and school employees referred to how children and schools are different from when grandparents attended school or when their biological children attended school. Grandmother E mentioned that grandparents do not understand what goes on with their grandchildren. As well, School Employee K clearly stated that "grandparents don't understand today's society and what

teenagers do. They don't understand cell phones, the internet, and the dangers that these things can cause. These are issues that grandparents need more help with than anything." Grandmothers E and I noted that schools have changed since they attended while School Employee L was informed by a grandparent that this is not "how we learned in school." Schools and their curriculum have transformed over time because of the changes in technology and workforce expectations.

To address most of the themes found in this study, a monthly support group meeting will be held addressing the different themes found in the three research questions. School employees or professionals from external agencies will be invited to lead the discussion on the different topics. Research identified support groups as opportunities for grandparents to discuss their experiences with other skipped-generation grandparents, reduce their feelings of isolation, teach grandparents how to maintain high expectations, and connect them to community resources (Edwards, 2006; Hayes, 2011; Smith & Dannison, 2001). As far as the generation gap, school environments have changed since the last time grandparents had any association with them. With all the changes, grandparents have a learning curve of understanding how schools have changed and what adjustments they need to make to help their grandchildren experience success in the school setting. Findings from this study and the literature were similar. Knowing this, topics discussed in the monthly support group meetings will reduce the lack of knowledge due to the generation gap. Schools were only one of the challenges that grandparents faced while interacting with their biological children.

Biological parents. Biological parents create problems for grandparents. Whatever the reason, grandchildren are upset over the situation of living with their

grandparents. Grandmothers A and I noted their grandchildren had anger problems because their biological parents were not fulfilling their role as the parent. Equally important, School Employees E and O (both guidance counselors) worked with grandchildren who experienced social anxiety. The reason for this social anxiety was because students who were reared by their grandparents wanted to be like other students who were reared by their biological parents. Additionally, Grandparents E and I mentioned that the biological mothers have influence over their grandchildren and it took time after a visit for them to resume life as it was before the visit. Grandparents inherited these issues when the grandchildren moved in and had to identify strategies to reduce the anger and anxiety. They had to be creative because of the way the grandchildren viewed their biological parents.

Biological parents were seen in a positive light by their children and sometimes were safeguarded by their children. Some grandchildren overlooked the reasons why they were living with their grandparents and loved their biological parents unconditionally. Grandmother O would like for grandchildren reared by grandparents to understand "that the problem is not the grandparent, but the mother and father." As well, Grandfather C noted his two grandchildren viewed their biological parents as the "heroes and we are the bad guys." Even though grandparents are placed in the difficult situation of rearing their grandchildren, sometimes grandparents protect their biological child. Grandmother M stated that some grandparents do not ask for assistance because it will penalize their biological child. She continued to explain, "I don't want to make my child mad. I don't want to garnish his wages or place him in jail because he doesn't pay child support. What good is that going to do?"

Collins (2011) stated reasons children live with their grandparents include "substance abuse, divorce, desertion, mental and physical illness, incarceration, AIDS, domestic violence, death of a parent, and child abuse and neglect" (p. 454). Some of these reasons matched reasons why grandchildren in this study lived with their grandparents. Because of this, a counselor and lawyer will address the grandparents and answer questions with which they may have dealing with their biological children and how to protect their grandchildren from being placed back in a difficult situation. Grandparents need to take advantage of this free opportunity and hold their biological children accountable, especially with child support.

Financial needs. In this study, eight of the 15 grandparents were married while seven of the grandparents were single. Most of the grandparents were struggling financially. Grandmother A and Grandfather C were the only ones who mentioned that the financial aspect of rearing their grandchildren was not a consideration in deciding to rear their grandchildren. Grandmother A stated, "I didn't think about my financial situation when I made the decision to get him. I had to go and do what was in my grandchild's best interest." As well, Grandparents C went to the court system and adopted their grandson (not biological) and granddaughter. The grandfather made it clear, "I don't care what we have to do, that is our commitment. We decided long ago that is what we were going to do." Money was never a factor in most of these situations.

Married grandparents struggled with the financial aspect of rearing their grandchildren as well as single grandparents. Grandfather C explained how they lost their free lunch status along with their waiver free school fees waiver because of their income. Once grandparents received custody, their income data were used by the school system to

determine the students' free lunch status. Most of the grandparents in this study were retired and living on a fixed income. The monthly total of their income was not enough to rear their grandchildren. Grandfather C indicated he may have to return to the workforce to be able to provide for all of the extracurricular activities his two grandchildren would like to join. On the contrary, Grandmother E and Grandfather M declared their child's social security benefits were helpful in the rearing of their grandchildren. Meanwhile, Grandmother A stated the financial support received from the grandchild's mother and father was not enough to pay for daycare. She and her husband "paid for most of the stuff out of their pocket." When grandparents applied for custody of their grandchildren, the court system usually required the biological parents to pay child support to the grandparents. Even though most of the grandparents with custody were awarded a monthly stipend by the court system, this did not guarantee payment.

Receiving child support from the biological parents was a "hit or miss" proposition for the grandparents. Grandmother A stated the "dad and mother paid for a while, but the mom quit paying but would give me clothes sometimes." In addition, Grandfather D noted his grandchildren's parents lived across the street and that he and his wife "would squeeze something out of them every now and then." Grandmother O struggled with financial support. She confirmed, "I receive $34.62 every two weeks for both of my granddaughters. It is not enough to purchase school supplies, clothing, and transportation to school and their activities. I'm applying for financial assistance." In contrast, the biological fathers of both children of Grandfather H paid on a regular basis every 2 weeks. The importance of children to their biological parents was evident when it came to providing financial support if they had the means and opportunity.

Members of skipped-generation households usually live in poverty because the grandparents live on a limited income (Day & Bazemore, 2011). Findings in this study resembled the literature found for this study. Consequently, employees from external agencies will be invited to speak to the grandparents about the financial assistance programs available to them at a couple of our support group meetings. Employees from the South Carolina Department of Social Services, the Social Security Administration, and the Upper Savannah Council of Government will be asked to discuss their financial assistance programs and the criteria to receive assistance. Not only are grandparents limited financially, they are also restricted by their physical condition.

Physical limitations. Age, health, and physical ability were challenges some grandparents faced rearing their grandchildren. Grandmother A and Grandfather M noted that age and health limits grandparents. Furthermore, Grandfather M stated that "grandparents don't have the same energy level as 25-year-old parents." Moreover, Grandmother A explained she and her husband did something every weekend with their grandson, such as camping and hiking. She stated, "As you grow older, your health plays a big role in the activities you can do." Two other issues noticed by School Employee O (guidance counselor) were limited mobility and hearing difficulties of grandparents. She acknowledged she had problems contacting grandparents with hearing difficulties and had issues getting certain grandparents to come in for mandatory conferences such as Individual Graduation Plan meetings due to mobility limitations.

Giesel and Rahn (2015) explained how a person's physical abilities decrease as a person becomes older. Findings in this study matched the findings in the literature. Therefore, a doctor and physical trainer will be invited to discuss the importance of

maintaining doctor's visits and exercising on a consistent basis during one of our monthly support group meetings. A decrease in physical competence will prevent grandparents from attaining crucial information for assisting their grandchildren academically.

Grades. Students performed well in classes when their grades were averaged together from different categories (tests, quizzes, homework, participation, projects, extra credit, etc.), but they struggled on standardized tests where content knowledge was the only category measured and scored. Focusing only on the students in this study, I analyzed their four core courses (English, math, social studies, and science) quarterly grades for the 2014-2015 school year. The number of eighth-grade students who scored an 85 or higher was slightly less than 64.0%, while the number of students in sixth grade who scored an 85 or higher was 62.5%, and 42.0% of the students in seventh grade scored an 85 or higher. No students in sixth grade failed a quarterly core class while approximately 5.1% of students in seventh and eighth grade failed courses during the 2014-2015 school year. Table 6 divides the data into three separate categories from quarterly grades during the 2014-2015 school year: percentage of students who scored an 85 or higher, percentage of students who scored a 70 or higher, and the percentage of students who scored a 69 or lower. These scores were based on different categories (tests, quizzes, homework, participation, projects, extra credit, etc.) determined by each teacher. Along with analyzing the quarterly grades of the students, the students' standardized test scores from the middle school's federal accountability test (ACT Aspire) were examined.

Table 6

Quarterly Grades Passing and Failing Percentages, 2014-2015

Grade	85 and higher	70 and higher	69 and lower
6	62.6	100.0	0.0
7	53.1	94.9	5.0
8	63.1	92.1	5.2

English, writing, science, reading, and math were tested on the ACT Aspire state assessment. This test measured college and career readiness. Students who were college and career ready in sixth grade were 60.0% while 32.1% of seventh graders and 52.1% of eighth graders were classified as being on track to enter college or the workforce upon their high school graduation. Students who were not prepared in these areas were over 40.0% in each grade led by 67.8% of the students in eighth grade. Table 7 states the percentage of students in each grade level who were college and career ready and those who were not ready.

Quarterly grades can be inflated by extra credit and additional assignments by the teacher to increase students' overall averages. Based on data from the state's standardized test, over 40% of the students were classified not appropriately progressing in content knowledge to be ready for college or the workforce upon graduation. Although the quarterly grades were high, the standardized test grades provided a more accurate picture of the students' true content knowledge. With the proper academic assistance at home,

these grades can improve. Table 8 compares the percentage of students whose quarterly grades were 70 or above, 69 and below, to the percentage of students identified as NOT ready to attend college or enter the workforce on the 2015 ACT Aspire scores.

Table 7

Percentage of College and Career Ready Students

Grade	Ready	Not ready
6	60.0	40.0
7	32.1	67.8
8	52.1	47.8

      Glass and Honeycutt (2002) noted that grandparents feel incompetent to help their grandchildren with schoolwork. The findings of this study were similar to findings in the literature. Knowing this, a school employee (administrator, guidance counselor, or teacher from a different content area each month) will discuss with the grandparents how schools have changed since they or their biological children last attended school during one monthly support group meeting. Also, content teachers will discuss how their content has changed since the last time grandparents were associated with a school. With this feeling of incompetence, the grandparents need to help their grandchildren find some type of academic assistance.

      Academic assistance. Grandparents' educational level and ability to understand the content played a role in the amount of assistance the grandchildren received at home.

School employee O stated, "The higher the education level of the grandparent, the higher chances of the child being successful in school." Additionally, School Employee M explained what she noticed about her grandparents assisting their grandchildren at home:

Grandparents of the two students I had last year were on two completely (different) spectrums. One of the grandparents was educated. I know for a fact that he helped a lot at home. The other grandchild didn't have much help at home. The grandmother admitted to me that she didn't know how to do a lot of the work.

Table 8

Quarterly Grades Versus College and Career Readiness

Grade	Quarterly grades above 70	Quarterly grades at 69 or below	NOT college and career ready
6	100.0	0.0	40.0
7	94.9	5.0	67.8
8	92.1	5.1	47.8

Note. 2014-2015 quarterly grades and 2015 ACT Aspire.

School Employee E supported grandparents by noting, "It is not because they are not trying to help, grandparents just don't understand what we are asking them to do. It is not because (of) the lack of effort, it is a lack of understanding." As well, School Employee G identified that grandparents lacked the background knowledge of the content.

Grandparents admitted their inability to provide academic assistance. Grandfather D stated, "My wife and I told the teachers that we can't help him with his work." In

addition, Grandmother L explained that when her granddaughter informed her of the new kind of math they were studying in school, she told the granddaughter, "It's been so long since Grandma's been in school."

Math was the subject most grandparents needed help with to assist their grandchildren in the school setting. School Employee G (assistant principal in charge of instruction) rationalized that grandparents can help their grandchildren memorize and find facts in social studies and science. She noted grandparents can help with English/language art, but math is the biggest gap to overcome. She described how math "has changed tremendously over the years." She explained the vocabulary has changed and this has caused grandparents a lot of problems. Meanwhile, School Employee I (math teacher) concurred by stating, "Math is so different now than it used to be when she was in school." As well, Grandmother G and Grandfather H agreed that math was taught much differently than when they attended school. Grandparents are able to view online videos for assistance with math.

In addition to videos, schools can provide after-school tutoring programs or built-in academic mentoring programs to help grandchildren succeed academically. Research showed that grandparents have limited resources and abilities to help their grandchildren achieve at high academic levels (Collins, 2011; Edwards & Sweeney, 2007). Findings from this study were comparable to findings from the literature. Knowing this, when content teachers speak during their assigned support group meeting, they will discuss all the academic tutoring and mentoring programs available for their grandchildren. If academic programs are not available, technology could be very beneficial in the process of assisting their grandchildren academically.

Technology. Grandparents were either on one side of the technology spectrum or the other. School Employee F stated that "most of the grandparents didn't grow up with today's technology." In addition, School Employee B observed, "I'm the same age as most of these grandparents and I at least touch technology. Since we were not raised with technology, we don't understand it." As well, School Employee J reiterated School Employee B's observation that grandparents do not understand how technology works and suggested that grandparents need extra instruction with social media, websites, e-mails, and the school information system. Comprehending technology would make the task of rearing their grandchildren much easier.

School Employees E and G mentioned how Google, Kahn Academy, and YouTube can be beneficial in helping grandchildren and their grandparents with the grandchildren's homework. Some grandparents do not understand that today's students communicate and socialize by means of technology. School Employee O explained how "some grandparents are not familiar with the internet and don't realize what their grandchildren are doing and how they are communicating with their peers and strangers. Grandparents are left out of the loop."

Research claimed that most grandparents were technologically deficient unless their grandchildren taught them how to use technology (Correa et al., 2013; Mori & Harada, 2010). Findings from this study were equivalent to findings from the literature. To this end, it is beneficial for school employees to take time to show grandparents how to use the Internet, access the school website and parent portal, text and send e-mails, access YouTube and Kahn Academy, and introduce them to social media platforms. Technology will allow grandparents to communicate differently and more effectively.

Communication. Grandmothers L, N, and O admitted they had no communication with the school. Meanwhile, Grandfathers D and H and Grandmother F confirmed that they either called or stopped by the school, and Grandmothers E and I stated they only called the school. In addition, School Employees C, E, and I explained how they communicated with grandparents by writing notes on their grandchildren's tests, which were required to be signed and returned to school or in the grandchildren's daily planner. To contact grandparents, School Employee G (assistant principal) identified the telephone all-call system as the best way to notify grandparents of specific messages, events, or school activities. Also, she mentioned grandparents complained about not being notified of school events or activities that were only posted on the school's website. Because some grandparents were unable to access the school's website, they preferred to be informed by a flyer or school newsletter. In contrast, Grandmothers B and J and Grandparents M were fluent with technology and sent e-mails to school employees. They preferred to communicate electronically. Grandparents also differed in how they scheduled face-to-face meetings at school.

Grandparents preferred to talk with all of their grandchildren's teachers when they attended a school conference. School Employee G explained this was not an issue except when the grandchild was only having problems in one teacher's classroom. Talking with all the grandchildren's teachers made the grandparents feel more comfortable and confident that everyone was on the same page. Schools and their employees can help grandparents beyond educating their grandchildren.

Research agreed with the findings of this study. Munoz et al. (2015) stated some older adults prefer to communicate by "using wire telephones, face-to-face meetings, and

written letters" (p. 141) or notes. The technology portion of support group meetings will assist grandparents with understanding how to use text and e-mails to improve communication with school employees. Communicating with school employees may lead to locating external agencies that will assist grandparents with their individual needs.

Locating information. Information that will help grandparents in the rearing process of their grandchildren is difficult to obtain. Grandmother M explained that "nobody is open with information. You have to dig for it." She went on to say she had to search the Internet, booklets, and pamphlets to obtain the information she was trying to gather. It is well known that spouses and children are eligible to receive Social Security benefits after a person's death. Immediately after the death of their biological child, Grandparents E and Grandmother L knew they needed to talk with the Social Security Administration concerning their child's death benefits for additional support for their grandchildren. Equally important, Grandmother A was informed of a governmental agency that provided financial assistance for clothing, shoes, and school supplies from another grandparent, and Grandparent F verified she received information from her grandchild's guidance counselor. The other 12 grandparents were unaware of where to start searching for assistance. Providing information to grandparents was a goal of this study.

Locating information about external agencies to help with the rearing of grandchildren was hard because the "services are so fragmented" (Langosch, 2012, p. 164). Grandparents in this study had a hard time locating assistance just as the grandparents in the literature. Knowing this, inviting employees of local external agencies to a support group meeting to discuss their programs and sharing the criteria to

receive these services will save grandparents time and inform them of the services available to them. With the challenges of the participants in this study already identified, I looked into what grandparents can contribute to help their grandchildren experience success in the school setting.

Research Question 2

How can grandparents help their grandchildren experience success in the school environment? To identify ways grandparents can help their grandchildren experience success, I asked grandparents about the academic performance of their grandchildren; the types of academic assistance being provided to their grandchildren by teachers and the school; the different methods of communication they had with the teachers and the school, including who initiated the contact; and their opinions concerning ways the school can assist them in helping their grandchildren experience success in the school setting. Meanwhile, I asked school employees if they adjusted and/or modified instructional strategies for students reared by their grandparents to identify the different methods of communication with grandparents, including who initiated the contact, to list strategies used to make grandparents feel comfortable and confident to increase the amount of communication with them, comment on the grandparents' ability level to help their grandchildren academically, and share their opinions concerning ways the school can assist grandparents to enhance the school success of their grandchildren. Discussed below are ways grandparents can contribute to their grandchildren's success in the school setting based on the information obtained in these interviews.

Provide a stable environment. School Employee L realized that one of her students had issues with authority. She explained that once the student got settled with his

grandparents, "he was much better." Prior to moving in with his grandmother, this same student attended five different schools in one semester at a neighboring district. The student did not have any grades because his biological parents kept moving their children from school to school. Equally important, School Employee N noticed most of the issues the grandchildren experienced improved while living with the grandparents. Grandparents can help their grandchildren overcome issues by providing a stable and structured environment. To provide a stable environment, grandparents must have custody of their grandchildren to make important decisions.

Custody is better than having guardianship because guardianship does not guarantee the grandchildren will live with their grandparents (Frank Cannon, personal conversation, October 19, 2015). To make decisions for their grandchildren, grandparents must have at least one of the following: custody, guardianship, or power of attorney. Without one of these three legal options, grandparents must rely on their biological children to make the important decisions (educational, medical, and legal). As an illustration, Grandmother A described how she tried to gain access to the school's student information system to keep track of her grandson's grades. The school would not grant access and she had to obtain approval from the superintendent to gain access to the system. As well, both Grandmothers A and K could not get their biological child to stop by the school to sign a paper to grant them access to the school's student information system. Custody is important so grandparents can make decisions for their grandchildren. To gain custody, grandparents must go to court and be granted custody by a judge.

When grandparents decided to gain custody of their grandchildren, they had a process to go through to prepare for their court appearance. For example, Grandmother A described her experience and the process of obtaining custody of her grandson.

> I went to see a lawyer. They wanted to know information with dates, times, and facts. I had to sit down and document everything I saw. My word was just not good enough. I had to start documenting everything so when I went to court, I had all my ducks in a row. I had to sit back, observe, document what I saw and heard. I had to have money for the lawyer. When I spoke with the guardian ad litem, I had to have all my facts together. In court, when parents are asked if they had anything to say, they sat there quietly. You cannot say I think, I presume, or I guess in the court of law. You must know the facts.

To prepare for court, grandparents must document the necessary information for court and be willing to testify against their biological child. After taking the steps to provide a stable environment, grandparents should focus on the emotional well-being of their grandchildren and themselves. Grandchildren struggle with not being able to live with their biological parents.

Smith and Dannison (2001) noted, "All grandparents share a strong desire to provide grandchildren with a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment" (p. 47). To provide a stable environment, grandparents and grandchildren need help financially, emotionally, legally, and academically. Findings from the study were comparable with previous research. With this in mind, employees from external agencies, a lawyer, a counselor, and school employees will present and interact with grandparents to help accomplish the goal of providing resources needed for a stable home environment.

Grandparents need to be willing to accept the advice and help of professionals from external agencies, especially counseling for both their grandchildren and themselves.

Counseling. Grandchildren want to live with their parents. Grandmothers A and I described their grandchildren as being angry with their biological parents because they were unable to live with them. Additionally, School Employee E (guidance counselor) explained that although their grandparents provided a caring and loving environment, these students wanted to be like their peers and live with their biological parents. As well, School Employee K noticed her student was angry at her biological parents "for being in the situation that she was in." Sometimes, grandchildren live with their grandparents for reasons beyond their parents' control.

Unfortunately, sometimes parents die at an early age. In the situation of Grandchildren E and L, their primary caregiver (parent) passed away and their other parent was not able to keep them due to their circumstances. At this time, their grandparents became their primary caregivers. In some cases, grandchildren had issues that were harmful and dangerous to their health.

Great-Grandmother G needed expert help with her granddaughter. Her granddaughter demonstrated eating and cutting disorders. She had been in and out of residential care for years. In this case, both the granddaughter and great-grandmother needed to talk with someone.

Members of skipped-generation households can benefit from counseling. Grandchildren need more than grandparents can provide and grandparents need to improve their skill set to rear their grandchildren. When grandparents agree to rear their grandchildren, they assume the responsibility of helping solve the physical and emotional

problems caused by the separation from their biological parents (Robinson & Wilks, 2006). Findings from this study were similar to findings from the literature. Therefore, a counselor from an external agency will speak at a monthly support group meeting and will have an open invitation to attend other meetings. Grandparents may be hesitant to speak with the counselor at the first meeting, but if the counselor attends multiple meetings, the grandparents may establish a relationship and may over time become more open to speak. Along with counseling, parenting classes will be beneficial for skipped-generation households.

   Parenting classes. School Employees K and O observed that grandparents could benefit from parenting classes. Furthermore, School Employee K explained "grandparents don't understand today's society and what teenagers do. They don't understand cell phones, the internet, and the dangers these things can cause. These are items that these grandparents needed more help with than anything." The views of discipline between grandparents were different. For example, School Employee G noted that most of the time the grandparents of the students she worked with were "more coddling" than biological parents. In addition, School Employees J and O called attention to the fact the grandparents they witnessed were either strong disciplinarians or they overcompensated for the absence of their biological children. However, School Employee J, who was a grandmother rearing two of her grandchildren, believed grandparents should "hold their grandchildren accountable for learning as opposed to overcompensating for the lack of biological parents."

   Parenting classes can help grandparents reduce the stress of rearing their grandchildren and train grandparents how to have sensitive conversations with

grandchildren (Dolbin-MacNab, 2006). Findings in this study resembled the findings in the literature. With this in mind, a counselor or expert in child psychology will be invited to speak at one of the monthly support group meetings to help grandparents understand how to rear children in the 21st century. To enhance their ability to help their grandchildren experience success in the school setting, grandparents need to understand today's schools.

Understanding today's schools. Grandparents need to understand today's schools and how they operate. With this information, grandparents should have an idea of what to expect, and this will allow them to create strategies to help their grandchildren in the school setting. In fact, School Employee J, who is a grandmother rearing two of her grandchildren, explained that grandparents will fare better in educating their grandchildren if they understand what the school is trying to accomplish. For illustration, School Employee B provided a good example of grandparents and today's schools.

When teachers walk into the school building, we don't know it's a building because we consider it our lives. But when we walk into a doctor's office, courthouse, or tax office, we are a little nervous because we are not in our territory. Grandparents feel the same way when they walk into a school building. Grandparents are not only out of their territory, but they are out of their time zone. Grandparents are raising children in a time zone that they are not accustomed to (with) more modern changes. Grandparents have lived past their technological time.

In addition, Grandmother K and School Employee A expanded on how schools are different than when the grandparents or their children attended school. Moreover,

School Employee A cited the age gap and the culture of today's schools as major differences. Schools should invite grandparents into the school on a typical school day and let them observe what is happening. They should observe the technology used and understand the daily routine. Before leaving to go home, teachers, students, and administrators should discuss what the grandparents experienced during the day.

Grandparents are overwhelmed with the new practices and technology of today's schools. Biscoglio and Langer (2011) and Smith and Dannison (2001) explained that grandparents have limited knowledge of what is actually taught in 21st century classrooms. Findings gathered from both the grandparents and school employees was similar to literature found throughout this study. Because of this, school employees will present information about today's schools and how the content has changed since the grandparents were last associated with schools during the monthly support group meetings. Without having a clear understanding of today's schools, grandparents may need the help of people who can assist them with unfamiliar tasks.

Recruit assistance. In the process of deciding whether she could rear her granddaughter, Grandmother B explained how she recruited people to call the Department of Social Service on her behalf concerning receiving financial and medical benefits for her granddaughter. Without these benefits, Grandmother B would have been unable to afford financially to rear her granddaughter. During her interview for this study, Grandmother B had a strong conviction on how grandparents need the support of others to help them. As far as the school setting, grandparents need to recruit people, especially younger family members, to assist when needed. For instance, Grandparents E spoke about how their daughter assisted them with school issues concerning their nephew and

niece. The grandmother explained how she helped "maneuver us through things." School Employee I described how one of the grandparents hired a tutor to assist their grandson in math. Grandparents cannot do this alone.

A common theme throughout literature revolved around some of the grandparents' inability to help their grandchildren with their schoolwork and homework (Edwards & Sweeney, 2007; Glass & Honeycutt, 2002; Robinson & Wilks, 2006; Tveit, 2009). Knowing this, grandparents will be encouraged to recruit other family or community members to help their grandchildren with topics/issues they know nothing about during monthly support group meetings. If grandparents are unable to recruit assistance, they will be encouraged to have Internet access in their homes.

Be connected. School Employees C, G, and J explained how the Internet provided the grandchildren and grandparents with sites to help with academic content (i.e., Kahn Academy, YouTube, and the teachers' websites with videos and/or links). Home access to the Internet is beneficial to the future success of grandchildren.

With the exception of Grandparents M, the rest of the grandparents did not mention technology, the Internet, or using texts or e-mails when they communicated with the school. All 15 school employees mentioned the grandparents' inability to use technology to communicate with the school or its employees. The literature mentioned that both the grandparents' lack of access to technology and how it can assist their grandchildren academically were similar to information gathered in this study. Munoz et al. (2015) stated that "older adults don't have broad access and communication technology" (p. 141). Earlier, Fairlie, Beltran, and Das (2010) explained that home computers make it easier for students to complete assignments and allow students to learn

through research, educational software programs, and websites. Equally important, they discovered there was a "strong relationship between home computers and high school graduates" (p. 784). Grandparents will be encouraged to obtain Internet access and have some type of device in the home so their grandchildren can access the Internet. School initiatives can be just as important to the academic success of the grandchildren as the grandparents' contributions.

Research Question 3

How can school personnel provide grandparent-friendly environments and work together with grandparents to improve the chances of success for all individuals in skipped-generation households? Identifying how schools can be more family friendly to skipped-generation households and to solicit the grandparents' and school employees' opinions concerning what schools can provide grandparents to enhance the school success of the grandchildren was discussed in this study. Listed below are strategies that schools can implement to make them more family friendly and help to enhance the grandchildren's chances of experiencing success in the school setting.

Creating a family friendly environment. There are many different reasons why grandchildren are living with their grandparents. Teachers and the grandchildren need to understand the point that Grandmother O made: "The problem is not the grandparent, but the mother and father." Grandparents are trying to make the best situation out of a difficult one. Grandparents should not be punished or looked at differently than regular biological parents. For instance, Grandmother G stated, "We are treated as just protected old granny type people. We should be treated like a parent coming in. It's not like I'm trying to coddle my grandchildren." Grandparents should feel included in school

activities. School Employee E had a good philosophy to address this issue: "I consider them as stakeholders also. We also invited them to our PTO nights, Open Houses, and made sure they are aware of what is going on." Equally important, School Employee G made them feel welcomed by trying to include them in their grandchildren's life. School should treat grandparents in the same manner as they treat biological parents. Also, School Employees A, C, F, and O encouraged grandparents to call them when they had a question and decided to use communication methods with which grandparents felt comfortable using (telephone, notes, or face-to-face conversations).

Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2010) explained that both parents and grandparents did not feel comfortable visiting a school unless they received an invitation. In addition, Hayes (2011) observed that "school receptivity was the most powerful predictor of school involvement for elementary and secondary schools" (p. 156). With this in mind, school employees were creative in developing special activities for the grandparents during specific school days. These special activities provided learning moments for grandparents to learn about today's school and what a typical school day looked like for their grandchildren. Knowing this, grandparents will be introduced to the same type of experiences during the monthly support group meetings. Not only do grandparents need to feel welcomed and made comfortable coming into the school, they need to be introduced to 21st century technology.

Technology education. School Employee B explained that schools should be proactive concerning teaching grandparents about technology. He emphasized that "schools create scenarios all the time but never follow through with solutions." As well, School Employee F stated that technology training would allow grandparents to "feel

more comfortable and more confident using technology." More important, School Employee H mentioned that grandparents without Internet access miss school events because they cannot access the school's website, and School Employee L described how beneficial it would be if grandparents knew how to access and navigate the school's website and student information system. Furthermore, School Employee E noted that grandparents "struggle with the technology piece of academics."

Kulesza and Smith (2013) stated that baby boomers are frightened by technology while Jobling (2014) observed they are scared of computers. Grandparents did not provide their feelings toward computers in this study, but the school employees agreed most of the grandparents were unable to use a computer and had a lack of understanding of the Internet, social media, texting, and e-mailing. Teaching grandparents simple and brief computer tasks or explaining software, social media platforms, and the dangers of the Internet/social media will be included in each monthly support group meeting. Grandparents will benefit from understanding technology along with sharing experiences with other grandparents who are also rearing their grandchildren.

Support groups. Grandfather C acknowledged that grandparents could learn from each other by shared ideas of how they handled certain situations. In addition, Grandmother O supported the idea of student support groups for the purpose of identifying and interacting with each other and to realize they were not the only ones in school experiencing the same real-life issues. Creating these social groups may develop bonds that lead to these students supporting each other academically. A school's guidance department should include support groups for both the grandchildren and grandparents in their guidance plan.

Schools can provide opportunities for grandparents to discuss their experiences with other skipped-generation grandparents, reduce the feelings of isolation, teach grandparents how to maintain high expectations, and connect them to community resources (Edwards, 2006; Hayes, 2011; Smith & Dannison, 2001). In addition, grandparents can learn other skills needed to help their grandchildren experience success in the school environment. In our same town, there are no support groups for grandparents who are rearing their grandchildren. Beginning next school year, I will conduct a monthly support group at the local high school during the school day to connect and help grandparents become more successful in the rearing process of their grandchildren. Support groups will be as beneficial for the grandchildren as they are for the grandparents. An after-school program would be a good place for a support group to begin.

After-school academic assistance. Grandmother K mentioned that the school district provided an after-school program at one of her grandchildren's previous schools but was cancelled due to the lack of funding. Additionally, Grandmother G and Grandfather C admitted their grandchildren struggled academically. More importantly, Grandmother G and Grandfather H explained that an after-school program would provide immediate tutoring and academic help. The local school district just built a new middle and high school complex leaving the old middle school unoccupied. Grandfather D described how it would have benefited students and the community if the school district had turned the old middle school into a community center to house an after-school program for students. He pointed out there were many retired teachers in the community who would have volunteered in the after-school program to help students succeed.

Roth (2010) noted there are "positive academic, behavioral, and social benefits from participation in after-school programs" (p. 22). Although it is true grandparents feel incompetent to help children with their schoolwork, after-school programs would be beneficial for students being reared by their grandparents. Findings in this study resembled the findings in the literature, that grandparents' struggle to help their grandchildren with schoolwork and after-school programs would help these students succeed academically. During the monthly support group meetings, school employees will share with the grandparents all academic tutoring and mentoring opportunities and encourage the grandparents to make sure their grandchildren attend the individual sessions. Schools could also impact student achievement if teachers are aware of students being reared by their grandparents.

Sharing internal information. In teaching students, teachers seldom learn as much information as they can about each student and his or her home situation. Schools can do a better job of sharing information about students and their situations with school employees whose job directly impacts the student's academic progress. School Employee D explained that "a lot of teachers don't understand these kids and their home situations. Teachers will just write them up because they think students are bad. They write them up without knowing the whole story." More importantly, School Employees B, C, F, G, and O agreed schools should do a better job notifying teachers of students reared by their grandparents. In addition, School Employee G pointed out that adjustments to instructional strategies can be made to overcome the generational gap between students and their grandparents if teachers are notified of their home situations. Schools should have a plan in place for identifying grandchildren who are being reared by their custodial

grandparents and provide teachers with information of how to help these families.

Ekinci (2012) explained, "trust . . . is the most important predictor of information sharing of schools" (p. 2517). School administrators and guidance counselors must trust each other knowing that the shared information will not be circulated among other school members who do not have an educational impact on students whom the information concerns. Most of the school employees interviewed were unaware of the students' living arrangement after I identified the students they taught whose grandparents were participating in the study. Due to the lack of literature concerning sharing of information, the findings in this study were inconclusive. Before sharing the information with teachers, a conversation concerning confidentiality will be discussed at a faculty meeting. Teachers will be informed that they will be given certain information that will allow them to adjust both their teaching strategies and handling of discipline to help students learn. To teach each student effectively, teachers must know each student's situation.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1 was designed to identify challenges that members of skipped-generation households were experiencing and to find external agencies that could assist with problems they were having. Grandparents lacked knowledge based on the generation gap and 21st century technology, which included new means of communication. Their grandchildren and schools were much different than when they raised their own children. Smith and Dannison (2001) noted how schools have transformed over the last two generations. Unless grandparents had reasons to keep up with the changes, they would be unaware of the transformation of the younger generation and today's schools. In today's world, 21st century technology is changing at a rapid

pace. Technology has changed how information is delivered and how people communicate with each other. Munoz et al. (2015) explained how older adults do not understand how to use or have "access to information and communication technology" (p. 141).

Grandparents may be familiar with the new technology platforms but are unaware how to access and use them. Lee, Chen, and Hewitt (2011) explained how computers are a challenge for older adults. Meanwhile, Epstein (2010) stated in her theory of parent involvement that parents should have conversations with school employees to discuss academic progress. Based on findings of this study, grandparents are uncomfortable communicating with and visiting schools. In addition, schools do not treat grandparents the same way they treat the biological parents of other students. Schools must do a better job at creating grandparent friendly schools where grandparents feel welcome and a part of the school community. When this occurs, grandparents will meet two other of Epstein's (2010) theories of parent involvement, volunteering and becoming more involved on the school campus, while participating in a school organization that makes decisions for the school.

Other challenges found in Research Question 1 can be categorized under the heading of academic assistance or locating assistance among external agencies. Grandparents' lack of ability to help their grandchildren with schoolwork was a problem for most grandparents. Due to the different curriculum used in today's school, grandparents are unable to provide assistance. Robinson and Wilkes (2006) discussed that assisting their grandchildren with schoolwork may be impossible due to how schools

have changed since they last attended. One of Epstein's (2010) theories of parent involvement includes providing a home environment that supports children academically.

Meanwhile, the rest of the challenges located in Research Question 1 were related to finding external agencies for assistance. Dealing with their biological children, lack of financial resources to rear their grandchildren and physical limitations are challenges that can be addressed by external agencies. Meeting with a lawyer, receiving child or state financial support, or maintaining regular health appointments are challenges external agencies can assist with at a nominal cost. Smith and Dannison (2001) explained how grandparents need existing community services. These services improve the resources and skills grandparents need to rear their grandchildren in a productive home environment.

Research Question 2 identified ways grandparents can help their grandchildren be successful in the school setting. Grandparents must first establish a stable home environment if grandchildren have a chance to experience success. Without a stable home environment, Epstein's (2010) theory of creating a home environment that supports children academically would not be obtainable. Also, other ways found in Research Question 2 that grandparents can create a home environment to support grandchildren academically is to understand 21st century schools better, recruit assistance from the younger generation, and have their homes connected to the Internet. As mentioned in Research Question 1, most grandparents are unable to assist their grandchildren with their schoolwork. Being connected to the Internet will allow grandchildren to google how to work a problem or watch a person explain the problem on YouTube or Kahn Academy. Fairlie et al. (2010) stated there is "a strong relationship between home computers and

high school graduates" (p. 784). Meanwhile, Thompson (2011) explained how Kahn Academy is an effective ways to learn skills and concepts.

To help both their grandchildren and themselves, grandparents can register for parenting classes and schedule appointments for counseling. Children are different than their biological parents when they were growing up. Parenting classes can enlighten grandparents how to discipline and communicate with their grandchildren. In addition, grandchildren move in with their grandparents with issues they are unable to deal with emotionally. Counseling will benefit both the grandchildren and grandparents. Collins (2011) stated that counseling can "reduce day-to-day anxiety and emotional frustrations" (p. 462). Grandchildren will learn how to handle issues in a controlled manner while grandparents will learn how to conduct sensitive conversations with their grandchildren. Based on Epstein's (2010) theory of parent involvement, grandparents will use external agencies as resources to strengthen their families.

Research Question 3 identified ways schools can help students of skipped-generation households be successful in the school setting. Schools can create a grandparent friendly environment where grandparents feel more welcomed in the school. Smith and Dannison (2001) discussed how schools should "develop strategies toward working more effectively with custodial grandparents" (p. 48). If this occurs, grandparents may volunteer, become more involved on the school campus, and even serve on school committees that make decisions for the school (Epstein, 2010). Schools can also help grandparents of skipped-generation households by providing technology classes along with support groups for grandparents sharing the same experiences. Based on the findings, schools can do a better job sharing information concerning the students

who are reared by their grandparents. This information does not reach the classroom teachers who can adjust their teaching strategies so these students are able to experience success in the school setting. With the findings listed above, this study can be expanded to further help skipped-generation households.

Conclusion

Grandparents rearing their grandchildren have struggled for a long time. They have been trying to do things on their own without reaching out for help. School employees have noticed there were issues with students reared by their grandparents but had not made an effort to reach out to provide assistance. Due to the rising number of grandparents rearing their grandchildren, schools need to do a better job of creating a grandparent-friendly environment to make the school more welcoming for grandparents. Grandparents have just as much to offer as the biological parents of other students.

In addition, school employees need to partner with external agencies so they can make recommendations to grandparents who are struggling to rear their grandchildren. There are agencies whose mission is to assist people who need a helping hand. Because all students must attend school, schools are in the position to connect people and agencies. To begin this process, I developed the Educators Impacting Skipped-Generation Household Seminar to educate school employees of the challenges of skipped-generation households and the external resources available in the community. The seminar is discussed in the next section.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project genre chosen for this study was a 3-day professional development seminar to inform school employees of challenges faced by skipped-generation households along with information about external agencies who can assist grandparents in the rearing process of their grandchildren (see Appendix B). Decisions to allow grandchildren to move in with them are made quickly by grandparents with little time to prepare for the transition. When the decision is made, grandparents do not consider all the financial, legal, and medical obligations that come with their grandchildren. Grandparents are unaware of the programs and organizations whose mission is to help people in need. This seminar was designed to provide school employees with the information grandparents need when their grandchildren move in with them.

Professional development research (Wood & Thompson, 1980), social constructivism (Gergen, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978), and andragogy (Knowles, 1984) were used to design this 3-day seminar. Information shared during the seminar will improve the quality of life for skipped-generation household members and will increase the success of these students in the school setting.

Section 3 begins with the overview, description, goals, and rationale of the project. Next, I discuss a review of the literature focusing on professional development, social constructivism, and andragogy. Equally important, I describe the content and theory of the project along with the project outline. Finally, I summarize the implications of how this project will impact social change and skipped-generation households.

Overview of the Project

During the data analysis phase of this study, three themes emerged that needed to be discussed to increase the success of students from skipped-generation households in the school setting. The themes included (a) disseminating new information and strategies that will help grandparents' rear grandchildren in the 21st century, (b) addressing the challenges of skipped-generation households and aiding in locating assistance, and (c) adjusting school practices to support skipped-generation household members. First, grandparents must be aware of the changes and current strategies used in the rearing of children in today's society. Dysfunctional families, changing expectations and curriculum in today's schools, and technology have created situations where grandparents must address these issues differently than when they raised their own children. Grandparents have not experienced most of these problems first-hand and will have to learn about these issues before they can address them.

Second, grandparents will be faced with many challenges in the rearing of their grandchildren. Financial, legal, and medical issues will become challenges because there are more people involved with less money and the grandparents may not be as healthy as they were in earlier years. Due to living on a fixed income, grandparents may be more open to receiving assistance in many ways so they can provide their grandchildren with material things they need to be successful and/or fit in with other students being raised by their biological parents. They need guidance on locating assistance to improve the quality of life for their families.

Last, schools must treat grandparents the same as biological parents. With the number of skipped-generation households increasing, grandparents rearing grandchildren

are becoming more prominent throughout each school. Schools must create a more welcoming school environment for grandparents and must understand that grandparents are consumed with the rearing of their grandchildren and have little time and resources to find the answers for themselves. I created a 3-day professional development seminar for school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers to equip them with the information they need to assist grandparents who are looking for guidance in the rearing process of their grandchildren.

Description and Goals

With the number of skipped-generation households increasing, it should be the people, churches, and organizations of local communities who reach out and assist these families. The school community is the perfect group to support these families because of their constant interaction with both the grandparents and grandchildren. A professional development seminar is the best method of providing school employees with the knowledge to help these families. Lemmer (2011) explained how professional development assisted the teachers of his study with increasing parent involvement. For professional development to be effective, participants must be engaged and motivated.

Research-based activities are included in this seminar to keep adults engaged and motivated. An icebreaker will be used each day to increase communication and to get to know and respect each other (Alpers, Jarrell, & Wotring, 2015; Holbert, 2015). In addition, a scavenger hunt is scheduled to "facilitate active learning" (Tinnon, p. 104). Equally important, group discussions and role-playing will be included to keep the participants engaged. Knowles (1984) noted people are the most valuable sources of information when they interact with each other. Also, he observed adults are more

motivated to learn when they value information that will make them more effective in their lives. As well, Wood and Thompson (1980) explained how "adults will learn, retain, and use what they perceive is relevant to their personal and professional needs" (p. 164). Furthermore, Reeves (2010) identified that participants are more motivated when the information "directly relates to the needs of teachers and students" (p. 23). Activities in this seminar are implemented because research has shown they increase adult learning.

In the Educators Impacting Skipped-Generation Household seminar, the goals included are (a) to increase school employees' knowledge of challenges faced by skipped-generation households, (b) to provide information and strategies to assist grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren, and (c) to develop ideas for ways to make schools more grandparent-friendly.

The first goal is to share challenges that skipped-generation households are experiencing. During one of the sessions, these challenges will be reinforced by a panel of five grandparents who are rearing their grandchildren and will provide first-hand accounts of their struggles. The second goal will provide information concerning many topics that have changed since the grandparents were in school or when they were raising their own children. Participants from state, local, civic, and ministerial associations who provide assistance for families in need will be part of the panel. Representatives from these organizations will speak during the seminar to inform the school employees of their programs, describe the criteria to receive these services, and provide contact information. Finally, the third goal will require school employees to look at how they treat grandparents when they come into their schools and to develop a plan to make grandparents feel more welcomed. With the amount of information gathered during the 3-

day seminar, school employees will have adequate information to help grandparents provide for their grandchildren's needs and to help their grandchildren be successful in the school setting.

Rationale

For this 3-day event, a seminar was chosen to disseminate the results of this study. Walling (1984) explained that the difference between a seminar and workshop is the end result. He clarified that a workshop produces a product while a seminar is "devoted to study and exchange of ideas on one or more educational topics" (p. 139). Additionally, he noted that seminars enhance "real learning" and "personal growth" (p. 140). To improve the chances of success for students reared by their grandparents; a seminar was best suited to reach this project's goals and objectives.

Professional development opportunities can be used to update school employees on the challenges facing education. Walling (1994) stated that

one crucial challenge that faces education today is the rapid changing characteristics of students who are entering the system. It is essential that educators and others involved in the schooling process not only be cognizant of the shifting demographics but have periodic opportunities to learn how to deal with the impact of these shifts. (p. 203)

Equally important, Schmid, Gillian-Daniel, Kraemer, and Kueppers (2016) discussed how schools need to develop teachers to teach all types of students. To keep school employees informed of the challenges faced by students throughout their school population, Schmid et al. recommended that professional development opportunities be "intentional" (p. 18) for dissemination of information. Schools are responsible for

keeping school employees up-to-date on current challenges. This seminar will inform the school employees of the challenges of skipped-generation households and provide awareness of ways to help both the grandparents and students succeed in the school setting.

Review of the Literature

Research described in this section was gathered from journal articles, empirical studies, and books by many different researchers. I discovered an abundance of research data existed on professional development (De Rijdt, Stes, van der Vleuten, & Dochy, 2013; Lieberman & Miller, 2001; Postholm, 2016; Shanker, 1994) through the research process. However, there was very little on social constructivism (Gergen, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978). I uncovered plenty of research on adult learning (andragogy). Knowles (1984) and Wood and Thompson (1980) had the most in-depth description of andragogy and were well-versed in the subject area. These researchers provided effective research strategies that will allow for the dissemination of information in a professional development environment.

Professional Development

Professional development enables organizations/individuals to disseminate information to people for the purpose of teaching or improving specific skills or tasks. De Rijdt et al. (2013) defined professional development as "activities targeted to strengthen and extend the knowledge, skills and conceptions of the teachers in a way that will lead to changes" (p. 49) in a person's thought process. In addition, Shanker (1990) simplified the definition of professional development as the process of teaching teachers new knowledge. Professional development is a simple way to disseminate new

information. Yet providing new information is only one benefit of professional

development.

Professional development offers participants opportunities to begin to think about

topics differently. Green, Kelso, and Zillioux (2015) explained that professional

development offers people an alternative way to see how the world operates.

Additionally, new knowledge learned in professional development may redefine how

persons view their purpose toward specific topics. Also, Lieberman and Miller (2001)

stated that "professional learning and staff development open windows of understanding

about students, teaching, learning, purpose, community, and oneself" (p. 19). New

knowledge allows people to think differently about topics and to create new thought

processes. With this understanding of what professional development is and how it

impacts participants, I reviewed the different types of professional development.

Models of Professional Development

There are many types of professional development designs in today's society.

Seminars and workshops are defined by their results. Walling (1994) differentiated the

differences between the two by stating that a seminar is "devoted to the study and

exchange of ideas on one or more educational topics" (p. 139) while a workshop is the

"development of a specific educational product" (p. 139). Walling continued to explain

that seminars will produce personal growth, real learning, and substantial outcomes.

Depending on the result facilitators are trying to produce, they can implement one of

these models to reach their ultimate goal effectively. People working together are more

effective than an individual working alone.

Collective or collaboration learning is another type of professional development. This occurs when people work in groups to create new learning. Postholm (2016) explained that collective or collaborative learning is enhanced when people interact with each other to develop a common outcome. DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Karhanek (2004) added that "people who engage in collaborative team learning are able to learn from one another and thus create momentum to fuel continued improvement" (p. 3). It is easy for a comment by one person to spur a more in-depth idea from another member of the group. This process will lead to more logical and effective ideas. With today's technology, people are able to work together online. People are able to have face-to-face conversations on electronic devices or be part of a chat room to engage in professional development. Herlo (2016) stated that a "connectivist approach" (p. 87) allows people to learn from other people using technology. Traditional professional development through seminars, workshops, and conferences is no longer necessary.

Content of the Project

Grandparents frequently do not have the financial, medical, or legal means to perform the duties of being parents. Meanwhile, the generation gap illustrates that the grandparents' lack of knowledge concerning current parenting skills, ability to assist academically, physical fitness, emotional stability to handle the stress, and their lack of knowledge to use current technology prevents them from successfully rearing their grandchildren. But what cannot be measured are their passion, love, and motivation to make sure their grandchildren have everything they need to succeed. Grandparents who decide to rear their grandchildren will many times sacrifice everything to make sure their grandchildren have what they need to be like children raised by their biological parents.

This project includes guest speakers from external agencies, civic organizations, and religious groups whose mission is to assist people. They will discuss their programs and how they can help grandparents fulfill their needs. Additionally, counselors, a lawyer, a doctor, a wellness coordinator, and a parenting skill expert will be speaking. Also, the local police chief and a representative from the Attorney General's Office of Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) will discuss the dangers today's youth face in person and online. Finally, the local school district's technology director will discuss the different platforms students are visiting in today's society, and the assistant superintendent of instruction will stress the importance of skipped-generation households being connected to the Internet and online programs grandparents can use to assist their grandchildren academically.

Saturation

To find all the information available concerning professional development, many synonyms are used to describe professional development. I searched the following synonyms to gather data for this section: professional development, teacher development, teacher colearning, workplace learning, collaborative or collective learning, professional learning communities, continuing learning, lifelong learners, in-service education, staff development, personal development, continuing education, faculty development, educational development, professional learning, and pedagogical training. In addition, searches for seminars, workshops, and conferences were conducted. Also, I researched articles concerning social constructivism and andragogy. While searching these articles, I picked-up the names of well-known researchers in the field of study that led me to other articles and books written by these individuals.

To find the original sources of these researchers' work, I used resources found in the local university's library. Additionally, to find more current books concerning professional development, social constructivism, and andragogy, I rummaged through the assistant superintendent of instruction's book shelves to find more current literature on the topic of professional development. After all of this research, I believe the research for this section is complete.

<div align="center">**Educators Impacting Skipped-Generation Households**</div>

Theory Guiding the Project

Andragogy and social constructivism were the best philosophical theories to support this project. Warford (2011) described andragogy as the practice of teaching adults. Strategies used in the teaching of adults and students are totally different. Andragogy focuses on how adults learn. The other guiding theory best suited for this project is social constructivism. Phillips (1997) explained that social constructivism is "knowledge constructed by groups of people whose work is influenced by social, political, economic motives" (p. 151). In addition, Gergen (1985) stated that social constructivism explains "the process by which people came to describe, explain, and account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (p. 266). This project examined grandparents who were rearing their grandchildren and ways to help them be successful in this process. The social constructivism definition used in this project was knowledge that is created through social interaction through the eyes of all the participants of this seminar. Because all the presenters and participants have had different experiences with skipped-generation households, a clear picture of challenges faced by

these skipped-generation households will be identified and a unique set of solutions to assist these specific households will be developed.

Presenters must prepare differently when making presentations to students and adults. Knowles (1994) stated that students are taught to sit quietly in a class, listen to the lesson, and let the teachers do most of the talking. He emphasized students are dependent on and demand to be taught by teachers. Adults are free-thinkers and would rather create their own understanding of the topic. Wood and Thompson (1980) explained that adults want "to be the origins of their own learning" (p. 376). Also, learning must have personal and professional value to adults.

Knowledge must be of use to adults before they become focused on the learning. Wood and Thompson (1980) observed that adults "will learn, retain, and use what they perceive is relevant to their personal and professional needs" (p. 376). Additionally, Knowles (1984) noticed that adults will not be motivated to learn unless the learning impacts their lives. He continued by describing how internal motivation has a greater impact on adult learning than external motivation. Adults must see a personal value in new knowledge before they will attempt to learn. To create an interest in new information, adults prefer different types of learning strategies.

Adults learn better when the topic has a specific focus and includes social interaction. Knowles (1984) stated that adults learn better when the activity is "life-centered, task-centered, or problem-center" (p. 12). He continued by explaining that adults learn to "perform a task, solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way" (p. 12). Adults learn better when they have a purpose for learning. Also, adults prefer to learn in activities that require social interaction. Wood and Thompson (1980) observed that

informal interaction among participants is effective in a staff development setting. In addition, Herlo (2016) explained that adults learn better by talking while Knowles stated that adults are the "richest resources for one another" (p. 10) because they can learn from experiences of each. Finally, Herlo noted that one of the most effective ways to learn is by talking with each other. Sharing knowledge learned from different life experiences creates a knowledge base that enhances change and a person's effectiveness.

Project Outline

The 3-day seminar was designed to inform school employees of the challenges that skipped-generation households are experiencing, provide them with information on how they can assist both the grandparents and grandchildren, and inform them of the external agencies in the local community that can assist grandparents in the rearing process of their grandchildren. Activities within the seminar will include icebreakers that allow the participants to know and value one another (Holbert, 2015) and become closer as a team (Alpers et al., 2015). In addition, guest speakers, comparing and contrasting the differences between schools the school employees attended and today's schools, role-playing, and the impact technology plays in the lives of students raised by their grandparents will be included.

The morning session of Day 1 will begin with a focus on the challenges of skipped-generation households. During the first session, data gathered from the study along with a panel of grandparents will be presented to provide first-hand experience, and to create a more realistic view. Before lunch, school employees will identify the differences in schools they attended and the schools they work in today.

In the afternoon, a panel of community counselors will lead a session on issues they addressed with grandparents and grandchildren from skipped-generations households. This session will continue the theme throughout the day of challenges and family issues and provide school employees with a complete list of challenges faced, especially by the students sitting in their classrooms or walking the halls of their schools. A lawyer will lead the final session of the day to discuss the different issues that grandparents have with their biological children when dealing with the rearing of their children. The lawyer will also discuss the rights of the biological parents and the required legal protections and agreements they need in place to rear their grandchildren in a stable environment.

Day 2 begins with sessions to equip school employees with advice to help grandparents. It begins with a representative from the local children's center discussing effective parenting strategies used to rear 21st century children. The next session is presented to encourage grandparents to take care of themselves physically so they can take care of their grandchildren. A local doctor and wellness coordinator will speak on the importance of maintaining regular check-ups and exercising.

The afternoon session focuses on peer pressure faced by students both in person and online. The local police chief will discuss what he sees students involved in on the streets and what is happening in other communities across the state and nation. This session will be followed up with the school district's Director of Technology identifying social platforms students are using online. Finally, a representative from the ICAC will speak on the dangers faced by students on the Internet and social media platforms. These

sessions will benefit school employees concerning all students, not only students living in skipped-generation households.

Day 3 begins by focusing on organizations that members of skipped-generation households can contact to receive assistance in rearing their grandchildren. State and local agencies that provide assistance with rent, utilities, food, eye conservation, and other types of assistance will speak to the school employees. This information will allow school employees to refer grandparents to agencies when they are aware of their needs.

To conclude the seminar, the school district's assistant superintendent for instruction will discuss online academic assistance options with school employees. Most of the grandparents from the study are unable to provide academic assistance to their grandchildren. Online academic options will help to fill in the gap. One of the problems with this solution is that most skipped-generation households do not have Internet connectivity in their homes. School employees need to encourage grandparents to have Internet connection or provide alternative options where their grandchildren are able to have access to the Internet on a consistent basis such as the local library. The final session is a reflection time for all of the information covered during the seminar and an opportunity to create a plan to make their schools more grandparent friendly. The rising number of skipped-generation households leads to school employees needing to address these issues to improve the academic achievement for the grandchildren.

Stage 1: Planning

Needs assessment. For this seminar, the needs assessment data was generated through face-to-face interviews with both school employees and grandparents. Data collected from the grandparents included the number of grandchildren living in the

household, types of external assistance being received, academic progress of the grandchildren, regularity of home-school communication, and suggestions of how schools can make the rearing process of their grandchildren less stressful. Also, data collected from school employees included the number of skipped-generation household grandchildren they have taught during their career, differences between these students and students raised by their biological parents, modifications made to curriculum for grandchildren raised by their grandparents, regularity of home-school communication, ability of grandparents to help students academically, and suggestions of ways schools can help reduce the stress on grandparents in the rearing process of their grandchildren. Therefore, topics for this professional development seminar were used as the needs assessment data to develop this seminar.

Philosophical underpinnings and current research. The structure of this seminar was based on the research theories of professional development, andragogy, and social constructivism.

Goals. This project was designed to help students reared by their grandparents experience success in the school setting. To achieve this goal, a professional development opportunity must be conducted to (a) increase school employees' awareness of challenges faced by skipped-generation households, (b) provide information and strategies to assist grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren, and (c) enlighten school employees on ways to make their schools more grandparent friendly.

Targeted population. The target population includes all district personnel who have direct interaction with the community stakeholders on a daily basis. This group

includes principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, school and district secretaries, superintendent, assistant superintendents, and parenting coordinator.

Content. Content for this study was gathered through interviewing both grandparents who were rearing their grandchildren and school employees who interacted on a daily basis with students from skipped-generation households. These semistructure interviews were held in an informal setting and were used as the needs assessment for this seminar.

Process and activities. The seminar was arranged with processes and activities that will engage the participants. Discussions, comparing, and contrasting public schools teachers attended to today's schools and role-playing scenarios are conversations planned to engage teachers. Daloz (1986) stated learning occurs when people interact with each other, not when they are isolated. In addition, guest speakers will lead different portions of the seminar. Eveleth and Baker-Eveleth (2009) noted that guest speakers will enhance learning of topics in a discussion.

Resources. Resources will be discussed in the next section of this chapter under implementation.

Evaluation. The evaluation model is discussed in the Stage 3.

Stage 2: Implementation

Location. Permission has been granted by the superintendent to use the media center in the high school. The area is large enough to seat 20 participants comfortably. Furniture (tables and chairs) will be removed from the area so only five tables and 25 chairs are available. The furniture will be rearranged according to each activity scheduled. A laptop, LCD projector, Promethean Board, and a sound system will be

available during the entire length of the seminar. Doughnuts, orange juice, coffee, soft drinks, snacks, and water will be provided during the conference. Participants will be responsible for their own lunches.

Timetable. The proposed seminar is scheduled for the 3 days prior to the start of the school year. Teachers who are invited to the seminar will swap these 3 days for three nonprofessional development days throughout the school years. The first activity will begin at 8:30 a.m. each morning and participants will be dismissed no later than 3:45 p.m. each afternoon. Participants will be allowed 1 hour for lunch each day and two 15-minute breaks throughout the day.

Resources. Facility resources provided by the school district, financial resources from multiple sources, and human resources throughout the community are important to make this seminar a success.

Research district resources. Due to the increasing number of students reared by their grandparents, the local school district is taking an interest in this seminar. The school district is allowing me to use their high school media center and equipment, which includes 20 Chromebooks, a laptop, Promethean Board, LCD projector, copy machine with unlimited copies, and Internet access. This would not be possible without the local school district's assistance.

Financial resources. Participants will not be charged for the seminar. The local school district is allowing employees to participate in this seminar on a normal workday so they can entice their employees to attend. These daily salaries are being absorbed by the local school district because the benefits of the seminar will allow school employees to impact the academic achievement of students from skipped-generation households and

provide schools with a better insight to the challenges of these families. Financial assistance from external agencies who help skipped-generation households is sometimes available. Civic organizations (Lions Club and United Way), governmental organizations (Upper Savannah Council of Government), and the local ministerial association may have funds to support this type of seminar if approached.

Human resources. Representatives from the local mental health agency, health care system, child abuse counselor, lawyer from Legal Services, children's center, wellness coordinator, police chief, South Carolina Attorney General's Office of ICAC, social services, state government, United Way, Lions Club, Food Bank, and the ministerial association will lead sessions during the seminar. The local school district has volunteered the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and the Director of Technology to lead sessions. Without the assistance of these volunteers, school employees will not be aware of what these agencies, civic organizations, or ministerial association can offer people who are struggling and need assistance.

Existing support. This project is supported by the superintendent and all four principals in the local school district. The principals understand the number of students reared by their grandparents is increasing and they need to find ways to help these students succeed in the school setting. Guidance counselors also support this seminar because they are asked by grandparents regularly where to go for assistance when their grandchildren move in with them. The mayor and police chief of the town understands these grandparents are in need of assistance and support the assistance this seminar is providing for these families. It is a need in the community and this seminar provides information about how and where to access assistance.

Potential barriers. One barrier will be to keep participants engaged for the entire 3 days. The seminar has been developed to alternate activities between lecturing, charting, role-playing, and using Chromebooks. A wide range of activities has been included in the 3-day seminar to maintain interest.

Another barrier is having the administrators at the entire 3-day seminar without being called back to their schools. The seminar will be held when administrators and guidance counselors report to school and they have a list of tasks to accomplish in their home schools. The superintendent may need to require employees to attend all sessions of the seminar. If the employees see the importance of the information and how it will benefit their school and students, they may be interested and desire to attend all of the sessions.

Proposal for implementation and time line. The first week of August, 2017, is the ideal window for the Educators Impacting Skipped-Generation Households seminar. Planning for the seminar should begin the first week in March. Approval from the superintendent to conduct the seminar, access to the targeted employees for 3 days, approval to use the high school media center and utilize district office personal (Director of Technology and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction) to conduct the sessions, and time to provide a 10-minute overview presentation in the principals, guidance counselors, and board of trustees meetings will be requested. The ideal time for these 10-minute meetings will be within the first 2 weeks of May.

After receiving the superintendent's approval, planning the conference will become the focus. First, a letter to all agencies, organizations, and associations will be mailed by the end of April with the seminar's purpose along with an invitation to

participate. A RSVP deadline of May 12 will be included in the letter. By May 15, 2017, a follow-up phone call will be made to each agency, organization, and association if they have returned their RSVP reply. Upon agreeing to participate, a contact person from each agency, organization, and association will be identified for future communications.

Secondly, sponsors will be recruited to make donations for breakfast items, coffee, soft drinks, water, and snacks for the seminar. By mid-June 2017, approximately six volunteers will be recruited to assist refreshing meals, setting up and breaking down the room before and after the seminar, rearranging the room between sessions, and greeting and directing presenters. The week after July 4, 2017, an e-mail along with a seminar agenda will be sent to the contact person of each agency, organization, and association and school employee to remind them of the seminar. Also, the week prior to the seminar, a telephone call will be made to all participants involved to answer any questions. Toward the end of this week, copies will be duplicated of all materials needed during the seminar, all purchased materials will be placed in the high school media center, the technology equipment will be tested, and unnecessary furniture located in the seminar room will be moved into an adjacent classroom. A meeting with the volunteers will be held the day prior to the seminar to conduct a run-through of their jobs and responsibilities during the next 3 days.

Roles and responsibilities. Using the philosophies and principles of social constructivism and andragogy, a copy of the events in the seminar will be sent to all participants. They will be asked to provide input or feedback of the tentative plan. Reading the plan will also inform them what to expect and begin their thought process

toward each session. All other roles and responsibilities are listed in the proposal for implementation section above.

Stage 3: Evaluation

An outcomes-based evaluation will be used to determine the impact of the project's professional development. The goal of the project is to increase the knowledge of the school employees who are attending the professional development seminar and to change their mindset towards both the students and grandparents of skipped-generation households. In addition, the knowledge gained by the participants has the power to change the quality of life of their students and grandparents. Fink (2009) described outcomes as "changes in knowledge, attitudes, behavior, health, or quality of life" (p. 110). The sessions designed for this project focus on increasing knowledge, changing the mindset of school employees, and improving the quality of life for members of skipped-generation households.

Guskey's (2016) five levels of information will be used to measure the effectiveness of the professional development. Level 1 verifies participants' satisfaction with the experience. Participants are asked questions and must rate their experience using a rating scale. Open-ended response questions may also be used to rate the participants' feelings toward the professional development. Level 2 identifies new knowledge learned or changes in participants' mindset toward the topic. Participants must reflect on their experiences and express what they learned and/or how the professional development impacted their way of thinking. Level 3 focuses on the school's beliefs and their policies and procedures concerning the topic discussed. Interviews should be held before and after the seminar to determine the effectiveness of the professional development to reveal

changes that occurred. Level 4 identifies if participants implemented information learned during the seminar. An adequate amount of time must pass after the professional development before I can determine if the participants' mindset and practices have changed. Level 5 focuses on the impact the seminar has on student achievement. To determine the effectiveness on student achievement, the professional learning leader should look at multiple sources of data.

The overall evaluation goal of the project is to determine if the participants gained new knowledge that impacted their mindset towards students and grandparents from skipped-generation households. As the professional learning leader, at the conclusion of the seminar, I will provide a survey using both a Likert scale and opened-ended questions to obtain participants' opinions of the professional development and to identify new information they learned (Level 1 and 2). Four months after the professional development, I will interview the participants to determine how they changed their approach toward students and grandparents from skipped-generation households since participating in the seminar and identify the steps they took to make their school more grandparent friendly (Level 3 and 4). I will also look at multiple sources of data (attendance, grades, discipline, and standardized test scores) of the students raised by their grandparents to determine if there are any differences in this evidence compared to the previous year (Level 5).

The key stakeholders in the project are school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers. School administrators are charged with creating a grandparent friendly school environment where grandparents feel welcome and comfortable asking questions so they can make informed decisions in the educational process of their

grandchildren. To provide relevant advice, guidance counselors must be aware of challenges faced by skipped-generation household members and provide information to these students and families that will improve their quality of life. Finally, teachers must be aware of the challenges these families are experiencing so they can meet the needs of these children and reach them academically. This project should increase the knowledge of school employees to better assist members of skipped-generation households and change their mindset toward these types of families.

<div align="center">**Project Implications**</div>

The professional development provides school employees with information they need to help students of skipped-generation households succeed academically. In addition, some of the sessions will provide information that will improve the quality of life for all members of skipped-generation households. This project impacts many areas of social change.

Receiving services from the community is defined as a type of social change. There are sessions in the professional development that focus on organizations where grandparents can apply for services to assist them financially, provide resources to meet their basic human needs, and offer support services that focus on the well-being of the grandchildren. In addition, a lawyer for the state's legal advocacy group will discuss the importance of custody and how the lack of custody will impact the grandparents' ability to keep and make informed decisions for the grandchildren.

Interaction and relating to other people is another type of social change. There are sessions in the project to equip school employees with information that stresses the importance of counseling for both grandparents and their grandchildren along with

learning updated parenting skills. These new skills provide grandparents with strategies to communicate better with their grandchildren and how to overcome adversity when discipline must be applied.

School employees will discuss the importance of creating a grandparent friendly school environment. Social change includes the ability to communicate with others. If grandparents do not feel welcomed at the school, they will stay away because they feel uncomfortable in that setting. During the professional development, school employees will discuss how to create a welcoming school environment.

When grandchildren move in with their grandparents, one of the first points of contact a grandparent has is with the local school community. Grandparents have to enroll their grandchildren in school and may not know that help is available or where to look for assistance. School employees are a group of people who will have contact with these grandparents and who can assist them. This professional development empowers school employees to make a difference in their community. Information taught during the professional development can impact the quality of life within the community.

Grandparents raising grandchildren is a consistent problem in communities around the world. Informing school employees of the challenges that skipped-generation households are experiencing and understanding where grandparents can obtain assistance will be valuable for all schools and their communities.

Conclusion

Skipped-generation households have many challenges and locating information is time-consuming in today's society. Grandparents' time is very limited due to the commitment it takes to rear their grandchildren, and finding assistance is a slow process.

Information from this study provides immediate information for grandparents in this community and reduces the amount of time it takes to obtain assistance in the rearing of their grandchildren.

Helping grandparents identify the different types of assistance available to help rear their grandchildren and information on gaining custody of their grandchildren will make rearing their grandchildren less stressful and more enjoyable in this long-term process. Grandparents need to have a better understanding of today's generation, work on their parenting skills, physically take care of themselves, participate in group activities with other grandparents to reduce isolation, and share ideas and strategies that have been successful in other skipped-generation households. Schools need to understand the challenges of skipped-generation households, create school-friendly environments, provide parenting and technology classes, and share internal information identifying students who are reared by their grandparents. To assist skipped-generation household students in succeeding in both the home and school environments, grandparents and school employees must work together while improving their skill set to benefit these grandchildren.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

To identify the challenges of skipped-generation households and ways grandparents and schools can help grandchildren of these families experience success in the school setting, a phenomenological approach was selected to "seek understanding about the essence and the underlying structure of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). Interviewing grandparents and school employees who were directly impacted or who had first-hand interaction with members of these households provided me with data to identify services and resources to assist and educate grandparents.

This section focuses on my opinion of the strengths and limitations of this project study and my definition of leadership and change. It also examines what I learned about skipped generation households and how I evaluated myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Finally, this section concludes with how this project study can impact social change and suggests how other researchers can expand on this project study to gain more in-depth data to improve the rearing and educational experiences of grandchildren reared by grandparents in their communities.

Strengths and Limitations

Providing information to school employees through a professional development seminar could be classified as a strength of the project. School employees will be informed of challenges faced by members of skipped-generation households, which will be reinforced by a panel of grandparents who will discuss individual challenges faced by their families. In addition, family, legal, and health issues will be discussed with professionals from external agencies to support the claims of the grandparents who are

rearing their grandchildren. Also, external agencies that provide services to people who need assistance will speak and inform the school employees of services they provide and their contact information. This seminar will provide valuable information so school employees can assist grandparents looking for assistance.

The use of best practices for adult learners is a strength. Social constructivism and andragogy principles will be used to capture the attention of and motivate the school employees to learn the content of the seminar. Gergen (1995) described an aspect of social constructivism as how peoples' interests motivate how they see the world. Meanwhile, Knowles (1984) explained that learners must feel that they are in charge of their own learning instead of being given all the information by a facilitator. The seminar is designed to allow for opportunities for participants to interact with each other and develop their own assumptions concerning skipped-generation household members.

A limitation of this project is the small population of people who can attend this seminar. All school employees would benefit from this seminar. The opportunity to hear from grandparents and professionals from external agencies and to listen to the challenges faced by skipped-generation households daily would impact how they teach students reared in these households.

Another limitation is the fact that the seminar is not open to grandparents. Grandparents whose grandchildren recently moved in with them could benefit from the information provided during the seminar. An alternative option is to provide the seminar to grandparents after offering it to school employees.

Scholarship

The process of developing the literature review and project was overwhelming. Choosing a topic and developing the research questions were the hardest part of the process. After deciding on these components, organizing and documenting my activities and thinking of next steps were challenging for me. These skills became easier to accomplish as I kept working.

The project was much easier to design because the findings from the study were used to create the seminar. Choosing the most important topics to cover from the study and using the best practices to teach adult learners was time-consuming. Designing the project was a detail-orientated task.

During this process, I have improved my writing, organizing, and critical thinking skills. This process requires a person to think constantly about the result, which will lead a researcher to the next step. In the data collection portion of the study, I saw myself improving during each interview. I began asking more in-depth questions and following up answers with more questions. As I developed the project and learned more about adult learners, I moved away from lecture to interactive activities where school employees shared their thoughts with other participants.

Leadership and Change

To create change, a person must believe in a cause and be self-motivated to make a difference. Leadership is the determination to inspire others to impact change toward the leader's beliefs and goals. Leadership is about possessing the knowledge and having the self-motivation to create change. Change will occur with inspirational leadership and logical solutions to issues.

Self-Evaluation

As a Scholar

In my past academic endeavors, I obtained the minimum amount of information needed to complete an assignment for a grade. This project study forced me to dig deeper into a topic than I have ever researched in my academic career. The exhaustive searches for research articles motivated me to inquire further when I found new information that aroused my curiosity. When I understood that government agencies were asking grandparents to rear their grandchildren and not providing an appropriate amount of assistance to accomplish the goal, it motivated me to find external resources to help grandparents in their attempt to rear their grandchildren.

During the interviews with the grandparents, I witnessed first-hand the frustration and emotional strain this process was having on the grandparents. Grandparents were concerned about their inability to assist their grandchildren with their academic work, whether they had enough financial capital to provide their grandchildren with the necessities needed for living expenses, and the guilt they felt for their children's inability to raise their own children. In this study, my scholarship was enhanced by both academic research and personal contact with the real-life experiences of people.

As a Practitioner

Interacting with the participants of this study increased my desire to step out of my comfort zone to help others. Information from this study consumed my thinking when I was working on the project or when I talked with grandparents concerning the challenges they were experiencing. Even when I talked with grandparents who were not

in the study, I was sharing information with them that I obtained from my research and interviews.

School employees in this study were more receptive to the information that I gathered than I anticipated. They were unaware of some of the challenges skipped-generation households were experiencing, but they had a good grasp on several of the challenges. During our discussions, most of the school employees provided great insight regarding challenges they were aware of and how they helped these grandchildren experience success in the school setting. Most of the school employees explained that with the help of the school district, issues grandparents were experiencing could be addressed in a positive manner. As a practitioner, I plan to lead this initiative and create change in this community.

As a Project Developer

This project study improved my organizational skills and encouraged me to think ahead while completing a specific section of the study. Thinking ahead allowed me to reorganize and rewrite the section that I was completing so I could transition to the next section. Unlike other assignments in my past academic endeavors, the study required me to interview a large number of people. Obtaining their contact information, setting up appointments, and providing them with consent forms and copies of their transcribed transcripts from their interviews was time-consuming and forced me to be focused on details and be intentional with my actions during the study. This study was a living document that led me to evaluate my thinking consistently as well as the direction of the study when new evidence was provided or discovered.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

This project study will impact social change by improving the lives, relationships, and communication of members who live in skipped-generation households. This study will provide grandparents, school districts, and school employees with strategies to improve the chances of grandchildren reared by grandparents to experience success in the school setting. If these strategies are implemented, the grandchildren's ability to achieve academic improvement to the point of receiving academic scholarships after graduation will increase. Upon high school graduation, grandchildren from skipped-generation households will have benefitted from both a home and education environment that worked together to produce a well-rounded citizen who could break the cycle of nonresponsible adults not raising their own children. All these grandchildren will not be saved but it will impact a few, which will change society one student at a time.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This study can impact at-risk students who may become high school dropouts and/or a burden on tax-paying society. Whether they receive welfare, disability for self-induced issues, or become a member of the state's prison system, identifying and trying to correct problems while they are in middle school will increase the chances of producing well-rounded and productive citizens. Research and data collected for this study recognize there is a communication gap between grandparents, external agencies, and schools. Grandparents do not know where to start looking for assistance to help rear their grandchildren. Schools are the first place grandparents turn to for help, but schools are often not aware of all the places where grandparents can receive help and have not researched this information because their emphasis is on educating these grandchildren of

skipped-generation households. The department of social services that recruits grandparents to rear their grandchildren provides limited assistance.

This project study can be used as a template that local communities and school districts employ to investigate specific challenges experienced by skipped-generation households. Using the questions of this study, researchers can collect data identifying the challenges and ask both grandparents and school employees their opinions about ideas, recommendations, and strategies they can implement to enhance the chances of grandchildren reared by their grandparents to experience success in the school setting. Each community will face different challenges and will have varying resources to assist grandparents in the rearing process of their grandchildren. Each community needs to create their own plan to meet their specific challenges.

Other future research should focus on communities that are successful at supporting skipped-generation households and identify the best practices of each community to produce a model program that external agencies and schools can emulate. To reduce the cycle of biological parents not raising their own children, this model program needs to be available worldwide because the number of skipped-generation households is increasing around the world.

The local middle school in this study was located in a Title 1 school district. Most of the grandparents in this study lived in a low socio-economic environment with an educational level of a high school diploma or less. Future research should focus on grandparents who are financially sound with a higher educational level to determine if these factors impact the lives of skipped-generation households in a different way.

Schools and school districts need to take a proactive approach to these issues because of the increasing number of skipped-generation households. Although schools think they are only in the education business, they need to provide programs and activities for these families so they can increase the academic achievement of these grandchildren and provide these students with a more stable and productive educational environment. Students cannot make academic gains unless they are receiving positive support and encouragement.

In this study, I looked at the challenges experienced by skipped-generation households and how grandparents and schools can help grandchildren be successful in the school setting. To address the problem differently than the way described in this study, I could have focused on the impact that living in skipped-generation households have on the overall well-being of the children including their mental health, social skills, and overall outlook on life; on students who need academic interventions and/or behavioral counseling; or on grandparents who have isolated themselves from their friends. All of these topics would have discovered many of the same findings identified in this study.

If I listed a few alternative definitions of the local problem, they would include grandparent isolation, neglect by the biological parents, lack of parenting skills, deficiency in technology knowledge and application, lack of awareness of how to participate in sensitive conversations between adults and children. Other problems identified were limited knowledge of how to be an advocate and how to be bold and motivated to learn how 21st century schools operate, along with improvements needed in internal communication within the school. Alternative solutions to the local problem include, but are not limited to, teachers/peers mentoring students of skipped-generation

households, churches and local civic organizations organizing support groups for grandparents rearing their grandchildren, government agencies performing a secondary role of helping skipped-generation households, local service agencies (e.g., United Way) sponsoring external agencies to help grandparents with services and skills needed to rear their grandchildren, or free counseling services to members of skipped-generation households. All of these suggestions would lead to creating better and more productive citizens of the students after high school.

Conclusion

Skipped-generation households encounter many challenges and require assistance to help produce a stable environment for both grandparents and grandchildren. This project study identified many challenges facing these types of households along with suggestions, recommendations, and strategies made by both grandparents and school employees to help grandchildren succeed in the school setting.

As the researcher in this study, I grew as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. Digging deep into the research, interviewing grandparents and school employees, and analyzing the data pushed me out of my comfort zone and taught me skills that increased my confidence to research any topic. Understanding some of the strengths and limitations of this study gave me insight into how other researchers can use or expand on my work to conduct further research to reduce the challenges of skipped-generation households.

In conclusion, grandparents and schools who use some of these recommendations can change the world student-by-student. Creating functional skipped-generation households where grandparents update their parenting, technology, and communication

skills through education is the first step in a more effective household. Counseling will reduce the stress and anxiety of both grandchildren and grandparents while improving their communication. School administrators who understand the challenges of skipped-generation households may provide training/activities for grandparents of skipped-generation households, implement after-school academic programs, and make sure teachers can identify affected students, actions that will increase the success of these students in the school setting. This project study provided information for better homes and school environments for these grandchildren.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

A. Grandparents

1. How many grandchildren are you raising?

2. What were their ages when they moved in with you? What are their ages at the present time?

3. Do you receive any type of financial, medical, or legal assistance in the raising of your grandchildren? If so, how did you locate this assistance?

4. How are your grandchildren doing academically in school?

5. What type of assistance are your grandchildren receiving from their teachers and the school?

6. Describe the current communication between you and the school (administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.)? Who initiates the communication?

7. What assistance can the school provide you and your family in helping your grandchildren become academically successful?

8. Do you have any comments or additional information that would benefit this study?

9. Can you think of any additional questions I can ask to receive a better understanding of needs of grandparents have rearing their grandchildren

B. Teachers' Questions

1. How many grandchildren reared by their grandparents did you teach in the 2014 – 2015 school year?

2. What educational, social, and emotional differences did you notice between students reared by biological parents and students reared by their grandparents?

3. What adjustments and modifications did you make in your instructional strategies to accommodate students reared by their grandparents?

4. Describe the current communication process concerning academic achievement of the grandchildren that existed between you and the grandparents? Who initiates the communication?

5. What did you do to make grandparents feel comfortable and confident to increase communication with you or the school?

6. While the grandchildren were in your class, can you comment on the grandparents' ability level to help their grandchildren succeed in your classroom?

7. What assistance can the school provide to grandparents to enhance the school success of their grandchildren?

8. Do you have any comments or additional information that would benefit this study?

9. Can you think of any additional questions I can ask to receive a better understanding of how school employees can help grandchildren become more successful in school and how can communicate

improve between grandparents and schools?

Appendix B: Educators Impacting Skipped-Generation Households

Day 1

Setting: Large room that seats twenty people comfortably

Equipment: Five tables, twenty chairs, sound system, Internet access, email access, and a LCD projector

Participants' Responsibility: Bring district issued Chromebook

Materials: Eight Super Sticky Self-Stick Wall Pads, eight packs of colored markers

8:00 Sign-in, name-tag distribution and breakfast

8:30 **Introduction of the Goals of the Seminar**

Introduction of Facilitator

Goals of the Seminar:
- To increase school employees' knowledge of challenges faced by skipped-generation households
- To provide information and strategies to assist grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren
- To enlighten school employees on ways to make their schools more grandparent-friendly

Review of the Agenda

Introduction of the Session Norms

8:45 **Icebreaker**

"Writing a Story" Activity

Directions:
1. The participants will be divided into five groups of four.
2. A list of twenty-five song titles from the facilitator's playlist will be provided to each group.
3. Each group must write a story using these song titles.
4. When completed, a participant from each group will read the story aloud to the entire group.
5. Time limited: 45 minutes

9:30   **Activity 1: Challenges of Skipped-Generation Household from Data**
Collected from Study

Facilitator's Note: Stress to the participants that:
- To help these students, you must understand their home environment and the struggles they are experiencing.
- These students may need a positive relationship and additional guidance.
- These students may not have anyone at home to provide academic assistance with homework.

Goals:
- To create an awareness of challenges skipped-generation households face in the local community

Directions:

1. School employees will view quotes through a PowerPoint presentation concerning challenges that skipped-generation households are experiencing.
2. A panel of five grandparents from the study will speak to the participants of the seminar and talk about challenges their households are experiencing.
3. In five groups of four, school employees will discuss what adjustments they can make in their classrooms and support they can provide to both the grandparents and students to help increase success in the school setting.
4. A representative from each group will share their group's recommendations.
5. Time: 90 minutes

11:00 – 11:10 – Break

11:10   Activity 2: Chart Differences of Schools when Grandparents attended and
Today's Schools

Facilitator's Notes: Remind participants that:
- Schools are different today than when the grandparents last attended or sent their own biological children.

Goals:
- To create an awareness of the differences between when the grandparents last attended school and today's schools
- To recognize what is expected of students in today's schools

Directions:

1. School employees will divide into four groups of five.
2. Topics for each group will include, but are not limited to, technology, homework, communication, discipline, transportation, and extra-curricular activities.
3. School employees will chart what schools looked like when they attended compared to what they look like today.
4. Answer the following questions:
   a. Does each grandparent experience the same differences?
   b. What can I implement to help grandparents understand the curriculum and technology used in today's schools and how can I make the transition easier for them?
5. After 20 minutes, spokespersons from each group will discuss the findings and conversations from their group.
6. Each group will post their charts on the wall.
7. Time limit: 50 minutes

12:00 – 1:00 – Lunch

1:00   Activity 3: Family Issues

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- When grandchildren move into the grandparents' home, both the grandparents' and grandchildrens' lives change. The opportunity to talk with someone about the current changes in their lives will be beneficial.
- Some grandparents will not know how to communicate with their grandchildren. Counselors can provide different strategies to make the transition easier.

Goals:
- To create an awareness for the importance of counseling for both grandparents and grandchildren of skipped-generation households
- To provide knowledge to school employees of challenges faced by members of skipped-generation households

Directions:
1. A panel of counselors will discuss issues experienced by members of skipped-generation households. One counselor will be present from each of the following local agencies: Beckman Center of Mental Health, Self Regional Healthcare, and The Child's Place.
2. Topics will include, but are not limited to, anger issues experienced by the

grandchildren when separated from their biological parents; what grandparents should do when the grandchildren return from a visit with their biological parents; adjusting to new living arrangement for both the grandchildren and grandparents; improving communication between grandchildren and grandparents; the importance of grandparents keeping their friends when raising their grandchildren (reducing social isolation); and how to address disorders experienced by the grandchildren.
3. School employees will have time to address questions to the panel.
4. Time limit: 90 minutes

2:30 – 2:45 – Break

2:45 Activity 4: Providing a Stable Environment

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to the participants:
- The biological parents may use the grandchildren to manipulate the grandparents. For example, the biological parents may tell the grandparents if they don't give them so much money, they will take the grandchildren with them. It is important that the grandparents have some type of custody of the grandchildren so this will not occur.

Goals:
- To address the importance of obtaining custody of their grandchildren
- To help school employees understand the rights of the grandparents and biological parents

Directions:
1. A lawyer from South Carolina Legal Services will present information regarding creating a stable home environment.
2. Topics will include, but are not limited to, the importance of having custody of grandchildren; the importance of grandparents having pre-determined boundaries set before grandchildren visit their biological parents; benefits of recruiting younger family members to help guide grandparents through unfamiliar issues; and the importance of grandparents seeking help when they don't understand an issue.
3. School employees will have time to address questions to the lawyer.
4. Time limit: 45 minutes

3:30 Activity 5: Wrap-up activities and Reflection

Goals:
- To reflect on information discussed throughout the day

Directions:
1. Exit Slip
   a. What have you learned today that will help students from skipped-generation households succeed in the school setting?

Day 2

Setting: Large room that seats twenty people comfortably

Equipment: Five tables, twenty chairs, sound system, Internet access, email access, and a LCD projector

Participants' Responsibility: Bring district issued Chromebook

Materials: Eight Super Sticky Self-Stick Wall Pads, eight packs of colored markers

8:00   Breakfast

8:20   Introduction of the Goals of the Seminar

Goals of the Seminar:
- To increase school employees' knowledge of challenges faced by skipped-generation households
- To provide information and strategies to assist grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren
- To enlighten school employees on ways to make their schools more grandparent-friendly

Review of the Agenda

Review of the Session Norms

8:30   Icebreaker – Bingo

Directions:
1. All participants will receive a Bingo card.
2. Each person will introduce themselves to others and find others who match the traits on the card.
3. When they find someone who matches one of the traits, that person will sign the card in the appropriate square.
4. The first person to fill in a row of boxes either across, down, or diagonal yells Bingo! and is the winner.

8:45   Activity 1: Parenting Strategies for 21st Century Children

Facilitator's note: Stress to all participants that:
- Children today have different beliefs and expectations than grandparents or their biological parents had at their age.

- Technology has changed the way children see the world. Grandparents don't have the same vision.

Goals:
- To create an awareness of current parenting strategies
- To provide school employees with updated parenting strategies to recommend to grandparents if asked

Directions:
1. A representative from the Greenwood Community Children's Center will lead a presentation on Parenting Strategies for 21st Century children.
2. Topics will include, but are not limited to, the differences between authoritarian/autocratic, permissive/laissez-faire,and authoritative/democratic parenting styles; finding the balance between too much discipline verses overcompensating for biological parents inabilities; and how to reward and use 21st Century parenting strategies to discipline their grandchildren.
3. Participants are in pairs. Speaker randomly passes out the sheets with scenarios that grandparents are experiencing. Each pair will role play the scenarios and model ways to respond to the situation appropriately. The Greenwood Community Center representative will provide feedback on each role playing activity.
4. Time frame: 90 minutes

10:15 – 10:30 – Break

10:30 Activity 2: Grandparents Staying Healthy

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- Before grandparents can take care of their grandchildren, they must take care of themselves

Goals:
- To understand how maintaining a healthy lifestyle benefits grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren
- To stress how exercising improves the health and stress level of grandparents

Directions:
1. A local general practice doctor and an exercise wellness counselor from the local hospital will provide a presentation concerning the importance of keeping regular doctor's appointments and exercising.

2. Topics include, but are not limited to, reasons to maintain regular doctor's visits, the importance of following medical advice, how exercise impacts keeping the body healthy, and how exercise relieves stress.
3. Participants will be able to ask questions.
4. Time: 60 minutes

11:30 – 12:30 Lunch

12:30   Activity 3: Social Pressure Faced by Students

Facilitator's Note: Stress to participants that:
- Grandparents are not aware of all the negative activities that young people can get into in today's society.
- Grandparents are not aware that today's society doesn't mind hurting or influencing their grandchildren in a negative way.

Goals:
- To introduce social pressures faced by today's students
- To provide strategies on how to address these issues

Directions:
1. The local police chief will discuss social pressures that he has encountered in the local community.
2. Topics include, but are not limited to, drug use, sexual activities and games, peer pressure, gangs, and sexting.
3. School employees will be able to ask questions.
4. Time frame: 30 minutes

1:00   Activity 4: Social Media Platforms Children Use

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to the participants that:
- Grandparents don't understand technology, the Internet, and software programs their grandchildren are exposed to.
- Grandparents don't understand the dangers these platforms can expose the grandchildren to in today's world.

Goals:
- To introduce different social media platforms
- To understand the dangers of these platforms

Directions:
1. The school district's Director of Technology will discuss the different social media platforms students use to communicate. Participants will access these

platforms on a Chromebook.
2. Platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, and Snap Chat.
3. Time limit: 50 minutes

1:50 – 2:05   Break

2:05   Activity 5: Internet Safety

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- Some grandparents are Internet illiterate, are unaware of the dangers, and don't know the proper procedures to keep their grandchildren safe from predators.

Goals:
- To gain a deeper understanding of the dangers of the Internet and social media
- To identify strategies to keep students safe from online predators

Directions:
1. A representative for the South Carolina Attorney General's Office Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) will present a program on the dangers children face while using the Internet and social media platforms.
2. Following the presentation, school employees will be divided into four groups of five and discuss issues that they have witnessed with other students.
3. School employees will be able to ask questions if needed.
4. Time limit: 95 minutes

3:35   Wrap-up Activity and Reflection
1. Exit Slip –
   a. What information can you provide to grandparents to keep their grandchildren safe based on today's topics?

Day 3

Setting: Large room that seats twenty people comfortably

Equipment: Five tables, twenty chairs, sound system, Internet access, email access, and a LCD projector

Participants' Responsibility: Bring a district issued Chromebook

Materials: Eight Super Sticky Self-Stick Wall Pads, eight packs of colored markers, and a fifty foot piece of tape on the floor

8:00 Breakfast

8:20 Introduction of the Goals of the Seminar

Goals of the Seminar:
- To increase school employees' knowledge of challenges faced by skipped-generation households
- To provide information and strategies to assist grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren
- To enlighten school employees on ways to make their schools more grandparent-friendly

Review of the Agenda

Review of the Session Norms

8:35 Icebreaker – Switch Side If
1. All participants decide which side of the tape to stand on.
2. The facilitator will ask a question to the entire group. If a participant agrees with the question, they will step over and stand on the other side of the tape.
3. After a couple of questions, participants will begin to tell others more about themselves.

8:50 Activity 1: Locating Information

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- When grandchildren move in with grandparents, the process happens quickly. There is no time to gather the information needed to make an informed decision. Grandparents feel obligated to take care of their grandchildren and will not think about all the financial, medical, and legal ramifications needed to rear their grandchildren.

- Grandparents may need encouragement to ask for help because they are proud people and don't want to ask for assistance.

Goals:
- To inform school employees of programs and services provided by state agencies

Directions:
1. Presentation from a representative from the South Carolina Department of Social Services (30 minutes).
    a. Discuss services provided by the Department of Social Services.
    b. Discuss eligibility requirements and how to apply for these services.
2. Presentation from a representative from the Social Security Administration (30 minutes).
    a. Discuss services provided by the Social Security Administration.
    b. Discuss eligibility requirements and how to apply for these services.
3. Presentation from a representative from the Upper Savannah Council of Government (30 minutes).
    a. Discuss services provided for grandparents raising their grandchildren.
    b. Discuss eligibility requirements and how to apply for these services.
4. Participants will be allowed to ask questions.
5. Time limit: 90 minutes

10:25 Activity 2: External Resources to Help Skipped-Generation Households

Facilitator's Notes: Remind participants that:
- There are local non-profit agencies or organizations that assist people in need.
- Some of these agencies provide services other than financial assistance. Members of these organizations receive gratification just knowing they can help someone.

Goals:
- To connect school employees with external agencies that can help skipped-generation households
- To gain a better understanding of these external agencies and to identify the assistance each organization offers

Directions:
1. A panel of representatives and beneficiaries of the following organizations: United Way (agencies receiving funds from them), Lions Club (financial

assistance for eye exams and glasses), Food Bank (food), and Ministerial Association (financial assistance for rent and utilities) will discuss their purpose and services they provide to the community.

2. Each representative will discuss how they provide assistance followed by a testimony from a beneficiary of their organization.
3. All participants will be able to ask questions of each panel member.
4. Time limit – 45 minutes

11:05 – 11:20 – Break

11:20   Activity 3: Visit Helpful Grandparent Rearing Grandchildren Websites

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- Many online websites are available to grandparents to provide information or allow grandparents to share personal experiences. Articles may include how grandparents handled certain situations.

Goals:
- To create an awareness of where to locate resources to help in the rearing and educating process of students from skipped-generation households

Directions:
1. All participants will be provided a Chromebook.
2. School employees will scan the following websites designed to help grandparents in the rearing of their grandchildren. Scavenger Hunt questions will be available to make this activity more interesting.
   a. Grandparents.com
   b. Grandfamilies.org
   c. Grandparentsasparents.org
   d. Raisingyourgrandchildren.com
   e. Newgrandparentrights.com
   f. www.scdhec.gov/library/ml-017048.pdf
3. Time Limit: 40 minutes

12:00 – 1:00   Lunch

1:00   Activity 4: Importance of Internet Connected Households

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- Most grandparents are unable to provide academic assistance to their grandchildren. There are websites grandparents can visit to find the

academic assistance they need to help their grandchildren succeed in the school setting.

Goals:
- To create an awareness of the impact that technology has on academic achievement
- To discover online resources which can assist students academically

Directions:
1. The school district's Assistant Superintendent of Instruction will discuss the importance of the Internet in the education process. She will stress that all homes should be connected to the Internet.
2. Resources mentioned, but are not limited to, Kahn Academy; YouTube; Apex Learning; Odyessaware; and Google.
3. School employees will view these sites to gain a better understanding of the content offered to students.
4. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions.
5. Time limit: 75 minutes

2:15 – 2:30   Break

2:30   Activity 5: Creating Grandparent-Friendly Environments

Facilitator's Notes: Stress to participants that:
- Just as educators are uncomfortable walking into a doctor's office, funeral home, or courthouse, this is the same feeling that grandparents have when they walk into a school building. Educators must find ways to make grandparents visits to school more welcoming and comfortable.

Goals:
- To define a grandparent-friendly school environment

Directions:
1. School employees will review comments from the study concerning how grandparents feel about visiting the school or contacting school employees.
2. In five groups of four, school employees will discuss and chart their opinions of what a friendly and inviting school environment looks like.
3. After 15 minutes, a spokesperson from each group will share their findings.
4. The facilitator will provide an overview of the differences after each group has presented their opinions.
5. Time limit: 30 minutes

3:30   Evaluation of 3 Day Seminar

Appendix C: Letters of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

May 6, 2015

Dear Rex Ward,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *An Investigation of the Needs of Custodial Grandparents in Helping their Grandchildren Experience School Success* with ████████████████. I understand that a field test to validate the clarity of the interview questions will be conducted prior to the research study. As part of this study, I authorize you to have contact information for all grandparents who raise their grandchildren, access to the grandchildren's middle school quarterly grades and standardized test results, collect data from grandparents and school employees, distribute findings for revisions or approval, and dissemination results of the study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing contact information for all grandparents who raise their grandchildren, access to the grandchildren's middle school quarterly grades, and their standardized test results, and providing a private room within the school for school employee interviews outside of instructional time. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.
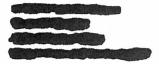
I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission of the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

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May 6, 2015

Dear Rex Ward,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *An Investigation of the Needs of Custodial Grandparents in Helping their Grandchildren Experience School Success* with the ▬▬▬▬▬. As part of this study, I authorize you to have access to a private room in the town's visitors' center to conduct grandparent interviews. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: access to a private room in the town's visitors' center to conduct grandparent interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission of the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

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Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

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May 5, 2015

Dear Rex Ward,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *An Investigation of the Needs of Custodial Grandparents in Helping their Grandchildren Experience School Success* with ████████████████████. I understand that a field test to validate the clarity of the interview questions will be conducted prior to the research study. As part of this study, I authorize you to have contact information for all grandparents who raise their grandchildren, access to the grandchildren's middle school quarterly grades and standardized test results, collect data from grandparents and school employees, distribute findings for revisions or approval, and dissemination results of the study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing contact information for all grandparents who raise their grandchildren, access to the grandchildren's middle school quarterly grades, and standardized test results, and providing a private room within the school for school employee interviews outside of instructional time. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission of the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

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