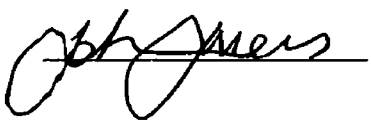
I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of MA by Research is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. Signed:

 (Candidate) ID No.: 55103279 Date:

A phenomenological re-interpretation of Horner's fear of success in terms of social class.

By

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ABSTRACT

The current study developed the concept of fear of success that was originally examined by Martina Horner (1970; 1972). In her studies Horner (1970; 1972) revealed stereotypes and biases that were discouraging women from pursuing careers in non-traditional fields. The key dimension in Horner's (1970; 1972) studies was gender. The key dimension in the current study was social class.
It was hypothesized that individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds fear that, for them, success will lead to alienation from their community, and the loss of identity and loss of overall sense of belonging within their culture.

The majority of the previous studies were based in the US and examined fear of success using objectivist conceptions of success and quantitative methodologies. The current study employed two-phase qualitative interviewing as the primary source of data collection in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the constructions and experiences of the participants in relation to success. Several themes emerged from the interviews. The findings suggest that the majority of participants believed that they would have to make vast life changes, in order to facilitate their views of desired success. The participants' fear was rooted in what they perceived as the 'consequences of successes. These participants occupied a 'trade-off mindset', for these young people, success meant leaving their family, friends, community and culture behind.

The majority of participants highly valued the community that they came from and the relationships that they have within it. Participants felt cared for, "that there was always someone to go to", "that people looked out for each other". The thought of losing this 'connection' and sense of belonging was expressed with noticeable anxiety. However, there was a lot of ambivalence surrounding these relationships. On the one hand, participants valued their relations and cited them as a contributing factor to their past successes. Nevertheless, when asked about their experience of not succeeding participants said that they could not tell anyone. This silence was accompanied by feelings of guilt and perceived shame.
Implications of these findings for access strategies to third level are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

The current study will explore and develop the concept of fear of success that was originally examined by Martina Horner (1970; 1972). In her studies Horner (1970; 1972) specifically examined stereotypes and biases that were discouraging women from pursuing careers in non-traditional fields such as medicine and engineering. The key dimension in Horner's (1970; 1972) studies was gender. Other dimensions explored by Horner (1970; 1972) and subsequent studies include: age, academic performance, estimates of future academic success, independence from others, peer and parental relations, expectation, academic motivation and the importance of academic achievement. All of the studies, to date, have focused on the middle classes within the educational system with an emphasis on psychological factors. Furthermore, the majority of studies that have been carried out took place in the United States.

The current study will re-examine the fear of success among working class people from Dublin's north inner-city from a socio-cultural perspective. The key dimension in the current study is social class. This is a term used to categorize individuals in a stratified social system. Social class characteristics are often related to (but may not be limited to) child-rearing practices, beliefs, values, economic status, prestige and influence, and general life chances (Higher Education, 2003, p1).

While examining this specific social class in Dublin's north inner-city there are a number of other factors that must be considered in order to understand the culture under scrutiny. Other factors of specific importance include social class

values and socio-economic status and their relationship to education. The losses as well as the gains involved in educational success and upward mobility for working-class youth will be explored.

It is accepted that fear of success is a phenomenon that may be present in people of all social classes. The current study will argue that fear of success is particularly evident in some Dublin north inner-city young people. It is further argued that these youths fear success, as it requires that they move beyond their family and their peers into unknown territory. It is difficult to exist in two parallel but distinct cultures, one known and another unknown. The path to success for a young working class individual is a lonely isolated one - one that places high demands on the individual's capacity to change and adapt. This study will examine whether the price of success for many working class people is too high.

The current research will explore the challenges faced by young people in Dublin's north inner-city in order to achieve academic success. It is envisaged that what has been constructed as 'success' by the individual is an intensely emotional process. This is a demanding and exacting process for an individual, both psychologically and socially. It is hypothesised that individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds fear that success will lead to: alienation from their community, loss of identity and/or connections to that community and the loss of their overall sense of belonging among their peers, friends and family.

Contextualising success

What is success? And how is it perceived? Success is a multi-faceted concept that may be perceived in several ways: financial success, academic success, emotional success, or life success in respect of, parental skills, interpersonal skills and inter-relational skills; or in cultural terms of intelligence, beauty, criminal activity, sports ability.

The literature on the fear of success does not clearly examine the subjective nature of success. Instead it alludes to a mainstream understanding of success that is better matched with middle class values, i.e. professional job, good standard of education, marriage, children etc (Kohn 1970). By contrast, a working class perspective of success appears to be far more subjective in nature. Success has many degrees of complexity and may be derived from various identities, roles, belongings and/or material objects (Anderson 1999).

A constructivist perspective recognises that 'success' is a concept that is constructed by the individual as well as by society. Constructivism refers to an 'epistemological perspective that highlights human beings' active construction of meaning and patterns of self organisation' (Lyddon, 1992: Mahoney 1989: Niemyer 1993: Niemyer& Mahoney 1995). Construct theory argues that 'success' is essentially a role that can become a central part of an individual's 'core-self' or self. Thus, according to constructivist perspectives, as the individual begins to focus on the successful event and the behaviour to operate in a 'successful' context, they often explicitly or implicitly elaborate this role (Burrell & Jaffe, 1999).

Several authors have examined issues relating to specific behaviours from a social constructivist perspective (Epstein, 1996; Gergen & Gergen 1996; Herwig-Lempp. 1996; Szasz, 1985). Moreover, a constructivist's perspective holds that individuals use or avoid certain behaviours primarily as a function of personal and social meaning, i.e. to 'convey acceptance or rejection of certain social identities' (Burell & Jaffe, 1999). Anderson (1999) carried out extensive ethnographic research on inner-city youths and their experiences of living and growing up in Philadelphia. He explored issues regarding identity specific to social class, exploring issues most prevalent in inner city life such as identity, violence, crime, drugs, teenage pregnancy and low employment.

For Anderson (1999) a participant's success is entirely subjective. The individual's identity is immersed in these concepts: teen pregnancy, drug-dealing, beauty, material objects and interdependence upon the community. Success beyond these margins becomes unknown territory, for the mainstream belongs to another culture - one that is predominately middle class and traditionally uninviting. Consequently, it is understandable that the notion of crossing over to the unknown and facing isolation and rejection may inspire fear, as suggested by Balkin & Donaruma (1978). Thus, the negative consequences that may result from being successful override any action or behaviour to achieve success.

There is a paucity of studies of fear of success in working class youth. Consequently this study will rely heavily on the work of Horner (1970; 1972) who examines fear of success. It will also rely on Kohn (1970) for issues relating to social

class and conformity and Bourdieu (1990), Lynch (1999) and Lucey et al., (2003) who examine the struggles of social mobility and successes of working class youth.

These issues encompass (i) social class, (ii) socio-economic status and its relationship to education and (iii) cultural customs/identity/constraints, particular to a community. Without an examination of these issues that are vital to the culture under scrutiny, a cross cultural examination of the concept of fear of success and its psychological relevance to Dublin inner-city youth would not be possible.

What will my research offer?

The research will attempt to go beyond the cultural bounds set by Horner (1970; 1972) and will try to test its cultural applicability outside of middle class students in the United States. It is envisaged that the current study will inform educators - both in the mainstream and also in the informal educational sector such as, for example, Youth Services and Vocational Training courses. By understanding fear of success and how to identify it, educators will be able to respond to it. This will enable students and clients to become aware of the fear of success and take steps to overcome it. Following this understanding, educators may view various learning styles differently and modify programmes accordingly.

The thesis statement can be summarised as follows:

Ho: The research will examine whether individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds fear that success leads to: (a) alienation from their community;(b) a loss of identity and/or connections to that community and (c) the loss of their overall sense of belonging within their culture - that is, peers, friends and family.

CHAPTER 1

FEAR OF SUCCESS

The literature that is examined in the present study is broken into four chapters. This chapter has one main aim. It sets out to examine the literature relating to fear of success, in order to illustrate how the concept of fear of success has been narrowly applied in the past. The chapter begins with an overview of Horner's (1970, 1972) work. The chapter then systematically examines other theorists who have re-examined the fear of success.

An overview of Horner's work on 'fear of success'

The concept of fear of success was first examined by Martina Horner (1970; 1972) almost forty years ago, when she looked at the stereotypes and biases which discouraged both men and women from pursuing careers in non-traditional fields. In her study, Horner (1970; 1972) specifically examined stereotypes and biases that were discouraging women from pursuing a career in medicine, a traditionally male-oriented field. At the time of Horner's study, less than ten per cent of doctors were female. Furthermore, the number of women accepted into medical school was limited to ten/fifteen percent (Eagle, 2003). In her study Horner, (1970) asked college students to respond to the following scenario:

At first time finals, Anne (John) finds herself (himself) at the top of her (his) medical school class.

Female participants were asked to respond to Anne's scenario while the male participants were asked to respond to John's scenario. Horner (1970; 1972) found that male students described John as a 'hard working and dedicated' person who will 'be successful' as a doctor:

John is a conscientious young man who worked hard. He is pleased with himself. John has always wanted to go into medicine and he is very dedicated. His hard work has paid off. John continues working hard and eventually graduates at the top of his class (Horner, 1970, p.64).

Horner (1970; 1972) found that female participants responded negatively to Anne's success in medical school. There were fears that Anne would endure negative social consequences, being socially rejected or being deemed unsuitable for dating and/or marriage:

Anne doesn't want to rank number one in her class. She feels she shouldn't rank so high because of social reasons. She drops down to ninth in her class and then marries the boy who graduates number one (Horner, 1970, p.64).

Anne has a boyfriend, Carl, in the same class. They are quite serious. Anne met Carl at college and they started dating in the sophomore year of undergraduate school. Anne is rather upset and so is Carl. She wants him to be higher scholastically than she is. Anne will deliberately lower her academic standing the next term, while trying to help Carl. His grades come up and Anne soon drops out of medical school. They marry and he goes on in school while she raises their family (Horner, 1970, p.60).

Moreover, there were female participants in Horner's study who could not even consider the probability that Anne was attending medical school. They assumed Anne was a nursing student:

Anne was talking to her counsellor. The counsellor says she will make a fine nurse. She will continue her med school courses. She will study hard and find she can and will become a good nurse (Horner, 1970, p 62).

Horner (1970; 1972) concluded that women have 'a motive to avoid success or a 'fear of success'. Namely, they fear negative consequences for their succeeding in traditionally male domains. Such fears are based on societal expectations. Horner (1970; 1972) identified fear of success as a psychological barrier to women's participation and advancement in the workforce and in society at large (Horner, 1970, 1972). Horner's findings were considered as a psychological explanation for women's failure to achieve success at the same level as men in society (Eagle, 2003).

An overview of fear of success and subsequent theorists

Fear of success is a complex concept. For that reason, a number of theorists from varying disciplines have either directly or indirectly attempted to interpret it (Horner, 1970, 1972; Horner & Flemming 1977; Zuckerman & Wheeler, 1975; Canavan-Gumpert, et al, 1978; Itzkowitz & Petrie 1982; Orlofsky, 1978; Piedmont, 1988; Canavan, 1989; Fleming & Horner 1992; Campbell & Fleming, 2000; Eagle, 2003). These disciplines include: Psychology, Sociology, Psychoanalysis and Anthropology. However, these authors have narrowly limited their study of the concept to a single viewpoint, interpreting it inside the bounds of a single discipline, without ever exploring an interdisciplinary approach. The current study will explore the concept of fear of success in a Dublin north inner-city context, from a social psychology perspective, while also drawing on educational, ethnographical and sociological theory.

Fear of success has long been identified as an inhibitor of achievement behaviour (Horner,1970, 1972, 1974; Horner & Fleming, 1977; Fleming 1978; Canavan 1989). The theory of the fear of success enjoyed its peak in the early-mid

1970s (Horner, 1970 1972, 1974; Zuckerman & Wheeler 1975; Canavan-Gumpert, et al, 1978; Orlofsky, 1978). Following this it has consistently been revived every decade since (Itzkowitz & Petrie 1982; Piedmont, 1988; Canavan, 1989; Fleming, 1978; Campbell & Fleming 2000).

Fear of success refers to feelings of anxiety which arise as an individual approaches the accomplishment of important, self-defined goals, the attainment of which is both deeply desired and resisted by the individual (Canavan, 1989). 'Success fearers' move towards their goals, but as they draw close, anxiety increases and they respond by implementing a variety of anxiety reducing, but self-defeating mechanisms (Canavan-Gumpert,et al 1978). The 'success fearer' maintains the largely unconscious belief that success will result in negative consequences. The negative consequences that are expected are related, in a large part, to significant or important others (Campbell & Fleming, 2000, p.2).

While certain theorists offer an explanation for fear of success solely within the bounds of the individual (Horner, 1972, 1974; Canavan, 1989; Fleming, 1978; Horner & Fleming (1977), others have sought to explain this seemingly irrational reaction of some individuals to the attainment of their goals.

Other studies attribute the fear of success to inconsistencies or negativity in parenting or interpersonal dynamics (Condry & Dyer, 1976; Canavan-Gumpert, et al, 1978). Some of these include: oedipal feelings of competition, hostility, and jealousy (Freud, 1915; Krueger, 1990; Miller, 1994; Moulton, 1985); competitive parental reactions to a child's quest for individuality (Baker, 1979; Balkin, 1986;: Lent, Brown

& Larkin, 1986; Miller, 1994); and sibling rivalry (Ovesy, 1962). Some existentially oriented theorists suggest that success neuroses may arise when an impending success threatens the individual's sense of self in some way and in doing so generates disintegration anxieties (Becker, 1973; Lacocque, 1986).

Other investigators point to: cultural stereotypes of appropriate achievement striving for men and women (Pfost & Fiore, 1990); the disapproval of specific and important others in the individual's daily life in response to his or her achievement efforts (Balkin, 1987); and cultural ambivalence and pressure regarding success (Horney, 1937). Others concluded that fear of success is an interpersonal rather than an intrapersonal barrier (Bremer & Wittig, 1980; Cherry & Deaux, 1978; Janda, O'Grady & Capps, 1978; Monahan, Kuhn & Shaver, 1978). In doing so, however, they have narrowed the scope of the issue to an 'either /or' explanation.

Fear of success and gender

Several studies have indicated that fear of success is a gender-related construct, which appears to be stronger in females. (1968; 1970; 1972) postulated that the motive for fear of success is a 'typical and stable quality among women'. This, perhaps, sweeping universal claim required further empirical analysis. Horner (1970; 1972) made the first attempt to study the fear of success concept empirically and she found that not only did women in US culture, at that time, fear success more, but they also experienced more performance decrements in competitive situations, especially when competing with men. Moreover, Horner (1970; 1972) also found that higher levels of fear of success in females conflicts with motivation and performance under competitive conditions. When individuals who fear success were placed in a situation

that involved competition with others, the fear far outweighed the rewards of success. Horner (1970; 1972) concluded that under such conditions women were more likely to withdraw. In a later study, Zuckerman & Wheeler (1975) found that the fear of success occurred in situations where success was achieved by females. This fear supposedly promoted 'masculine' behaviour from women but also undermined the ability to achieve.

Later in the United States, Pappo (1983) maintained that the motive to fear success was apparent in both males and females. They argued that 'success fearing' individuals respond to success cues by engaging in behaviour designed to decrease the threatening situation. For example, at the time a 'success fearing' individual receives a personal compliment, for example, a high grade at college or significant positive feedback, he or she then begins to employ behaviour to minimize the 'danger' of becoming successful. The individual, according to Pappo (1983), will act in a negative way so as to convince others that this compliment was unwarranted. Behaviours include putting off studying for a test until the evening before or possibly not studying at all. The final result of the strategy is a lower grade and success is effectively sabotaged.

Piedmont (1988), also in the US, argued that sex-role expectancies gained during pre-adolescence determine gender identity and cultural norms which may dictate appropriate behaviours for each gender. Piedmont (1988) held that since competition and success are often classified as 'masculine' characteristics, women are typically expected to avoid conflict and associate success with negative consequences such as social isolation and loss of femininity.

A study in the US found that men react even more negatively than women to a female who succeeds in a male-dominated field (Monahan, Kuhn & Shaver, 1978). By contrast, but also in the US, Pyke & Kahill (1985), investigating the relationship between gender and fear of success in physicians, found that males scored higher than their female equivalents on fear of success. In an earlier study, Kearney (1984), examined the correlation between fear of success and gender among college students in the US. The study employed the 'fear of success' instrument developed by Good and Good (1973). Kearney (1984) found that no sex differences existed among 'success fearing' individuals. Results further indicated that both male and female success fearers seemed to self-sabotage, so as to prevent interpersonal relationships suffering and also to avoid any anxiety ascribed to success.

Similarly, Forbes & King (1983) investigated the relationship between gender and fear of success among college students in US. Both the Good & Good 'fear of success' scale (FOS) and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) were administered to each of the participants. Participants were assigned classification, based on the BSRI scores. The results indicated no significant differences between gender and the fear of success. The authors concluded: 'the fear of success is a general personality trait occurring in both men and women' (p.737). Although gender has been a major factor within previous literature, the current study will place more significance on social class, as it is believed that this will have more implications for the concept of fear of success in current Irish cultural contexts.

Fear of success, educational levels and a 'significant other'

Balkin (1986) investigated fear of success in male American college students and its relationship to their family and friends. Each participant was required to provide information pertaining to siblings, close friends' attendance in college, and the extent of their parents' education. There were two comparison groups: Group A reported college attendance by one or more parents and Group B reported non-attendance by both parents. It could be assumed that Group B, the non-college attendees, were working class. However, the authors did not make this explicit.

The results of this study showed that 45% of participants in Group B indicated fear of success while 17% of all participants indicated a fear of success. The results which were found to be statistically significant were consistent with a previous study by Balkin & Donaruma, (1978) which indicated that: 'men whose friends were not going to college showed more fear of success than men whose friends were going to college' (p. 1073). The results of the study indicated that the fear of success in male college students involves fear of disapproval, rejection and alienation from friends and family. Thus, this indicates that the successful behaviour that is disapproved of by significant others produces anxiety in an individual who fears success. The current study will seek to further develop the findings of Balkin & Donaruma, (1978) and Balkin (1986) which indicated that fear of success involves fear of disapproval, rejection and alienation from family and peers.

Subsequently Balkin (1987) investigated the association between significant others (defined as close friends, siblings and parents) and fear of success among American female first year college students. Participants were required to provide

information regarding the college attendance of these significant others. Horner's 'Thematic Appreciation Test' (the use of verbal cues given to each participant) method was used so as to provide consistency with previous studies.

The results of this study reported a statistically significant difference between fear of success in female students whose friends did not attend college and female college students whose friends were attending college. It further indicated that fear of success among female students appeared to involve fear of rejection and disapproval from friends. Thus, in the attempt to avoid rejection and disapproval female success fearers may sabotage their academic success. In addition, Balkin (1987) found that success appears to be far less important than the perceived negative consequences of success. No later studies examined this issue. The current study will seek to further develop the findings of Balkin (1987) in order to examine if female students, whose friends are not or have not attended college, fear success more than female college students, whose friends have attended or are attending college in a Dublin inner-city context.

Fear of success (FOS) & developmental factors.

Orpen (1989) conducted a study in Australia investigating middle-class college students' fear of success, and its relationship to subjective fears, cognitive beliefs, attitudes and actual performance outcomes. The study employed the fear of academic success consequences scale and nine hypothesised predictors of fear of academic success, which included: age, sex, school, academic performance, estimates of future academic success, independence from others, academic motivation and the importance of doing well academically. The results of this found no significant

relationship between fear of success and academic situation/performance. Results also indicated no statistical significance for gender and fear of success. However, age was statistically significant in this study. More specifically, older students were found to display less fear of academic success than younger students. Orpen's (1989) study demonstrated how crucial developmental factors are when investigating the concept of fear of success.

In another cultural context, Ishiyama & Charassol (1985) investigated the correlation between fear of success, age and gender in high school children in British Columbia. Participants' ages ranged from early to mid adolescence. Each participant was administered a fear of success consequence scale. Ishiyama & Charassol (1985) found that the early adolescent group (grades 7-9) displayed a greater level of fear of success than the mid- adolescent group (grades 7-12). Furthermore, the females of both age groups displayed a higher level of fear of academic success than males in either group. Overall, females were found to have a higher level of fear of success in eighth grade, which was followed by a rapid decline. However, success exhibited by males showed more of a gradual decline between the seventh and twelfth grade. Girls in the early adolescent group were seen to have significantly higher levels of fear of success than their male counterparts. In addition Ishiyama & Charassol (1985) found that males were not as fearful of the social consequences that are ascribed to academic success as their female equivalents. Moreover, elevated levels of fear of success among Canadian students appear to exist at an early age and later decline with age. Working with a sample of adolescents in the US, Weiner (1980) found that adolescents avoid success for a number of reasons. However the most significant finding in this study was the fear of jeopardising peer relationships.

O'Connell & Perez (1982) in the US conducted a study on fear of success attributes and the effect of gender-appropriate or gender-inappropriate cues on incidence of fear of success. The study examined students from high school and college. Each participant was surveyed in relation to their attributions for success and failure. The Thematic Appreciation Test (TAT) and two verbal cues were given to each participant. Results indicated that college students exhibit more fear of success than high school students. Further analysis found that male 'success fearing' college students were more likely to attribute internal factors to success and external factors to failure. However, female 'success fearing' college students were more inclined to attribute success and failure to external factors.

Freilino & Hummel (1985) studied the relationship between fear of success and age in college students in the US. The authors reported a statistically significant correlation between age and the fear of success. The findings indicated that participants who were under the age of twenty three demonstrated higher levels of fear of success than the participants who were over the age of thirty. These findings are consistent with a range of international studies, which found that early adolescents displayed a greater level of fear of success than those in their mid to late adulthoods (Horner (1970; 1972) Weiner 1980; Ishiyama & Charassol 1985; Freilino & Hummel 1985). A developmental focus will be incorporated into the present study in a somewhat limited fashion, through adopting a range of ages in the chosen sample of 18-26 years. A longitudinal study would be optimal for more detailed analysis of developmental factors. However, this is outside the scope of the current study.

Summary

The literature relating to fear of success can be divided into three categories, namely: gaps in the research, cultural issues, and methodologies.

Gaps in the Research

Having revisited the literature including the electronic Journals in St Patrick's College/DCU namely: EBSCO, ERIC, PSYCHINFO, JSTOR, PSYCARTICLE, ETC. No other studies relating to fear of success were found.

There are very few studies on working-class youth in Ireland. An examination of the literature indicates that this scarcity is also an issue in the international literature. Social class as a focus of study regarding fear of success has not been explicitly investigated. Within the research that is available, gender was exclusively chosen as the key variable. Age has been considered, but only as a dependent variable. Furthermore, the majority of studies conducted only looked at third-level education settings. Irish research has not looked at fear of success. The current study offers advances over previous studies by looking at social class as a key dimension.

Cultural Issues

Studies predominantly looked at students in the US, some studies have taken place outside the US, however, these are limited. The focus on third-level education indicates an extreme bias towards middle-class students. The context within which this cohort was studied was limited to an educational setting many in the United States. The aim of the current study is to go beyond these cultural bounds and examine the concept of fear of success in a Dublin north inner-city working class context.

Horner's fear of success concept can be seen as being very much the product of assumptions still prevailing in psychology generally in the 1970s and 1980s, which sought general universal laws and tended to minimise contextual factors in the name of 'science'. While strong critique of universal laws in terms of gender differences was evident in psychology in work such as Gilligan's (1982) criticisms of Kohlberg's (1973) supposedly universal stages of moral reasoning as excluding female voices, and her subsequent work (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990) criticising Erikson's (1968) universal stages of adolescent development based on assumptions of separation from parents as minimising the experiences of adolescent girls, recognition of the centrality of culture differences and social class issues has taken perhaps even longer in mainstream psychology. Work such as that of Gergen (1992; 1996) and Burman (1994) brought a greater recognition of these cultural and social class contextual factors within psychology, though this focus was largely after Horner's research was at its peak. Psychology arguably generally still needs to give more attention to social class and cultural difference factors.

Methodologies

The majority of the studies used a quantitative methodology. Horner (1970, 1972) used a hypothetical scenario which was semi-structured and allowed for participants' perspective; however, this was limited by the scenario in question. This did not allow for very deep interpretation of the data. Thus participants' perceptions or experience of success were not included. The current study will use qualitative methodologies in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the participants in relation to success.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL CLASS VALUES, SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND HOW THEY RELATE TO EDUCATION

Setting the Context a Profile of Dublin North Inner-city

The following profile of Dublin North inner-city was adapted from the Dublin North inner-city partnership Strategic plan 2001-2006 *Achieving Equality, Overcoming Exclusion.* This six year plan set out a strategy to secure social and economic rights in the inner city. The statistics where possible have been updated using Census Data, Central Statistics Office, 2006. The (2006) Census statistics are the most up-to-date data, currently available.

The inner city contains the largest scale and most acute levels of concentrated poverty and deprivation in Ireland. The intensive economic growth and investment in urban renewal that has occurred in the city centre over the past decade has exacerbated the divisions between wealth and poverty in the inner city. While the local residents and community have derived benefit from this investment in terms of employment and infrastructure, nonetheless there remains a significant challenge to alleviate the most acute poverty and to achieve the levels of social inclusion that a developed European city requires (Dublin North inner-city partnership Strategic plan 2004-2006: p 3).

The population of Dublin North Inner City has increased by 16% between the last census in 2002 and the latest in 2006. The unemployment rate of 20% has risen

from the reported figure of 14% in 2002, and continues to be much higher than the national average of 5 %. Lone parent households account for 12.73% of all households in the area. The scale of heroin abuse remains highest in the State. One fifth of this population is of foreign nationality. One third of the Dublin North Inner City population has a third level education qualification, however, an estimated 7% of Dublin North Inner City Local Authority tenant's progress to third level. The literacy problems of this population are widespread with 63% of second level students behind the national average reading age. Twenty percent of primary school pupils in this area qualify for special needs. There is a major lack of recreational facilities for young people in the area.

Introduction

The reason for the current study is to elucidate the thesis that fear of success is not adequately considered as a factor in the educational under-achievement of some working class youths. Education and related qualifications determine, to a large extent, the life opportunities and success of people. Individuals who leave the formal education system with few or no qualifications are at a disadvantage; their personal and social development is curtailed; and they are at increased risk of poverty and social exclusion (Gorby et al, 2005).

'Educational Disadvantage' refers to a situation whereby individuals in Irish society derive less benefit from the education system than their peers (Kellaghan, 2002). This manifests most notably in poor levels of participation and achievement in the formal education system (Tormey, 2007). Given that education may be the main route to success for young people from Dublin's north inner-city, it is important to consider the educational opportunities afforded to this group of individuals.

An overview of the relationship between educational attainment and socioeconomic status in Ireland

It is evident from the literature that only a minority of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds succeed in reaching third level education in the education system in Ireland (Gorby et al 2007; O'Connell et al 2006; O'Brien, 2005; Combat Poverty Agency, 2003; Clancy, 2001). The ESRI (2007) report of early school leavers indicates that the number of students leaving the education system with no formal qualifications has decreased in recent years. However, working class students still make up the majority of those who leave. These findings highlight the direct relationship between educational advancement and socio-economic status. Working class students are consistently 'under-represented' at third level (Tormey, 2007; O'Brien, 2002). Young people from working class backgrounds tend to leave the education system earlier and with fewer qualifications than their middle class counterparts (Gorby et al, 2005). Even when young people finish school, there is evidence that those with working class backgrounds take fewer honour subjects at Leaving Certificate and, thus, achieve fewer points when compared with their middle class peers (Power & Tormey, 2000; Gorby, 2007).

According to Archer & Weir (2004) the current initiatives set up to tackle educational disadvantage, while in line with European models of good practice, have had minimal impact. The characteristic of Irish responses to 'target' educational disadvantage is, according to Tormey (2007) limited in that it focuses on the individuals or groups who are 'failing within the system rather than focusing on the system itself' (p. 171).

Tormey argues that the Irish education system is not only failing a minority of disadvantaged children and schools with social problems, but also the wider majority of working class children who may be under-achieving. Tormey (2007) argues that as the educational attainment of working class students increases, so too does the attainment level of middle class students. This ensures that regardless of whatever gains young people from working class backgrounds are making, they are being 'outpaced' by their middle class peers. The crux of the problem, he suggests, is that 'educational disadvantage is a function of advantage' (p. 172). This is a facet of the Social Integration Discourse (SID) of Levitas (1998), which suggests that the goal of education is closer integration into the system that perpetuates the inequity.

It has been suggested by many theorists that social class is the focal point of the Irish educational system (Tormey, 2007; O'Brien 2005). Social class moulds values, attitudes, social relations and biases, which determine how knowledge is given and received (hooks, 1994, p.178), see also (Clancy, 1995, 2000, 2001). According to Clancy (1982, 1988, 2000, 2001) middle class children in Ireland are better represented at all levels of the post primary system, particularly at entry to third level, then their working class peers. Lynch (1999), in her study of barriers to third level education, found that low income, working class students were the least represented group at third level education in Ireland. Correspondingly, Breen et al, (1997) found marked differences in educational participation and achievement based on social class. The parallel between social class and educational success is manifested in the continuing disparity between the participation, performance and achievement of working class students and their middle class peers (O'Brien 2002).

Clancy has made a significant contribution to the knowledge base and the development of policy on access to higher education. His longitudinal analyses of data on entry to third level have provided a standard reference over a 20-year period (O'Connell, Clancy, & McCoy 2006; Clancy,2001). These analyses reveal that, while the position of entrants from lower socio-economic backgrounds has improved, as the places in higher education have expanded over this period, the proportion entering from the lower socio-economic groups remains substantially below that of other social groups (Clancy, 2001). In all four surveys, the Higher Professional group (including university lecturers, doctors, dentists, accountants and lawyers) has had the highest participation rate, with an estimate of full participation in 1998 - up from 85% in 1992. It is clear from looking at the participation rates that, while all groups have increased, the lower socio- economic groups have the lowest rates.

Some decades ago, Craft (1984) suggested that due to their 'value orientation' the Irish working classes had lower 'educational and occupational aspirations' than their middle class peers. In a study, using a Dublin suburban sample, Craft (1984) found that the offspring of 'future orientated' parents were more likely to stay in school. Craft (1984) further concluded that the middle classes presume that the future can be fashioned and that they have the ability to take the lead in determining it, while the working classes assume that the future will just happen.

Tormey (2007) suggests that the relationship between social class, origin and educational success is greater in Ireland in than any other European country. Studies also highlight the role of selection mechanisms in perpetuating the hegemony of

middle-class students in third level education to a higher degree in Ireland than elsewhere in Europe (Hannan et al, 1996; Muller et al, 1996).

Social class, values and education

Melvin Kohn (1969, 1970, and 1977) extensively examined values amongst the working and middle classes in the US, employing a longitudinal approach. Kohn (1977) found that members of different social classes develop different conceptions of social reality, different aspirations, hopes and fears, and, thus, a different concept of what is desirable. Kohn (1977) uses the terms parental values to denote: 'values that parents would mostly like to see embodied in their children's behaviour - characteristics they consider most desirable to inculcate in their children' (p. 18). Kohn (1977) fundamentally found that middle class parents value self-direction for their children, while working class parents value conformity.

Moreover, Kohn (1977) found that parents rate their values, not only in terms of intrinsic desirability but also in terms of 'how problematic their realisations are'. Parents are most likely to accord high priority to those values that seem important to their social group, in that failure to achieve them would affect the children's future adversely. The essential difference between the terms for Kohn (1977) is that self-direction focuses on 'internal standards' for behaviour, while conformity focuses on 'externally imposed rules'. According to Kohn (1977) the former is concerned with 'intent', the latter with 'circumstances'. Kohn (1977) asserts that the class difference in parental valuation of self-direction and conformity is potentially important for two reasons. Firstly it offers us insight into child rearing practices among the different

classes and, secondly, it helps us further understand the broader relationship of class to values and orientation.

An overview of Kohn's studies

Kohn's original study, conducted in Washington (Kohn 1956-57), was based on interviews of 339 mothers. This sample was 'broadly representative' of the white middle and working classes. All mothers had a child in fifth grade of the local public or provincial school. In a random sub-sample of 82 families, the father and the fifth grade child were interviewed. A further study, the Turin Study (Kohn & Pearlin, 1962-63), was designed to be directly comparable to the Washington study and was also based on samples considered to be 'broadly representative' of white middle and working classes. However, it was deliberately not representative of the city of Turin. This sample was limited to families with children, although the children were not interviewed. In addition, the sample of fathers was much greater (341) and a larger sample of mothers (520) was also taken.

The national study, conducted in the US (Kohn, 1964) was based on a sample of 3,101 men, chosen to be representative of all men employed in civilian occupations in the United States. However, there are two immediate limitations to this study. Firstly, no women or children were involved in this sample. Secondly, it was thought to be representative of all socio-economic levels, although it did not include 'the lowest, the unemployed' (p. 9). Kohn (1977) concluded that, although differences existed between the studies in the United States and Italy, the relationship between parental values and social class was much the same in both countries. Moreover, implicit in parents' values for their children were their values for themselves. If they

valued conformity they were inclined to view the world and their own capacity in a way that makes conformity seem essential and fitting.

In addition, Kohn (1977) cites several authors who either directly applied or slightly modified his studies in another country (Taiwan, Olsen, 1971; France, Perron, 1971; UK, Platt, no date given; Germany, Hoff & Grueneisen, 1977) and also, independently in the United States (Bertram, 1977; Clausen, 1974; Franklin & Scott, 1970), However, neither Kohn nor Horner (1970, and 1972) related their work to each other. According to Kohn (1977), the findings of all of the above studies support his hypothesis that the higher the social class the more likely parents are to value self-direction for their children (No references are supplied for these studies in Kohn's 1970 bibliography). In addition, they found that the lower the social class the more likely parents were to value conformity to external authority. He found the higher social classes associated a desire for autonomy and high confidence in one's own ability. Autonomy, according to Kohn (1977), is a central value for the higher classes as 'they see themselves as competent members of an essential society' (p. 103).

Working class values and education

Subsequently, several authors have re-examined social class values, however, McElhaney (2001) specifically examined working class parents living in high-risk, low-income neighbourhoods in the US. She notes that this group are often labelled as having approaches to child rearing that are in contrast with traditional, middle-class parenting behaviour.

It is often proposed that working class parents, in high-risk settings, namely low income, disadvantaged neighbourhoods behave in a harsher manner towards their children because they maintain parenting values that emphasise obedience and conformity (Kohn, 1963, 1977, 1979). However, McElhaney (2001) found little evidence actually linking parenting values to corresponding parenting behaviours (see also Luster, Rhoades & Hass, 1989).

A fundamental issue to be considered is the aspirations of parents for their children. According to Kohn's (1977) study, working class parents were considerably less likely to expect (or even want) their children to attend college and obtain the stereotypically middle class jobs that require a college education. Moreover, Kohn (1977) notes that parents who did have expectations for their children to attend college tended to be disproportionately highly educated. A further explanation for this lack of expectation might be found in Bourdieu's (1977) 'Habitus', which suggests that individuals quickly comprehend what conditions make possible for them, and do not to aspire to the unavailable. For Bourdieu 'habitus' constitutes "a set of durable, transposable dispositions which regulate psychological activity" individuals are often unconsciously aware of its influence (1977a, p 72).

Downes & Maunsell (2007), in their study of early school leaving among working class youths in South Dublin inner city, found that approximately 90% of fifth year students aspired to complete second level education. Moreover, in two primary schools there was a 100% response rate from pupils indicating that they wanted to stay on at school until Leaving Certificate. These figures demonstrate an intention of working class children as early as primary level to stay on until Leaving

Certificate, suggesting that it is clearly the norm for working class pupils in Dublin's south inner city to aspire to do their Leaving Certificate. Similar figures were found among working class youth in Dublin 15, (Downes, Maunsell & Ivers, 2006). This study found that 86% of the pupils sampled aspired to stay on until they completed the Leaving Certificate. Working with a similar sample of youth in Ballyfermot, Dublin West, Downes (2004) found that 87% of the pupils sampled aspired to stay on until they completed the Leaving Certificate.

Daly & Leonard (2002) interviewed working class families in urban and rural disadvantaged areas across Ireland. They found that not only did the parents have high hopes and aspirations for their children they also believed that education was their route out of poverty. The aspiration of one parent for her children to complete and succeed in education is illustrated in the following quote:

> *"When my daughter says she hates it here, I say: 'Get your education and your qualifications and get a good job abroad if you can.' The circle has to be broken. I do not want them to put their children through what I'm putting them through. Paul is very bright and intelligent. Will there be a job for him? Will there be a way out of the ghetto? That would worry me with him. He deserves better. I would hope for more support to help children and parents, more prevention work. The families are forgotten. It's always 'Let's blame the parents'."* (p 86)

Daly & Leonard (2002) found that not only did working class parents want their children to stay on in school they also did everything in their power to encourage them to do so. The authors concluded that issues highlighted in the study should not be reduced to a simple inability to cope among the families concerned. Rather, the

families are faced with extreme financial and other deprivations, which place enormous pressures on their management and parenting skills and which expose their children to social exclusion and various at-risk behaviours. This is a subject that is discussed in greater depth in a subsequent chapter.

Barriers to participation for working class students in education

In her work on working class pupils' access and participation at third level education in Ireland, Lynch (1999) declares 'there is nothing 'wrong' with working class attitudes or values. The majority of working class parents value and want education for their children' (p. 58). Instead, she asserts that what alienates the working classes from education is that they lack financial resources 'to make the system work for themselves'. She concludes her point by stating, that while differences in terms of style, taste and milieu between working class children and the education system are important factors in equality, they are not as important as financial barriers.

In their study of working class and middle class girls in British societies, Lucey at el (2003) found that the middle class parents had a wealth of knowledge about higher education as well as the means to provide financial support and stability, whereas the majority of working class parents' experience was characterised by failure. Consequently they felt they were only able to help their children in the primary years, therefore filling the parents full of 'doubt' and 'feelings of inadequacy', 'guilt' 'shame' and 'anger'. The working class girls in this study learned early on that the path to third level education was a lonely one.

Lucey et al (2003) has highlighted how even the most basic of information about the education system is simply not available to many working class children. Moreover, Lucey et al, (2003) note that even the students who were considered to be the 'brightest', who applied themselves and whose parents wanted them to be educationally successful, received very little advice on how to progress their education. In addition, Lynch & O'Riordan (1999) found that working class students and their parents felt excluded from the decision making process. Moreover, parents noted the lack of information available to them regarding access to third level education for their children.

More recently, Mulkerrins (2007), within an Irish context, discusses the lack of consultation between schools and working class homes. She found that working class parents did not see themselves as having a part in the school system. Rather, they and, very often, the school viewed them as merely consumers in receipt of a service, which was being provided by the school. Moreover, Mulkerrins (2007) notes that this lack of consultation is not limited to the school and the parents but also includes the Department of Education and Science and the parents. She found that parents were not even consulted when home-school liaison services were being set up. The consequence of this is a service predominantly founded and operating on middle class values.

Similarly, Gilligan (2007) and Lucey et al., (2003) criticise the literature pertaining to working class families, noting the imposition of middle class values on working class families and repeated negative implication of the educational failure of working class children. These authors call for a refutation of such models arguing that

their exploratory power lie in the 'pathologising' of any parental practices not immediately recognisable as middle class. The challenge however is to work towards theorisations which allow and, furthermore, appreciate the significance of family practices in a different and non-pejorative way.

The focus of policies and initiatives to improve working class children's educational performance has been on those 'interior spaces' of family interaction - spaces that Lucey at el (2003) note have been 'inevitably pathologised' when set against the obsessively 'normalised interior family spaces of the middle classes' (p. 287). Moreover, Lucey et al., (2003) argue that all this serves to do is to push responsibility further into the family and away from society, which echoes of Levitas' (1998) 'Moral Underclass Discourse' (MUD).

O'Brien & Flynn (2007) highlight the significance of care in education. The authors call for an understanding and recognition of care and the work it involves and how this recognition is fundamental to tackling the 'reproduction of educational inequality' in Ireland, particularly in a climate where most relations are valued and defined by their economic worth. O'Brien & Flynn (2007) suggest: given the range of resources required to produce educational care, and how these resources are accessed from different societal positioning, it is urgent that the relational work that is produced largely by mothers is valued and recognised (p.83). Moreover, O'Brien & Flynn (2007) propose that the care, which is given mostly by mothers, is shaped by schooling in ways that systematically privilege some and disadvantage others.

Lucey et al., (2003) note the indivisibility of home and school in the success and failure of working class children. While this may also occur in the production of middle class educational success, the authors note, middle classes are cited in an unquestioned sense - one that does not subject them to the kind of 'pathologisations that historically inform regulative and interventionist educational policies' aimed at raising the achievement of working class children (Lucey et al., 2003, p 288. See also Finch, 1984; David, 1993). Lucey et al., (2003) recognise the significance of the family's role in educational success. Middle class children succeed in education to a much greater degree than their working class counterparts. As such, it is perceived that the daily practices of working class families must be lacking that which ensures success in middle class families.

More recently, Derman-Sparks & Fite (2007), commenting on the US education system, note the need for the education system to recognise diversity as a strength, rather than a deficit. 'A child that meets with an unfamiliar school culture and language may experience this as devaluing their home culture and language' (p.51). The problem, according to Derman-Sparks & Fite (2007), is that there is no reflection of a working class culture in the education system. In addition, the authors comment on the system as maintaining the advantage in favour of the dominant class. Tormey (2007) proposes that a 'systemic approach' that addresses the issues which contribute to inequalities - one with more appropriate pedagogic models, and better equality of access - might be better suited. He does assert, however, that attempts to improve the education of working class students have not been misguided, but rather they have been tokenistic.

Socio-economic barriers for the participation of working classes in education

Little consideration has been given to the direct effects of poverty and low incomes on participation and success in education, in the past, despite the suggestion that education is the vehicle of change for young people living in poverty (Tormey, 2007). Both national and international research has identified a correlation between low levels of participation in education and poverty. A strong association between students from low income backgrounds and low educational attainment persists. Tormey (2007) suggests that the effects of poverty on education are direct and immediate.

Downes and Maunsell (2007) conducted a study on early school leaving in Dublin south inner city. They found extremely high levels of variation between schools concerning student hunger, which affected their learning. They found 'exceptionally high levels of responses' in two schools where (33%) of pupils stated that they were either often, very often, or every day too hungry to do their work in school. The authors found that the differences between primary schools in South West Inner City ranged from 6% to 33% of pupils stating 'they were either often, very often, or everyday too hungry to do their work in school'. The authors also suggest that: it is evident that concerns regarding hunger are enduring into secondary school, with a conservative estimate of at least 17% of students in one secondary school stating that they were either often, very often, or every day too hungry to do their work in school (p. 37).

In an earlier study with a similar sample in west Dublin, Downes, Maunsell & Ivers (2006) found that the nutritional requirements of a 'substantial minority' of pupils were not being met. 'Approximately 18% of the 6th class pupils attending school on a given day across the 4 schools stated that they were either often, very often, or every day too hungry to do their work in school' (p. 24). Moreover, the authors assert that food poverty 'is a serious issue in these areas of Dublin 15 (p. 24)'. They cite Friel & Conlon (2004) who note that 'food poverty' can be defined as 'the inability to access a nutritionally adequate diet and the related impacts on health, culture and social participation'. Moreover, Friel & Conlon (2004) suggest that: food insecurity and inadequate diet are central to the experience of poverty. Thus far these issues have been, in the main, ignored by policy makers regarding poverty in Ireland'. Friel & Conlon (2004) maintain that: 'At a policy level, food poverty per se has not received much attention and explicit efforts to alleviate the adverse implications of food poverty are sparse'.

Daly & Leonard (2002) conducted a study, *Against All Odds – Family Life on a Low Income,* in rural and urban Ireland. This study illuminates the impact of poverty on families, their children and their communities. The study was an in-depth examination of 30 families in disadvantaged communities. It highlights how inadequate resources and a lack of basic necessities curtail people's everyday life. The study found that parents expressed a lot of anxiety regarding the well-being of their children and the impact that poverty would have on them: "*The kids learn much too quick. They have to fight for the right to play on the road. They have to be very aggressive just to survive and that's not right. It's a jungle out there*" (p 102). In

addition Daly & Leonard (2002) found that parents were extremely concerned that teenagers were likely to get mixed up with drugs and other crimes:

> "*In this area you can get mixed up with the wrong crowd and then they start behaving like the others. The main problem now I think is drugs... They're very easily influenced into doing the wrong thing and you can't watch them twenty-four hours a day.*"

These fears were echoed by the children themselves:

> "*When I was young I was a bit stupid...I thought that maybe life was nice but now that I am older and I am out in the world I know that that is not right. I have seen some terrible things, people over-dosing, people getting beat up, things being stolen. They do it during the day and you just stand there and watch*" (p. 86).

In 1999, Lynch carried out a study into the barriers facing students from low-income working-class backgrounds in accessing and participating successfully in higher education. The study presents an understanding of disadvantage from the perspective of those directly affected by it. The study included second and third level students from low income working class households, community workers (who were also parents) and teachers. One hundred and twenty two people were interviewed for the study.

Lynch (1999) suggests that there are three key constraints that operate as the principal barriers to equality of access and participation in higher education for low income, working class students. These are: economic constraints, institutional constraints, and socio-cultural constraints. The data from each of the groups suggest that economic constraints were of greater significance than either educational or

socio-cultural constraints (Lynch, 1999, p. 125). Lynch found that poverty affected participants' studies directly, as they were under pressure to contribute to the household budget. Thus, they took on a job, leaving them less time to study. In addition, they lacked the necessary space and facilities required for study, such as computers and reading materials. Moreover, goods and services were a given for their middle class peers, 'enabling them to maintain their relative advantage in an open competitive system'. Lynch (1999) found that, as well as the visible economic effects, there were also more indirect social and psychological effects. Insecure and low incomes left participants feeling inferior and isolated. For Lynch (1999) social class was the barrier to participation rather than gender. Poverty left students feeling isolated. The 'lack of ownership' meant that students felt that they did not belong.

Lynch (1999, p. 98) concluded that the primary barriers facing low income students in accessing and succeeding in higher education were economic. She asserts that the aid given by the government was insufficient and did not cover the costs of higher education. Limited economic resources dictated spending priorities, where day- to-day survival took precedence over higher education. Lynch (1999) noted that education and related costs were viewed by low income families as a 'luxury' - one that came at the cost of other family members. 'The view that money was the bottom line on everything' was common amongst Lynch's (1999) participants (p. 98).

Conclusion

Ireland prides itself on free education for all. Yet, ironically, working class students continue to be under- represented at third level, in a time of a strong economy when we are often reminded of the words of An Taoiseach, Sean Lemass (1964): 'a rising

tide lifts all boats'. Nevertheless, it still remains the case that a working class student who enters and advances in third level education is the exception rather than the rule.

The system criticises the working class family, their values and the interior spaces of interaction for not wanting or valuing education. The literature would greatly benefit from a re-interpretation of Kohn's (1970) class and conformity study within an Irish context. As is evident from the current literature, when consulted, working class students not only want, but aspire to enter third level education. Moreover, the parents of working class youth not only value education. They also see this as the only viable route to success for their children. The issue is not that the working classes do not value education, but rather that education comes at a cost that is too high and sometimes at the expense of other family members.

The cost of education, coupled with the potential loss of earnings, is a luxury that many parents in low income families cannot afford. This is an issue that has many intricacies. The decision on whether a child of working age in a low income family can remain in school and progress to third level will have a lasting effect, not just on the child, but on the child-parent relationship, the community they live in and society at large.

CHAPTER 3

WORKING CLASS STUDENTS AND THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION

Having examined the barriers to education, this chapter examines the factors that affect working class students who have gone to college and the changes and adjustments required of them. These changes are social, psychological and, very often, emotional.

Introduction

According to Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), working class students who participate in third level education will have to 'abandon particular characteristics of their class, namely their thoughts, perception, appreciation and action' (p.107). Once educated, they cease to be working class. Their defining identity, in terms of the social class, is automatically changed by virtue of their educational success. This view is echoed by Lynch (1999) in working with a working class Irish sample. According to Lynch (1999) there is no other marginalised group for whom this holds true to the same degree. This presents the working class student with an enormous dilemma - to stay outside of the system and challenge it, or to participate and be excluded from challenging the system. Lynch (1999) explicitly echoes Bourdieu, when she adds 'if the working classes become 'assimilated' by the system they are no longer part of their class. Their 'structural relationship' to education has changed. This change brings with it isolation - an isolation that Lynch (1999) asserts does not occur with any other marginalised group within education.

Lynch (1999) asserts that working class students do not 'give up' on the education system in some 'predetermined way'. Rather they negotiate and inhabit the education system and evaluate the opportunities that are open and those that are not. She asserts that if the system seriously wants to retain these students then substantial grant aid is necessary to make higher education a realistic option for low-income students. Such aid would have the effect of raising aspirations and even performance. Information and more linkages with working class communities are also essential. Institutes, their curricula, texts and teaching practices all could be more inclusive of working class communities (Lynch, 1999, p. 126). In their study Boldt (2000) note that the school curriculum in the Dublin Inner-city schools sampled, was irrelevant to the needs, interests and abilities of the culture under scrutiny. The authors found that schools represent "an alien environment associated with the authorities, which, imposes without a context o importance" (p. 19)

More recently, Bryan (2007) examines the current Irish curricula and how they can be characterised as 'unjust, in the sense that they are believed to play an important role in perpetuating social inequality along, *inter alia*, class, gender and racial ethnic lines' (p.247). This enables dominant cultural groups to sustain their competitive advantage (see also Tormey 2007). Furthermore, Bryan (2007) notes that, while the current body of research focuses on equalising educational access, little consideration is given to the substantive content of the curricula and how this contributes to inequality in accessing education for particular marginalised groups.

Cultural constraints on education

In their study on inequality in higher education and social class barriers for Irish students, Lynch & O'Riordan (1999) found that social and cultural constraints were of

considerable significance. They found that the impact of poverty was 'direct' and 'immediate' and that it created cultures that fostered 'a lack of ownership'.

> Cultural discontinuities were also experienced by working-class students within higher education, as they felt their class backgrounds were neither reflected nor affirmed within the colleges. They experienced themselves often as outsiders in an insider's world, where other students appeared to 'have been there before, done it all, know everyone'. (Lynch, 1999, p.123)

The sense of discontinuity between community, home and college was increased by the lack of accessible, accurate information about higher education. Students viewed expectations of teachers in second level and support from lecturers in third level as important. Moreover, working class students were highly dependent on college facilities such as libraries, computers and crèches. Lynch (1999) found that participants expressed a range of fears and anxieties about going to college. The fear of isolation and of being an 'outsider' was specifically named by students as an issue.

Previously, Taylor et al., (1995) worked with a similar sample as Lynch (1999) of working class youth in North America. The participants of this study were living and attending school in an inner-city area. They came from working class backgrounds and were all economically disadvantaged and at risk of early school leaving. Taylor et al., (1995) examined these participants' idea of success. They found that participants had very definite ideas of success, which included money, power, independence and respect. They believed that the path to achieving this came through gaining an education that would lead to a professional career. This chosen

path, however, was not without consequences - namely, isolation, loneliness and exclusion.

The participants in the Taylor et al, (1995) study present two separate ideals of women. One is the traditional 'housewife' and the other a more personally constructed ideal of the 'sophisticated woman complete with briefcase'. The idealised images the participants speak of present them with an impossible choice. On the one hand, if they fulfil the role of 'house wife', they must abandon all hopes and dreams of a career, while, on the other hand, career success may come at the high cost of no relationships, isolation from family and disconnection from self and others. These findings explicitly echo the findings of Horner, (1970) over twenty years previously in the U.S; however, the author does not link this. When asked to identify obstacles that may prevent them from fulfilling their goals and aspirations of being successful career women, the majority of replies by participants were: the forming of a serious relationship; getting married; and/or having a baby.

In addition, the participants spoke of cultural norms regarding domestic life. Typical working class women inherit 'prescribed domestic duties' and these duties may be inimical to the demands of education. Furthermore, Taylor et al., (1995) found the 'cultural unease' that a wife's level of education may exceed her husband's may also diminish the likelihood that married women will continue their education (Cardoza, 1991; Taylor et al., 1995). These findings are also in line with the findings of Piedmont, (1988) who maintained that sex-role expectancies, gained during pre-adolescence, determine gender identity and cultural norms, which may dictate appropriate behaviours for each gender.

Research on college attendance and retention in the US supports these findings, suggesting that delays in marriage and child-bearing are important factors in whether women are likely to enrol and, furthermore, remain in education (Cardoza, 1991). Cardoza (1991), also in the US, notes 'domestic labour' had a sharp negative impact on degree completion. Taylor et al., (1995) further found that moving beyond their mothers is psychologically difficult for many girls, who are filled with ambivalent feelings of both wanting and not wanting a different life for themselves as well as feelings of guilt. These girls recognise that their mothers similarly want and do not want a different life for their daughters (hooks, 1993b).

However, this interdependent self has frequently been interpreted as a deficit. Steintitz & Solomon (1986) found in their study of talented white working class youths, in three communities in Boston, that the strengths of interdependence and community among working class people have been 'conventionally portrayed as constricted by their unwillingness to free themselves from their relationships' (1986, p.6).

Crossing over: existing between two classes

Drawing on a longitudinal study of middle class and working class girls growing up in British societies, Lucey et al., (2003) implicitly builds on the work of Lynch (1999) and Horner (1970; 1972) by focusing on those few working class women who manage to get to university and face the prospect of a 'professional' career. The authors examine the concept of 'hybridity' as it is used, to denote shifts in the structure of modern-day feminine sensibilities and argue that, although hybridity may be a social and cultural fact, 'in this psychic economy there are no easy hybrids' (p. 288). The

authors examine the concept of 'hybridity' as espoused by cultural theorists in relation to new forms of ethnic subjectivities hybridity. They argue that it is a useful concept in exploring the experience of individuals in the context of shifting economic and social relations and this adds another dimension to theories of fragmentation (Lucey et al., 2003).

Lucey et al (2003) credit Bhabha (1990), with developing the notion of hybridity in relation to conditions of political inequality and oppression, views it as holding positive possibilities. He underscores the invariable 'negotiation of discursive double-ness'. Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration, but an opportunity to take up and develop a critical stance towards hierarchy (1990, p.58). The current study relies heavily on the findings of Lucey et al., (2003), as literature relating to hybridity is scarce. Hybridity is an important factor to consider, as it examines how those individuals from working class backgrounds who do make it to third level cope. It acknowledges both the emotional and psychological struggles that this entails.

The impact of hybridity is inconclusive. Does having to exist between competing identities mean that the hybrid subject has the best of both worlds? Or does it mean that the individual has to live 'within the interface of the two' (Anzaldua, 1987, p.37, cited in Lucey et al., 2003). And what of the hybrid who moves between the two competing identities? Can the 'border-crosser' ever find a place or a condition of her own and, thus, some stability? Lucey et al., (2003) suggest that these types of transformation require 'a new feminine subject, one who is capable of understanding

herself as an autonomous agent, the producer of her present and her future, an inventor and constant re-inventor of the person that she may be or become' (p.288).

The edifice of the self is a constant struggle 'won only provisionally and always entailing expenditure of considerable amounts of psychological energy' (Lucey et al., 2003 15, 3, 285-30). Lucey et al., (2003) found that the speed of societal change and the instabilities of the social world are internalised and experienced as instabilities of the self. This inner turmoil is particularly intense for educationally successful girls. Thus, Lucey et al., (2003) ask the question how, then, do working class girls and young women inhabit the space accorded to them? In particular, how do working class girls, who succeed in education, manage to negotiate hybrid subjectivities, or other kinds of self-invention and regulation? These are in effect the location of Horner's (1970; 1972)fear of success in social class terms. The authors argue that management of this regulation is twofold. The fundamental tactic is the maintenance of strong boundaries between work and play (Walkerdine, 1991). The secondary tactic is the development of complex psychological coping mechanisms. However, Lucey et al., (2003) note, the very inner resources, which are necessary for success, can also be self-destructive.

Psychological impact of living between two worlds

Lucey et al., (2003) highlight the massive shift for working class young women moving into the intellectual domain, characterising it as one that requires an 'internal and external makeover'. The authors only examined females in their study. The process of educational success and of social mobility involves crossing borders of

social class, gender and ethnicity. It also involves negotiation between competing demands as other spaces and other possibilities are opened up.

Lucey et al (2003) suggest that although 'the notion of 'upward social mobility' is the desired outcome of social and educational policy is unquestioned. However, discourses of social mobility tend to harbour denials of the losses that are fundamental to and unavoidable in the change, even when those changes are desired, and of the enormous amount of psychological work involved in transformation; and the cost of that work' (p. 285).

These losses, Lucey et al., (2003) argue, are a heavy cost for the educational success achieved and, thus, social mobility can provoke ambivalent feelings in families, such as anxiety and pride. Moreover, the authors note, by declining to take notice of these feelings we are ignoring vital aspects of the experience. Lucey et al., (2003) stress that although these feelings are experienced psychologically they are, however, produced socially and, therefore, must be understood as 'profoundly psycho-social' a perspective also central to understanding Horner's (1970; 1972)fear of success. They suggest that, when examining the pathway from primary to third level education, the middle class participants mirrored that of a 'conveyor belt', while the working class participants were full of anomalies and contradictions (p289).

Lucey et al., (2003) conclude, 'There are no easy hybrids'. Hybridity may be a cultural and social fact but it is never lived easily. Not only are the working class girls who succeed in the education system entering into intellectual and occupational spheres traditionally viewed as masculine. They are also moving out of their class sphere, beyond the wildest dreams of anyone in their families, into professional jobs.

Moreover, if no importance is given to the psychological processes involved in both success and failure in education, the profound and continuing failure in the eyes of the system of numerous working class young people will continue unabated for both genders.

Conclusion

Hybridity is a useful concept, as it explains both the psychological and emotional struggles of working class women who want to obtain an education while maintaining close relationships. However, the current literature is limited to a female perspective.

While for Bhabha's (1990) idea that 'dipping in and out' of two often very different groups, can at first glance appear to present the individual with the best of both worlds, placing enormous pressure on the individual to be 'everything to everyone'. The interchanging identities adopted to cope with each setting means that the individual may experience disruption in their own identity, as most of the time is given to being one 'person' in a particular social group and quite 'another' in a different setting. The consequence of this is the lack of self-identity. This loss of identity, of belonging, of fitting in, may result in the internalisation of feelings of inadequacy. Thus the desire of social mobility, of wanting and desiring a better life culminates in loss. There needs to be an integration of working class culture at all levels in the curriculum, the staffing and the student body of third level institutions. While there is no doubt that the education of working class students has progressed in the last twenty years, it is not enough as the process to date has focused on allowing working class students to enter third level education on middle class terms. Education thus signifies loss and sacrifice. If policy makers are serious about creating equality in education for the working classes, then they need to recognise the losses that are involved for working classes students in search of education and social mobility.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology chosen to explore the perspective and experiences of Dublin north inner-city youth. This outline includes a detailed account of the methodologies and approaches used and the rationale for these methods, including benefits and limitations. Finally, the chapter examines the scope and limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

There were two key factors that influenced the choice of methodology:

1. The nature of the study: It was a 'hands on' study, drawing on the experience and knowledge of local people within their community.
2. The purpose of the study: To capture young peoples' attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences, from their perspective. In order to 'give voice' to participants' lived experience (Downes, 2003) thus a qualitative methodology was deemed the most appropriate choice.

Qualitative methodology explores the multiple realties of the participants (Coolican 2003). A combination of qualitative methodologies was employed in the current study. A two-phase, sequential approach was used, in order to gain insights into the understandings and experiences of Dublin north inner-city youth regarding 'fear of success'. The first phase consisted of the pre-pilot focus group, while the second phase consisted of interviews. The focus group was conducted during December 2006 and the interviews were conducted during March to August 2007. Both of these are discussed in detail later in the chapter.

The rationale for using a qualitative approach is that 'it facilitates understanding people from their own frame of reference' (Blumer, 1969). A client-centred methodology was used with participants, echoing the approach employed by Downes, Maunsell & Ivers (2006), with a similar sample of disadvantaged youth in Dublin West. The importance of child-centred and youth consultation, which ensures that young people are actively consulted regarding issues of their welfare, is well recognised (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1999; Downes, 2003, 2004). The participants were told from the outset of data collection that:

- they were not being judged;
- there were no right or wrong answers;
- every effort would be made to guarantee confidentiality of their answers;
- they could, at any time, refuse to answer a question or stop completely;
- their raw answers would not go beyond the researcher and those involved in overseeing the research.

Research Design

Research approach

The aim of the study is to examine the views of Dublin north inner-city youth. The methodological obligation is to reconstruct the individuals' perspectives while exploring subjective theories used by them to explain their world (Bryman, 2004).

The theoretical approach adopted in the current study is phenomenological in nature. Phenomenology is an exploration of 'the essence of lived experience' (Van

Manen, 1990). Phenomenology is based on the idea that experience, rather than simply factual content, reflects situations. Two key assumptions underlie phenomenology. One is that perceptions 'present us with evidence of the world' not as it is thought but rather how it is lived (Morse & Richards, 2007). The second is that existence is meaningful and of interest and that existence phenomenologically speaking is 'being', i.e. 'being in the world'. Individuals are thus in their worlds and understandable in their contexts.

The researcher's stance

When thinking phenomenologically, the researcher attempts to understand how people attend to their world, bearing in mind that the individual's account is a perception and, as such, a form of interpretation (Boyd, 1993; Van Manen, 1990). Carl Rogers (1951) prompted a phenomenological research approach to the study of humans. According to Rogers (1951), individuals perceive the world in their own unique way. Thus, research must involve 'a persistent disciplined effort to understand the subjective world through the phenomena of subjective experiences' (p.67) (See also Laing 1960; Downes 2003).

The rationale for choosing a phenomenological methodology is based on the emphasis that is given to both the subjective experience of the participant and the construction of this experience as a way of explaining their own world (Bryman, 2004). It is to attempt to perceive the world as it appears to the individual. Rogers' (1951) approach emphasizes conscious perceptions and feelings regarding social interactions, motives and processes of change. More importantly, Rogers (1951)

believed that people had the capacity to report, in meaningful detail on the nature of their own psychological experience (Pervin et al, 2004).

The aim of the current study is to reveal otherwise unseen 'phenomena and meanings, by examining peoples' attitudes and beliefs' (Omery, 1983). According to Bassett, 'in phenomenological study, an attempt is made to understand another person's subjective experiences and feelings by study of their field of expression' (2004, 159). The way in which an individual tells his/her story is influenced by his/her experiences but is also shaped by social norms and the views of others, and the wider society. Subjective viewpoints of Dublin north inner-city youth will be sought by employing a phenomenological approach.

Overview of the context and the research process

An emancipatory approach and the research process

The research process was guided by adherence to the principles of emancipatory research. Incorporating an emancipatory approach to research is of particular benefit when working with a marginalised sample (Smith & Williamson, 2004). Emancipatory research insists on 'shifting the power from the researcher to the researched'. Both the researcher and the researched participate. The research process is seen as more of a partnership: 'Working according to the principle of partnership is an attempt to avoid further disempowerment of those whose lives and experience we set out to research' (Smith & Williamson, 2004, p. 145). The exploration of the emotional experience of the participant seeks to describe and understand an individual's own perspective and experience.

In adherence to the principles of emancipatory research, the researcher encouraged the participant to talk about their feelings as well as their thoughts. In this type of research, Holloway & Jefferson (2001) suggest that it is necessary to see the participant, not just as a rational conscious subject, but also as a psycho-social subject. O'Brien (2005) exploring the emotional work and experience of mothers in an Irish context asserts that part of the research process is to explore the emotionality that comes up during the interview and to acknowledge this emotion around particular issues, not to avoid it. Thus, in exploring emotional work, it is vital for the researcher to acknowledge, listen and share their feelings and thoughts where appropriate. O'Brien (2005) advises that there is a need to 'take serious consideration of the social relations of research production'. She warns against the scenario where researcher and his or her participants are 'distanced by the belief that the researcher possesses knowledge and skills that give him or her control over the agenda and how it is researched' (p.92).

There is also an emphasis, within the emancipatory research approach, that the dialogue between the researcher and the participant is included into the research design, and, thus, integrated into all of the stages of the research process. The role of this dialectical relationship is to bring about awareness through reflection, not just for the researcher but also for the participants (O'Brien, 2005).

A central assumption of the emancipatory process is the issue of reflexivity this was a vital component in the work of O'Brien (2005) and was adapted by the current study. Reflexivity involves the researcher consistently 'interrogating'

oneself with regard to one's own biases, values and standpoint as the research progresses. This entails a 'process of reflection' regarding the meaning of the research in relation to the data collection process. This was vital to the current study, as the researcher seeks to investigate fears as well as hopes and expectations of inner city youth in relation to their identities, social class and culture. I found it necessary to question my own stance in relation to fears, as well as hopes and expectations in relation to my identities: my inner-city working class origin and my middle class education. I was attentive to how these identities would create 'both intimacy and distance' between the participants and me (O'Brien, 2005). For that reason, I found it crucial to take a few minutes at the end of each interview to reflect on how I was during the interview and to evaluate the space between me and each of the participants.

Sample Selection

Gaining access to key informants can prove a difficult task. It often proves even more difficult in the case of marginalised groups. Three key individuals in three local community based organisations: the NYP 2 (Neighbourhood Youth Project), the LDTF (Local Drug Task Force) and HOPE (Hands on Peer Education) were approached for help with accessing informants. The presenting sample volunteered to participate in this survey. All of the participants were known to one or all of the key individuals. The use of qualitative methods was employed to select participants for interview. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.28) outline sixteen different types of sampling used in qualitative research. The sample of participants that took part in the interviews was selected on the basis of four of Miles and Huberman's (1994) sampling methods:

- Maximum Variation: The principle is that if one deliberately tries to interview a selection of different people (age, gender, level of education, in a couple/single) their aggregate answers can be close to the whole populations. However I was not seeking representation on the general population. Thus, by documenting variations and identifying important common themes collective themes will emerge within the chosen population.

- Criterion: All cases meet the same criteria, namely, social class, age and address. All participants came from a working class background. Each participant was aged between 18-26 years and all of the participants lived and grew up in Dublin north inner-city.

- Opportunistic: following new leads and taking advantage of the unexpected.
- 'The snow ball effect': In order to reach a marginalised sample the current study employed 'snow ball sampling'. Once potential participants were identified, they were asked to identify and recruit similar individuals, in order to increase the overall number of participants.

Participants

Eleven participants took part in the current study. Boyd (2001) regards 10-12 participants or research subjects as sufficient to reach saturation. In addition,

Creswell (1998, pp. 65 & 113) recommends 'long interviews with up to 12 people' for a phenomenological study. For this study, a sample size of eleven was selected.

Participant profile

The current study was mixed gender. All participants came from a working class background. Each of the participants were aged between 18-26 they were split into two groups 18-22 and 22-26, the average age was 22.3 years. The educational range of participants varied from early school leavers to third level graduates. Of the eleven participants three of them had attended college. Three participants had a family member that attended college, one of whom was a brother, another was an aunt and the third was a second cousin. None of the participants had a parent that attended college. One of the participants who attended college also had a brother who attended college; however, this was six years prior to her and they did not live in the same house. All participants came from the same geographical area, each one living within a one-mile radius of each other. Three of the eleven participants were unemployed at the time of the study. The occupation of the highest earner in each of the households was semi-skilled. Almost half of the participant's parents were unemployed. See appendix (A) for an individual background profile of each respondent.

Table 1: Breakdown of participants by: age, gender, occupation.

GENDER	AGE	OCCUPATION
Charlotte	22	Care assistant
Donna	22	Unemployed
Gérard	19	Unemployed
Jane	26	Youth worker
Laura	26	Apprentice Solicitor
Leanne	26	Administrator
Leon	22	Apprentice Plumber
Lisa	26	Student
Maria	26	Shop assistant
Nicola	19	Administrator
Paul	19	Unemployed

All of the participants' names have been changed in order to protect their identity.

Data Collection

The data collection included a focus group and eleven, two-phase individual, depth/semi-structured interviews. Prior to the study the researcher was briefly introduced to each participant. This helped to build rapport and provide each participant with a brief overview and context of the research process. The interview process was broken down into two. The first interview was concerned with background information, while the second interview focused on the interview schedule which addressed participants: view, perception and life experience (see appendix for copy of interview). This two stage interview process also allowed the researcher and the participants to build rapport. There was a gap of 5-10 days between each interview, 10 being the longest.

Data collection took place in a local community-based organisation, which provided a secure and comfortable response environment - critical in accessing and eliciting deeper, emotive responses (Flick, et al 2004). As noted earlier this was a contrasting methodology to the quantitative fear of success approach.

Pre-Pilot/ Focus Group Perspective

A focus group was employed at the preliminary stage of the study (Kreuger 1988). This was done by consultation. An informal meeting took place between the researcher and a group from Dublin north inner-city. The purpose of this was twofold - namely to establish the best manner to encourage young people to talk about their

experiences and, in addition, to generate questions and themes for discussion in the individual interviews. Morgan (1988) suggests that focus group research can be used either as a method in its own right or as a complementary method. A focus group was employed in a complementary sense in the current study. Five participants took part in the focus group.

Focus group research includes as many perspectives as possible, seeking to explore attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences (Denscombe, 2000, p.115) regarding the focus of the inquiry. These attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences, may be partially independent of the group or its social setting, but are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering. Moreover, Morgan (1988) asserts that the value of focus group research is the interaction it yields between the different members of the group (see also, Kitzinger, 1994, 1995). This interaction between participants emphasizes their view of the world, the language they use and their values and beliefs about a situation. This interactive factor also enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences (Gibbs, 1997).

The main purpose for employing focus group research was to draw upon key respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs and experiences, in order to facilitate the questions for the main data focus, the interviews. Focus group research elicits reactions by means of a dynamic that is not present in other methods. Observational methods, for example, tend to depend on waiting for things to happen, whereas with a focus group the researcher follows an interview guide. As a result, focus group research may be a more organised and a more straightforward approach. Unlike other methods, such as interviews, focus groups allow the researcher to elicit a multiplicity

of views and emotional processes within a group context. In addition, focus groups enable the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time.

Gibbs (1997, p. 7) suggests that focus group research is distinctively useful with marginalised samples when: (i) there are power differences between the participants and decision-makers or professionals, (ii) the specific practices of a culture such as, everyday use of language, is of interest, and (iii) when the aim is to explore the degree of concurrence on a given topic (see also Morgan & Kreuger, 1993). Focus groups 'elicit information in a way which allows researchers to find out why an issue is salient, as well as what is salient about it' (Morgan, 1988). Participants are given the opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes (Race et al, 1994), to be valued as experts, and to be given the chance to work collaboratively with researchers (Goss & Leinbach, 1996). This can be empowering for many participants and may also become a forum for change (Race et al., 1994).

According to Berry (1999) although focus group research have many advantages, they are not without limitations. Focus groups can be intimidating at times, especially for inarticulate or shy members. However, if participants are actively involved in something which they feel will make a difference, focus group research is often empowering. In addition the researcher has less control over the data produced when using focus group research, rather than individual interviews. In addition he/she has to allow participants to interact and express uncertainties and opinions, while having trying to maintain control over the situation which is a very different skill to keeping participants focused one topic. Moreover, it cannot be supposed that the individuals in a focus group are expressing their 'own definitive

individual view'. They are speaking in a specific context, within a specific culture (Berry, 1999). Finally, focus groups are not fully confidential or anonymous, because the material is shared with the others in the group, which may result in some participants censoring their answers (Berry, 1999). Some of these limitations can be overcome by careful planning and moderating, but others are unavoidable and particular to this approach.

Interviews

It was decided to use depth interviewing as the main method to collect data for the study, since a phenomenological approach was adopted for the investigation. Two-phase interviewing was employed. Each of the eleven participants was interviewed twice. The first interview focused on background information, while the second interview focused on the lived experience of each participant.

The interviews were guided by the phenomenological approach adopted by the current study, emphasising the lived experience of the participants. As previously stated, phenomenology is based on the idea that experience rather than simply factual content reflects situations. Arksey and Knight (1999) assert that: 'interviewing is a powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have thus far been difficult to articulate, their unspoken perceptions, feelings and understandings' (1999, p. 32). Fetterman reported that: 'the interviewer should keep in mind that the person being interviewed is the expert on what he or she knows, understands, and feels' (1989). The interviews used both open-ended and closed questions, since the participants' viewpoints were more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or a questionnaire (Flick, et al 2004, p. 149). According to Bailey (1996, p. 72): 'the informal interview is a

conscious attempt by the researcher to find out more information about the setting of the person'. The interview is reciprocal. Both researcher and research subject are engaged in the dialogue. Kvale (1996) remarks with regard to data capturing during the qualitative interview that: 'it is literally an *inter-view*, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest,' where researcher attempts to: 'understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold meaning of peoples' experiences' (p. 1-2). At the root of phenomenology is 'the intent is to understand the phenomena in their own terms — to provide a description of human experience, as it is experienced by the person herself' (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96).

Depth interviewing is employed when a researcher wants to elicit information pertaining to a participant's point of view or situation. It can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation. This type of interview involves asking open-ended questions and probing, wherever necessary, to obtain rich purposeful data. Patton (1987, p. 113) suggests three basic approaches to conducting depth interviewing:

(i) The informal conversational interview;

(ii) The general interview or guided approach;

(iii) The standardized open-ended interview.

The current study employed (ii), i.e. the general interview or guided approach as a framework for interviews.

When employing this approach for interviewing, a checklist was prepared to address the relevant topics to be covered. A series of semi-structured, open-ended

questions, around key issues, topics and themes, which emerged from focus groups, were prepared in advance, (see appendix a). The interviewer was, nevertheless, free to explore, probe and ask follow-on questions, where necessary. Wenden (1982) formulated a checklist as a basis to interview participants. She asserts that the general interview guide approach is useful as it 'allows for in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters of the study' (1982, p 39).

Rationale for selection of depth interviewing

In the main, it can be stated that interviewing as a research method provides a means of engaging with an individual at a level that may not be achieved by other methods. Cohen and Manion (1994) explicate the value of interviews as a research technique. They propose that it is one of the more comprehensive methods, affording the researcher the opportunity to: 'ask questions, probe and explore' as a result of direct interaction in the interviews. Moreover, Gray (2004) argues that an interview is the best form of research if the study is largely exploratory and involves examining feelings or attitudes.

The use of this exploratory methodology allows the researcher to adjust later questions, clarify issues, follow new lines of inquiry, and probe for detailed information. It allows deeper understanding of participants' beliefs, values, views and meanings, eliciting rich, detailed, qualitative data. It helps the researcher to understand participants' personal experiences and how these have been shaped. Questions can be tailored to each interviewee and 'rambling' off topic can be encouraged.

An indispensable component of all interviews is the verbal interaction between the researcher and their participants. Hitchcock & Hughes (1989, p.79) emphasizes that: 'central to the interview is the issue of asking questions, which is best achieved in qualitative research through conversational encounters'. Furthermore, 'the success of the interview depends, to a large extent, on the personal and professional qualities of the individual interviewer' (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 142). Personal qualities involve building a rapport with the participant, while professional qualities involve following and maintaining ethical guidelines. Accordingly, Berry (1999) suggests that it is important for the researchers to familiarize themselves with questioning techniques before conducting interviews. The current study directly employed four of the ten questioning techniques outlined by Berry (1999, p.10) throughout the interview process:

The researcher would probe and follow-up questions (Patton 1987, p. 125-126). The rationale for probing was to 'deepen the response to a question', and to further enhance the richness of the data obtained. It was also used to give cues to the participant. For example, the repeating of significant words of an answer leads to further elaboration (Kvale, 1996, p.133).

Interpret questions (Kvale 1996, p.149): The researcher clarified and extended the meanings of the participants' statements, in order to avoid misinterpretations on her part. In addition, the researcher would encourage a free rein but also maintaining control: by allowing the participants to 'ramble' wherever they liked. However, a checklist of ideas, or themes to explore guided each interview. Palmer (1928, p. 171) suggests that proficient interviewers: 'should be always in control of a conversation, which they guide and bend to the service of their research interest'.

It is extremely important to establish rapport: This was achieved by respecting the informants' opinions, supporting their feelings, and recognising their responses. It was also revealed by the researcher's tone of voice, expressions and gestures. In addition, Kvale (1996) suggests that: 'A good contact is established by attentive listening. This was demonstrated when the researcher showed interest, understanding, and respect for what the participant had to say' (p. 128). This allows participants to finish what they are saying, allowing them to proceed at their own pace Kvale (1996, p.148).

Other interviewing techniques informed by the literature

In addition, another technique, informed by the literature, was employed. Erlandson et al., (1993, p.87) assert that the researcher and participants should use the same language. Moreover, the authors emphasize the importance of language stressing that: 'using concrete everyday wording is what should happen in your questions and the interview'. This will be achieved by: 'using words that make sense to the participant, words that reflect the participant's view: (Patton, 1980).

Interpretation/Explication of Data:

The following subsection has two aims namely to outline the explication method of interpretation and to demonstrate how this was employed in the current research. The interpretation of the data, like the methodology, is rooted in phenomenology. The concept of 'fear of success' has not been approached phenomenologically before. Moreover, the studies which have examined this concept have focused on quantitative data. The current study is a re-interpretation of Horner's 'fear of success' in terms of social class.

The phenomenological interpretation process consists of reading, reflecting, writing and re-writing. This enables the researcher to transform the lived experience into a 'textual expression of its essence' (Van Maden, 1990). The data was interpreted by employing a revised version of Groenewald's (2004) phenomenological explication strategy. For Giorgi (1997), the operative word in phenomenological research is 'describe'. The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. According to Welman and Kruger (1999, p. 189) 'the phenomenologist is concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved'. A researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people involved with the issue that is being researched (Downes, 2003; Greene, 1997; Holloway, 1997; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996; Maypole & Davies, 2001; Robinson & Reed, 1998).

Insights into the experience of Dublin north inner-city youth were achieved by employing phenomenological strategies, reflecting further on phenomenological literature and re-writing (Morse & Richards, 2007). The researcher selects words or phrases that describe particular aspects of the lived experience they are studying and reflect on these. Certain phrases or experiences are grouped together and labelled. For the phenomenological researcher, the value of the writing and re-writing process cannot be overrated, as this reflection is where the insight is cultivated.

Morse & Richards (2007) urges the researcher to view this process as iterative rather than in linear terms. She asserts: 'labelling the different elements as steps tends to trivialise the cognitive work involved and actually moves away from thinking

phenomenlogically' (p. 171). Van Maden (1990) suggests that the researcher uses his or her own experience as a starting point. From there the researcher may trace sources of the phenomena of interest and search for what he terms 'idiomatic' phrases. The researcher obtains experiential descriptions from others in interviews for personal life stories. Following this thematic analysis is done and it is necessary to write and re-write as a 'measure of thoughtfulness' (Van Maden 1997). Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) recommend that the researcher repeatedly read transcripts of each interview to become familiar with the words of the interviewee, in order to develop a holistic sense, i.e. the 'gestalt'. Zinker (1978) explains that the term phenomenological implies a process, which emphasises the unique own experiences of research participants. The here and now dimensions of those personal experiences gives phenomena 'existential immediacy'.

Groenewald (2004) deliberately refrains from using 'data analysis', as 'analysis' has dangerous connotations for phenomenology. According to Groenewald (2004):

The term [analysis] usually means a 'breaking into parts' and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon... [whereas 'explication' implies an]...investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole' (p. 7).

Having explained the term explication, the researcher will now demonstrate how Groenewald's (2004) explication process was employed in the current study. Groenewald's (2004, p 6-7) explication process consists of five phases:

(1) Bracketing

(2) Delineating units of meaning

(3) Clustering of units of meaning to form themes

(4) Summarising, validating and modifying

(5) Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

However, the current study employed a revised version of Groenewald's (2004) method, in that the first step 'bracketing', i.e. the absolute removal of the researcher, was not utilised. Instead the researcher consciously reflected her position during this process, in order to limit any bias, while at the same time using her own experience as a starting point and participating in the process, as suggested by Van Maden (1990). This is in keeping with the emancipatory approach employed during the data collection process.

Stages two, three, four and five of Groenewald's (2004) explication process were applied as follows:

'Delineating units of meaning'

According to Groenewald (2004), this is a critical phase of explicating the data, in that those statements that are seen to shed light on the researched phenomenon are extracted or 'isolated'. The researcher is required to make a substantial number of judgement calls, while being consciously aware of her position, in order to avoid inappropriate, subjective judgements. I did this by listing the 'units of relevant meaning' and extracting from each interview carefully and clearly eliminating superfluous units. To do this required considering the literal content and the number (the significance) of times a meaning was mentioned Groenewald (2004).

Clustering of units of meaning to form themes:

By thoroughly examining the list of 'units of meaning', I tried to elicit the key meaning of units within the holistic context. Hycner (1999) asserts that this calls for even more judgement and skill on the part of the researcher. Clusters of themes were formed by grouping 'units of meaning' together (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). This meant identifying the significant topics, also called 'units of significance' (Sadala & Adorno, 2001). Both Holloway (1997) and Hycner (1999) emphasize the importance of the researcher going back to the recorded interview and forth to the list of 'units of meaning' to develop 'clusters of appropriate meaning'. Groenewald (2004) stresses that there may be overlap in the clusters, 'considering the nature of human phenomena' (p. 7). The researcher looked for 'the themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations' (Hycner, 1999). According to Groenewald (2004), care must be taken not to cluster common themes if significant differences exist. The unique or minority voices are important counterpoints to bring out regarding the phenomenon researched.

Summarise, validate and modify.

The next step in the explication process was step four. This step comprises three components:

- Summarise:

A summary that incorporates all the themes elicited from the data gives a holistic context. Ellenberger (1981) captures it as follows: 'Whatever the method used for a phenomenological analysis, the aim of the investigator is the reconstruction of the inner world of experience of the subject (cited in Groenewald, 2004, p 20).

- Validate:

At this point the researcher conducts a 'validity check' by returning to the informant to determine if the fundamental nature of the interview has been correctly 'captured' (Hycner, 1999).

- Modify:

Any modification necessary is done as a result of this 'validity check'.

Present general and unique themes from the interviews and composite summary.

Once the process outlined in points 2, 3 and 4 was complete I carried out, what Groenewald, (2004) refers to as, the 'composite summary'. Coffey & Atkinson (1996) emphasise that: 'good research is not generated by rigorous data alone ... [but] 'going beyond' the data to develop ideas'. Initial theorising, however small, is derived from the qualitative data (as cited in Groenewald, 2004). The 'composite summary' consists of a synopsis of the findings in relation to the relevant literature.

Ethical issues

Kemmis and McTaggart stated that: 'if ethical principles are not followed, existing work and the improvement process of the research may be at risk' (1982, 34). 'Ethical issues are many and varied, and may be quite complex' (DCU *Guidelines on best practice in ethical research*, 2006). Research that involves human subjects requires a thorough satisfaction of ethical issues (Bailey, 1996). Since the current study employs a qualitative approach, there are a range of ethical implications for the participants involved. The current research was guided by St Patrick's College/DCU, *Guidelines on best practice in ethical research*, 2006.

In order to ensure ethical research, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants. Bailey (1996) warns against deception, as it may be counter-productive. However, not asking the leading central research question is not regarded as deception (Kvale, 1996). Based on Bailey's (1996, p. 11) recommended items, I developed a specific informed consent 'agreement', in order to gain the informed consent from participants.

This consent 'agreement' advised participants:

- That they are participating in research;
- The purpose of the research (without stating the central research question);
- The procedures of the research;
- The risk and benefits of the research;
- The voluntary nature of research participation;
- The subject's (informant's) right to stop the research at any time;
- The procedures used to protect confidentiality (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bless & Higson- Smith, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Street, 1998).

Bailey (1996) further observes that deception might prevent insights, whereas honesty, coupled with confidentiality, reduces suspicion and promotes sincere responses. The 'informed consent agreement' form was explained to subjects at the beginning of each interview. Most potential subjects signed the agreement and those who did not were not pressured to participate in the study. All who ended up being participants were in agreement with its content and signed.

Methodological Limitations of the Current Study:

One limitation of the current study is the limited sample size (N=11). This means that the findings may not generalise to other socio-economically disadvantaged areas or may not be representative of the range of young working class people in Ireland, Dublin or even North Inner-city Dublin. However, because no previous research has focused on Fear of Success and the experiences of young people in Dublin North Inner City, it is possible that similar experiences exist but have not been recorded. This allows the researcher to make relevant recommendations for the Dublin North Inner City area and perhaps for a wider context of socio-economic disadvantage.

There was a clear gender disparity in responses, with the number of respondents being overwhelmingly female, with almost three times the amount of females to males. However, due to the difficulty gaining access to a marginalised sample it was not possible to obtain a gender of balance. Howard, (2002) in his study with marginalised students in the US, notes the difficulty in recruiting males to participate in research.

While a developmental focus was incorporated into the current study it was done in a somewhat limited fashion, through adopting a range of ages in the chosen sample of 18-26 years. However, in order to capture developmental factors a longitudinal study would be optimal for a more detailed analysis of these factors. However, this was outside the scope of the current study.

The interviewer effect or bias may be relevant factor when considering the limitations of the current study. Research has shown that how the interviewee perceives the interviewer can affect their response to a question. Denscombe, (2003) suggests "the answers might tend to be match what the interviewee suspects is the researchers point of view (p.170). This was minimised by asking open questions.

The issue of emancipatory /reflexivity as a research method is an important consideration when considering the limitation of the current study. Kirby & McKenna (1989) assert that the researcher plays a vital role in the research process, they bring their own thoughts aspirations and feelings, as well as their own ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, family background, education, etc, to their research. Conversely, as the nature of emancipatory /reflexivity research requires that the researcher is so involved in the research, it could be argued that the researcher may be too deeply involved to be conscious of your position and the bias this may pose to the research, at all times. This may have been combated by applying O'Brien's (2005) suggestion to take a few minutes at the end of each interview to reflect on the time and space between the researcher and the researched, during this time the researcher would take note of any unusual happens, if necessary. More generally it must be noted that social psychology research illustrates the gaps that exist between participants' attitudes and behaviour when involved in research (Robson, 2002).

CHAPTER 5

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The following is a thematic analysis of the findings of the interviews. This chapter is, at the outset concerned with a phenomenological presenting of the findings in the participants' voices (Downes, 2003). A discussion of these findings will take place; this will consist of systematically going through each of the themes that emerged from the interviews and discussing their findings in relation to the literature.

Four major themes emerged from the interviews: Success and Identity, Intrapsychic Dimensions of Success, Interpersonal and Cultural Dimensions of Success, and Educational and Institutional Dimensions of Success. From these major themes several subthemes emerged. I will begin by giving an overview of the four major themes and a breakdown of each of the subthemes that emerged within these. In terms of success and identity, the following themes emerged: individual constructs of success, personal models of success, and individual constructs of not succeeding.

In terms of intrapsychic dimensions of success, perceptions of not succeeding, perceptions of the effects of success, perceptions of alienation as a result of career success, perceptions of the need for change, fear of success, problematic alcohol and drug use, hopes, dreams and aspirations, earlier aspirations, and their expectations for the future.

In terms of Interpersonal and cultural dimensions of success, the following themes emerged: the perceived impact of aspirational changes on relationships, the perceived impact of career success on family relations, perceived isolation from

community as a 'consequence' of success, sacrificing relationships, effects of 'significant others', perceptions of peer problems.

In terms of educational and institutional dimensions of success, the following themes emerged: success perceptions of educational success, their estimation of the value for education, their earlier expectations of education, the barriers to education, the cost of education, access to education, acquiring middle class peers, required changes in the education system, and finally teachers' attitudes. I have grouped responses to a common theme and present the responses under the appropriate heading and theme.

Success and Identity

Individual constructs of Success

Relationships were seen by participants as a key indicator of success, similarly to Horner's (1970; 1972) participants, *"marriage"* was significantly named by a number of participants. *"Education", "Knowledge", "Finances"* were also construed as indicators of being successful Bourdieu, (1977). These ideas of success are often referred to in the literature as 'conventional'.

These ideas of success were very similar to those found by Anderson (1999) and Taylor et al., (1995) in their studies with similar samples of inner-city youth in the US.

Personal models of success

Gilligan (1982: 1990): notes the importance of having at least one 'strong figure' in an individual's life to ensure healthy development, particularly during adolescence

and early adulthood. The majority (n=6) of females named family and friends as their role models:

In the absence of a personal role model all of the males (n=3) mentioned a celebrity:

"The Beckhams" (Paul, age 19),

"Wayne Rooney" (Gerard, age19),

One participant explains his choice:

"Wayne Rooney - making a career out of football - something that he loved making him and that money" (Leon, age 22). The absence of a familial or personally known role model for the males is a worrying thought given the particular age of these participants.

Role identification, motherhood was specifically named by one participant. When asked to: "Tell me a story or give me an example of when you were successful" one participant said, *"When I had my kids I was successful."* This finding is supported by O'Brien (2005) in her study of working class mothers; she also found that motherhood and caring roles can be a source of successful identity.

Participants' constructs of not succeeding

When asked to give me the first five images of not succeeding. Responses of 'poor *or no education, 'poverty' and 'dropping out of school'* were mentioned a lot by participants. This finding supports Tormey's (2007) suggestion that lack of education

and poverty are often synonymous for working class youth. Furthermore, *"crime" and "drug use"* were also equally emphasised as unsuccessful by participants. This finding offers little support to an earlier finding by Anderson (1999) who suggests inner-city youth in the US often find successful identities from crime and drug use. Moreover, the males (n=3) in the current study explicitly advised younger siblings against entering into *crime and drug use.*

The majority of females in the current study advised a younger sibling against prematurely *"getting into relationships"* and becoming *"pregnant"* which were seen as a barrier to achieving success, by the female participants. This finding is supported by earlier studies by Taylor et al (1995) and Cardoza (1991) with similar samples in the US.

Intrapsychic Dimensions of Success

The perception of the effects of success on friendship

Similarly to Horner's (1970; 1972) participants, the current study found that relationships would suffer due to acquired success. However, the current participants assumed *"dramatic"* life changes as a salient part of achieving success: *"Stop drinking and smoking, take better care of my health, change friends and move area. I want to bring my kids up in a different area. I will have to change completely my thinking, attitude and the way that I act"* (Leon, age 22). These participants occupied a 'trade-off mindset'. For these young people, success meant leaving their *family, friends, community and culture behind.* Most of the participants (n=8) believed that they would endure *'dramatic'* life changes, both personal and cultural. The sacrificing of close and personal relationships was specifically named (n=7). Some participants

perceived this as emotional changes: *"stressed"* (Leanne, age 19), *"depressed"* Nicola, age 19), while several of the participants used the term *"lonely"*.

Three participants responded that significant life changes would be necessary to achieve success; however they viewed this as positive:

> *"You would have to move and you'd never have time for yourself, your family or your friends but it would be great; I'd love it"* (Donna, age 22).

> *"I'd have to move. The kids would have to move school. Everything would be better"*. (Maria, age 26, mother of two).

> *"It would be mad, but good"*. (Gerard age 19).

Perception of alienation as a result of career 'successes'

Lucey et al. (2003) note the road to academic success for working class youth is a lonely isolated one; the current study supports these findings. Having established from the participants the perceived changes required to facilitate success, participants were then asked: "How would this make you feel". Most participants (n=9) responded with negative remarks as opposed to positive ones: *"Bad", "lonely" and "isolated"*.

For two participants this perception took more of a positive stance: *"They will see me less but it will be good for me. I will be appreciated"* (Donna, age 22), *"Good, it would be great for the kids"* (Maria, age 26).

Generally participants perceived the road to 'success' as both lonely and isolated - one that is rife with ambivalence of wanting, on the one hand to be socially mobile, financially secure, attain dreams, yet, on the other hand, having to sacrifice relationships and endure lonely isolated conditions to achieve this.

Perceptions of the need for change

Unlike Horner's (1970: 1972) participants, when asked how these changes (success) would impact on their lives the current participants predominantly responded positively. The majority of participants used the terms "*great*" or "*good*" and appeared to welcome this change. However, some participants appeared to be more ambivalent, the followings illustrates this ambivalence: *"They would be good because they could have what they want, no worries. The kids could go to good schools. And bad, because they wouldn't get to spend time with me and we would grow apart"* (Maria, age 26).

Participants' fears of success

Unlike some of Horner's (1970; 1972) participants, all of the current participants, when asked, could imagine themselves being successful. However, similarly to Horner's (1970; 1972) findings, the perceived effects of success were named in terms of social and emotional 'consequences': participants predominantly responded with: *"loss of connection"* in terms of: *"community"*, *"friends"* and or *"family"*. *"Growing apart"* was equally mentioned a significant number of times.

However it is notable that, unlike Horner's (1970; 1972) participants, the current participants perceived consequences of success were more intrapersonal than

interpersonal. While Horner's (1970; 1972) participants' perceived consequences were limited to romantic rejection, the current participants consequences were much broader, in that they believed that they would lose their entire social network, namely family, friends and community.

These perceived consequences were mainly negative and often greater than their perceived gain - a gain that Reay 1998 and Holloway 1998 suggest that working class youth might be too willing to pass over. This is illustrated by the following: *"Fear of not succeeding – letting people down – fears of losing everything that I have chasing a dream and for what?"* (Leon, age 22). Once again this either/or scenario appears, there was a sense amongst participants that if they left their communities they felt that they would lose their connection with their peers as they would no longer have anything in common with them.

One participant explicitly named the perceived loss of cultural identity as her biggest fear: *"Of forgetting myself, fearing that I won't fit in, this is my biggest fear"* (Laura, age 26).

This finding resonates with an earlier finding by Taylor et al (1995) with a similar sample in the US, where the authors asked their participants what they would imagine would stop them from completing their education, the participants responded with the idea of: 'Getting above myself' and 'forgetting my roots'. What was fundamentally different from Horner's participants was that the current participants feared maintaining the status quo. When asked how not succeeding would affect their family and friends, all of the participants said that nothing would change in their lives if they did not succeed. Friends and family 'would be the same', thus, allowing them to

continue to exist in their 'comfort zone' as Kohn (1977) would suggest. However, the current participants appeared to struggle with when asked what they feared participants predominantly (n=6) feared: *"things stay the same"* in one participants words: *"That I will go nowhere in life, that things stay the bleeding same"* (Paul, age 20).

Nevertheless, there was a lot of ambivalence displayed in many of the participants' responses. While they feared the perceived losses that would come with success, they also feared failure and the idea that things would stay the same. Lucey et al. (2003) working with a similar sample of inner city disadvantaged youth in the UK found similar ambivalence among their participants, the wanting and desiring but struggling with the perceived losses. In the current study this was predominantly with the younger group (18-22 year olds). They appeared to be more ambivalent – wanting and desiring but not acting. Some of them found themselves in what Lucey et al. (2003) refer to as the trap of 'available', but nevertheless 'inadequate discourses' (p.288). All of the participants, except one, were either involuntarily unemployed or in a job that they had expressed dissatisfaction towards. This ambivalence was also apparent when participants tried to imagine themselves in a situation, having achieved their desired outcome. When asked how this would make them feel, *'anxious'*, *'stressed'*, and *'happy'* were words voiced by the many of the participants.

Participants' experiences of drug use

Participants had experienced a lot of issues including: *"problematic alcohol & drug use", "depression", "school explosion", and "exam failure"* these were often coupled with extreme feelings of *guilt and shame*. Nevertheless, when asked what did

their family think, there was a clear division. Almost half of the participants (n=5) said that their families were "*disappointed*". On the other hand, the majority (n=6) of the participants said that when they had not succeeded they had not told their families, as they had felt so "*ashamed*". In one participant's words: "*I just couldn't bring myself to tell them. I was so ashamed. I do not think I told anyone*" (Maria age 26). The importance of having just one person to speak to and confide in, particularly during adolescence, is paramount for healthy development and positive mental health, as suggested by Taylor et al., (1995) and Gilligan (1982). (See also: Downes & Maunsell 2007; Downes, Maunsell & Ivers 2006).

Upon reflection, when analysing the interviews it was apparent that these young people were more emphatic in expressing the feelings around not succeeding than they were in expressing the highs associated with succeeding, even though the words they used were quite strong and positive: *"Brilliant". "Really good.", "It felt good", "Proud". "Tops!" (Great), "Nice". "Excited", "A good feeling- like excitement".*

Participants' hopes, dreams and aspirations

Within the current sample almost half of the participants (n=5) were actively pursuing or had fulfilled their 'dream of success'. These participants were making positive changes towards success.

Table 2: A breakdown of participants by: age, gender, and current successful circumstances

NAME	AGE	GENDER	CURRENT SUCCESS
Charlotte	22	Female	Currently working as a care assistant in a remedial clinic.
Jane	26	Female	Returned to education to complete her degree in Social Science and currently works as a youth worker in her community
Laura	26	Female	Returned to education and completed her degree in Law and more recently completed entrance exams to the Law Society
Lisa	26	Female	currently participating on the return to education programme; has longer- term plan of becoming a therapist
Nicola	19	Female	Recently returned to education and is currently enrolled on a Leaving Certificate programme.

As indicated in the table above five of the sample had achieved or were pursuing success in the educational or work contexts, although there was diversity in these achievements by traditional conventional standards; some having attained prestigious educational qualifications while others were pursuing traditional work in care or having only recently returned to education. None of the men saw themselves on this road.

Having identified the participants who had succeeded (n=1) or were 'actively pursuing success', (n=4), the question was then asked: "If you had to do this again would you?"

One was confident she would do it again: "*Yes I would [do it again]. I love my job*" (Charlotte, age 22), " *I suppose so. I do not know, cos I am only starting, so I would say that*"[laughs] (Nicola, age 19).

The others articulated the difficulty they faced when trying to achieve their dreams, with little or no sign of assistance, as illustrated in the following voice: *"No, I would stay in school and make them believe in me, cos it was too hard and long the route that I took*" (Lisa, female age 26, participating at third level). This echoes the findings of Boldt (2000) who found that young people in Dublin Inner-city expectations' are limited by their experiences, insufficient support and encouragement.

Two were ambivalent because of the difficulties they faced: *"Yes, but, I would do it differently. I would stay in school, repeat my Leaving, and go to third level straight after - not have a baby. It was too hard through the back door system"* (Laura, female, age 26, single parent).

"I do not know. It was so hard working and going to college, only if I could go full time. Otherwise it's so hard". (Jane, female, age 26, returned to education to complete her degree in Social Science). This finding also resonates with Tormey's (2007) suggestion that working class students are constantly struggling to keep up, and will continue to do so in the current system, because, as the success of a working class student increases so too does the success of a middle class student, constantly keeping the working classes at a disadvantage.

Participants' earlier aspirations

When asked, "When you were younger what dreams would you have had for yourself", participants named a range of dreams that were in accordance with their current perceptions of success. These responses could be categorised as reflecting their current views of success: *"To be a successful professional" "Be happily married",* and *"To be financially comfortable"* were mentioned a significant amount of times.

Childhood aspirations did not differ greatly, when compared to current aspirations although participants appeared to be fatigued. When asked how had their dreams changed from when they were younger, the majority of participants talked of how their dreams had not changed (at least in memory) from when they were younger, although they did believe that achieving them had become somewhat of a *'struggle'*. Achieving success had proven *"harder"* than they had anticipated this is illustrated in the following participants voices:

"Only the route that I had to take in order to get there, it was far longer and harder than I have every imagined it would have been" (Jane, age 26, returned to education, obtained a degree).

"It has just got lost, it was so hard" (Lisa, age 25, returned to education, participating at third level).

Participants' expectation for the future

There was a clear division by gender, on the subject of internal or external attributes required to become successful. The majority of the females believed that they would attain success through *'hard work'* and *'determination'*. While the male participants in the study believed that their fate was in the hands of someone else, *'hoping'* to be given the *'chance'* or *'opportunity'* to do something: This external attribution of success lends support to Kohn's (1977) findings that working class males believe that the fate of their life chances are controlled externally. In a study with a sample of males from a disadvantaged community in North Dublin, Owens (2005) also found her participants attributed success to external forces, "hoping" that they would 'be given a break'. In a similar vein Downes (2003), in a study of Russian speaking heroin users in Estonia explored the concept of 'fatalism' i.e. assessing individual's belief in their ability to control their fate. He also found that fatalism was highly prevalent among the males in this study.

Interpersonal and Cultural Dimensions of Success

Community Relations

The majority (n=7) of female participants highly valued the community that they came from and the relationships that they had within it. When asked what they liked about their community. Participants mentioned the Intrapsychic aspects: '*connection*' and '*a sense of 'belonging' 'the people', and 'the support'* a significant amount of times, while the other female participant valued the physical aspects, more specifically the "pubs".

The males in the study all (n=3) replied with *'nothing'* when asked what they liked about their community. Pretty (2004), Fisher (2002) and Bess et al. (2002) emphasize the psychological importance of belonging to a community and that process providing vital supports, namely: identity, a social network and social outlet.

The perceived impact of aspirational changes on relationships

Perceived alienation from community was specifically named by participants, in relation to career success. This brought with it an enormous sense of loss. When asked: "How will these changes impact on your friends?" participants again named the loss of relationships with friends, while expected, dramatic effects on social and emotional life were also named. One participant further articulated this parting: *"Change the whole person that I am and how I am with them. It will be difficult"* (Leon age 22). When asked about the impact of success on their relationships most of the participants (n=7) used the phrases: [we would] *"drift apart"* or *"grow apart"*.

One participant spoke of the pressure between domestic duties and study: *"Between study and the baby I had no time for my friends. The relationships broke down"* (Laura, age 26, sharing her difficult experience of being a mother, maintaining relationships and undertaking a degree). Cardoza (1991) working with a similar sample of females in the US, notes 'domestic labour' had a sharp negative impact on degree completion.

Perceived impact of career 'success' on family relations

At a first glance the participant's perception of the impact of success appears to be positive. When asked: "How will these impacts on your family". The majority (n=6) simply responded "good or great", however upon further reflection they were ambivalent as illustrated by the following: "*Good and bad*" (Nicola, age 19). Other participants viewed this from their families' perspective:

"Ok, they would be happy for me. I would be staying out of trouble. My Ma wouldn't be as worried as much" (Leanne, age 19),

"They will see me less but it will be good for me. I will be appreciated" (Donna, age 22).

Although these participants' responses were mostly positive, there appears to be some ambivalence as to how they would be in this situation. This is resolved somewhat by being given the opportunity to support their loved ones:

"Good - you could give them [family] more [materially]" (Leon, age 22),

"They would be good because they could have what they want, no worries, go to good schools. And bad because they wouldn't get to spend time with me and we would grow apart" (Maria, age 26).

Fromm (1942), working from a socio-cultural perspective, discusses the high price that individuals pay for interrelation and community. He argues that modern people 'fear freedom'. 'Freedom from oppression', 'freedom from the traditional bonds of society', though giving the individual a feeling of independence, at the same time makes them feel alone and isolated, filled doubt and anxiety, and drives him into new submission and into a compulsive and irrational activity' (1942, p 89). According to Fromm, (1942) the separation from place and community, and the insecurities and fears entailed, assist in the clarification of why individuals seek the security and rewards of social orders. The individual fears two things: the strictures of the community, but also losing the support of the community. This is illustrated in the following: *"Fear of not succeeding – letting people down – fears of losing everything that I have chasing a dream and for what?"* (Leon, age 22). These findings further develop the findings of Boldt (2000) who suggests that the communities of young people from Dublin Inner-city can limit their potential, while Boldt's (2000) participants were not explicit about the constrictions their communities place on them, these findings support the author's interpretations of the varied constraints of the community on these young people's academic success.

Perceived isolation from community as a consequence of 'success'

On the question of what would need to change to become successful, the participants who did not go to college assumed a *'loss of connection'* with the community would occur (n=8). (As previously listed in responses above). It is notable

that participants that did attend college (n=3) talked about this *'loss of connection'* as inevitable. The need for connection' and sense of belonging was expressed continually throughout the study. Taylor et al. (1995) and Gilligan (1982) both discuss the need for an individual to belong, the need for 'assumed connection' as a way of fostering positive adolescent relationships, while simultaneously promoting positive mental health.

At different stages throughout the interviews the group who did go to college (n=3) talked about a lack of understanding from their friends:

"*They thought that it was great but some of them didn't really realise*" (Laura, age 26, sharing her experience of getting her Law degree and the lack of understanding on the part of her friends),

"*I didn't tell them either. I was so ashamed*" (Jane, age 26 sharing her experience of failing a course in college and not being able to tell her friends),

"*They thought that I was clever. That was then. Now they slag me for being on another planet. They just do not get it*" ([laugh] Lisa sharing her experience of when she returned to education and shared her long-term plans to become a therapist).

The need for peer acceptance and support when overcoming adversity is well documented in psychology (see Roosa, 2000; Masten, et al 1990; Rutter1987 and Sameroff, 1982). Furthermore, Piedmont (1988) in a study of fear of success notes the importance of having peers that understand the stresses and strains of education in order to succeed.

Sacrificing relationships

The sacrificing of close relationships was mentioned as a direct effect of success a significant amount of times. The majority of participants (n=9) assumed that they would no longer "have anything in common" with their peers and that this would result in a weakening of the relationship. Two participants took more of a positive stance:

"I'd have to make new friends" (Maria, age 26),

"The friends I'd have would be successful too so they'd be happy for me" (Leon, age 22).

Reay (1998) suggests that it is the ambivalence coupled with the perceived losses that is at the core of why so many working class students pass on education. Furthermore, when asked: "How do you see yourself in this situation?" more than half (n=7) of the participants assumed that [career] 'success' comes at a high price, namely *"stress"*. Lucey at al (2003) highlight the anxiety that often surrounds upward social mobility for working class youth. In their study, the authors found working class youth perceived the road to success as highly stressful.

Effects of significant others

A significant number of participants (n=6) noted the support of at least one person in their life as a factor that contributed to their success. In three of the participant's voices:

"Hard work, well really my friend. She encouraged me all the way" (Jane, age 26 returned to college and obtained a degree),

"Practice, hard work and me Ma. She was a great support" (Lisa, age 26),

"The support of my family, especially my granny. She always said I could be someone" (Charlotte, age 22, working in her dream job).

Interestingly, more than half of the participants cited the support of at least one significant other - a friend or family member - as a factor that contributed to past success. This supports the findings of Gilligan, (1982; 1990), Taylor et al (1995), Downes, Maunsell & Ivers (2006) and Downes & Maunsell (2007). Moreover, Taylor et al.(1995) emphasize the ambivalence that often surrounds these relationships; on the one hand, the individual highly values the relationship and the 'closeness'. Yet, when faced with a problem they feel as though they could not tell the person, for fear of jeopardising the relationship. This ambivalence was echoed in the current study by several participants (n=6). On the one hand, they valued their relations with a significant other and cited them as a contributing factor to their past successes. Yet, when asked about their experience of not succeeding participants said that they could not tell anyone. This silence was accompanied by feelings of guilt and perceived shame.

Perceptions of peer problems

"Drugs", "alcohol" and "crime" were significantly cited as the 'biggest problems' of the participant's peers. All (n=3) of the males in the current study advised younger siblings against entering into *crime.* They appeared to see the initiation into crime in recurring terms. Once you enter into the judicial system, it is almost impossible to break free. This is illustrated by the following: *"Stay away from*

drugs, stay in school, and do not get in trouble with the Law 'cos once you do you can't get out" (Leon, age 22). This is supported by the findings of the North Inner-city Local Drugs Task Force (2005) *Evaluation of Juvenile Arrests* Programme, which found repeated offending behaviours by young people who had become trapped in the 'cycle' of crime.

Educational and Institutional Dimensions of Success

Education as a key indicator of success

Education was seen as a key indicator for success by these participants. When asked to give examples or tell a story of when they were successful, a significant number of participants These findings challenge Kohn's (1970) suggestion that working class people neither want nor desire third level education and the stereotypical middle class professional jobs. Thus the desire for change and upward social mobility expressed by this group does not fit with Kohn's (1970) suggestions, but rather echoes the finding of Downes (2004) and Downes Maunsell & Ivers (2006) with a similar samples in Dublin West and later Downes and Maunsell (2007) with a similar sample in Dublin South Inner-city, these authors found that at least 80% of the sample in West Dublin and up to 100% of the Dublin South Inner-city sample aspired to succeed in education. Moreover, these findings offer further support for Bourdieu's (1977) conception of 'habitus', which suggests that individuals quickly comprehend what conditions make possible for them, and do not to aspire to the

unavailable. At the time when these participants were in at school, the possibility to further their education was met with insuperable obstacles.

Estimation of the value of education

Education was significantly mentioned as an indicator of success. Moreover, lack of education was seen as an indicator of 'not succeeding' by the participants. All participants explicitly used the words *"very important"* when asked how important education was. Education was seen as giving *"opportunities"* and *"a sense of achievement"* by a number of participants. While all participants valued education, this one example crystallises the importance of education for working class youth. When asked: "How important is education to you? Explain", this response was clear and unambiguous:

> *"Very important. It's the only way that a working class girl can guarantee success"*. (Jane, age 26, returned to education at age 20).

The participants in the current study highly valued education and viewed it as a currency to obtain what they desired. Kohn et al, (1977) found that the working classes were considerably less likely to expect (or even want) to attend college and have the stereotypically middle class jobs that require a college education. However, the current study's findings suggest that this working class sample of youth in Dublin inner-city do highly value education. Furthering the findings of Tormey 2007 and Downes and Maunsell (2007) and Downes Maunsell and Ivers (2006), these authors found that not only do working class youth in a disadvantaged setting value education, but they see it as the only viable route out of poverty.

Expectations of education

Holloway (1998) suggests education rarely meets the expectation of working class students. The following findings serve to further illustrate this suggestion: When asked: "Did you get what you expected?" the majority of participants replied simply with "*no*". Two participants further illustrate this:

> "*Not from the school system. I had to figure out what I wanted to do with my life and then I had to enter the 'back door' of education*" (Laura, age 26),

> "*Not really. I got a job, but really I would have loved to stay in school and get more - a better job*" (Jane, age 26).

Cost of education

Despite the supposition that education is free to all, more than half of participants (n=5) unequivocally noted financial reasons for not finishing or continuing their education. In two participant's voice:

> "*I wanted to go to college, but I couldn't.* (Why, was that?). *It just wasn't an option. I needed money*". (Jane, age 26),

> "*I just left, my head was wrecked all my friends had money I just wanted to start making money" (Donna, age 22).*

The current study's participants cited lack of financial support as being fundamental to their decision to leave school early. The cost of education, coupled with the loss of earnings, did not permit these young people to stay on in the education system. Education was seen as a luxury, which this group could not afford.

This finding is further supported by the findings of Combat Poverty (2004), Boldt (2000) Daly & Leonard (2002) and Lynch (1999), who found that it is not that working class families do not value education, but rather that the cost of education and related expenses create enormous barriers. Furthermore, in response to the question: "What needs to change to keep young people in school", participants referred to financial contributions such as: "*Some sort of an allowance*" "*Payment*" "*Money*".

Similarly, Boldt (2000) Lynch (1999), Daly & Leonard (2002) and Combat Poverty Agency (2004) all recognise the financial barriers faced by children from low income families in the Irish education system. Moreover, Carpenter, (2004) notes that poverty produces cultures where people lack a sense of ownership in education. Furthermore, Lynch (1999) suggests that this 'lack of belonging' impacts negatively on participants' hopes and aspirations, through creating a sense of inferiority and of social exclusion.

The lack of access to education

Despite the growth in access initiatives to third level education, there was a grave lack of information around educational opportunities for this group. The need for *greater access: "More funding" "access to college"* for participants and their peers was mentioned a significant number of times. This lack of information surrounding available supports and resources for working class students in education, this may go some way to explain why so few working class students access third level education. This is supported by the findings of research recently published jointly by NQAI, the Irish Universities Association and the National Access Office (2007)

which examined the routes of transfer and progression to degree courses between non-leaving cert students. The findings demonstrate that students currently progressing from education including access students only comprise of 4% of new time entrants.

Acquiring middle class peers

The majority of female participants (n=5) had pre-conceived ideas of what their peers would be like, which were expressed in a negative tone and named in remarks such as:

"Judgemental", "Snobby" and" Pretentious". Moreover, they believed they wouldn't have anything in common with them. Downes & Maunsell (2007) highlight the need to engage with students of similar backgrounds in a meaningful way and that it is of utmost importance when trying to attract and retain working class youth to third level education. In an autobiographical examination of her own experience as a working class academic, Holloway (1998) comments on this negative association with middle class peers, she suggests that this is because the middle class peers highlight the 'otherness' of their working class peers. In their discussion paper to the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, the Educational Disadvantage Centre, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra called for a recognition of cultural identity among working class students "a critical mass of students from working class backgrounds is essential to move beyond a model of access where the students are simply being assimilated into the culture of the college institution" St Patrick's College, Drumcondra 2007, p.15). Third level institutions need to create a situation where working class people choose third level without having to sacrifice their communities in the process, in an environment that allows them to be, rather than

having to be something or someone else, so that third level education is an evolving process that allows the individual to gain rather than lose.

Required changes in education system

Participants specifically mentioned the lack of links between their communities and the education system. These were named in suggestions for 'outreach services' to come into the community. In the voice of one participant:

> *"Maybe they [her peers] could be met half way, education outreach officers to have more of a presence in the community"* (Jane, age 26, returned to education and works in her community).

The majority of participants (n=7) lacked identification within the education system. They had no frame of reference. No one had gone before them. Only three participants had a family member attending college, one of which was a second cousin. Moreover, of the participants that had attended college (n=3) none of these participants had a friend attending college at the same time as them. They were always going to be entering another's territory. Downes & Maunsell (2007) suggest that: "a long-term strategy needs to be adopted to facilitate access for young people from the local area to third level with particular strategic priority to be given to the areas of teaching, law, social policy, social work, youth work, childcare, sociology, psychology" (P. 104). The execution of such a strategy would make improved levels of participation 'of local people in leadership roles in their own community' (P. 104) possible. Moreover, Downes & Maunsell (2007) conclude that this strategy would

build on current third level access initiatives for schools in the area, which provide reserved places for designated disadvantaged schools.

Perceptions of Teachers' attitudes

The need to change *teachers attitudes* were raised explicitly by almost half of the participants (n= 5). According to Lynch (1999) educators can be major support to working class students, particularly in the absence of positive home-school relations. Gilligan (1987) highlights the importance of having at least one strong character in an adolescent's life to ensure the healthy development of an individual. Furthermore, Downes (2003) highlights the significant impact a teacher can have on an individual's aspirations for the future.

CONCLUSIONS

While conceptions of fear of failure have been well recognised in relation to working class youth, the findings of this current study support a different though related fear, namely, the fear of success. Evidence is provided for this fear of success as being in social class terms. Whereas in other contexts, fear of success has been treated in gender based terms, fear of success emerges from interviews with this current sample along a number of dimensions. These dimensions are: Intrapsychic, Interpersonal and Cultural, and Educational and Institutional Dimensions of Success. A brief discussion of the findings in relation to both Horner's (1970; 1972) and Kohn's (1977) findings take place.

Success and Identity

Participants identified money, education, and knowledge as successful, or as Bourdieu (1977) would say, a source of capital. Relationships were also a source of success particularly marriage. The absence of a personal role model for the males in the study is a worrying issue, given their age. In the United States mentoring programmes have yielded significant results with similar samples (Deutsch, 2008).

Intra-Psychic Dimensions of Fear of Success,

Horner (1970; 1972) concluded that women have 'a motive to avoid success or a 'fear of success''. Namely, they feared the negative consequences for their succeeding in traditionally male domains. Such fears were based on societal expectations. The current participants did have a motive to avoid success, and this too was rooted in societal expectations. What was fundamentally different from Horner's findings (1970; 1972) was that a significant number of these young people equally feared

maintaining the status quo. *"That I will go nowhere in life, that things stay the bleeding same"* (Paul, age 20). Moreover, this expression of fearing that things would stay the same appeared to cause equal anxiety, suggesting that young people from Dublin North Inner-city genuinely have a desire to succeed in conventional terms.

Childhood aspirations did not differ greatly, when compared to current aspirations although participants appeared to be fatigued: *I would do it differently. I would stay in school, repeat my Leaving, and go to third level straight after - not have a baby. It was too hard through the back door system"* (Laura, female, age 26, single parent).

> *"I do not know. It was so hard working and going to college, only if I could go full time, otherwise it's so hard".* (Jane, female, age 26, returned to education to complete her degree in Social Science).

Generally participants perceived the road to 'success' as both lonely and isolated - one that is rife with ambivalence of wanting, on the one hand to be socially mobile, financially secure, attain dreams, yet, on the other hand, having to sacrifice relationships and endure lonely isolated conditions to achieve this. Alienation and isolation were seen as a direct consequence of achieving success *"Bad, you feel lonely and left out. But you choose to do it, so what can you do?"* (Laura, age 26). This ambivalence was also apparent when participants tried to imagine themselves in a situation, having achieved their desired outcome. When asked how this would make them feel, 'anxious', 'stressed', and 'happy' were words voiced by the participants.

Interpersonal and Cultural Dimensions of Fear of Success,

Participants highly valued the communities that they came from and the relationships that had within them. What was consistently echoed from other themes was the perceived loss of relationships with family, friends and community as a direct effect of achieving success. This was further developed into loss of "connection" and overall "sense of belonging". Fears of success were named as; the fear of "forgetting myself" loss of cultural identity was seen as the inevitable price of success. Ambivalence was also apparent throughout this theme. Particularly in relation to significant others, on the one hand, they highly valued their relationship and the 'closeness, citing them as a contributing factor to their past successes. Yet, when asked about their experience of not succeeding participants said that they could not tell anyone. "*They didn't know. I couldn't bring that on my family*" (Lisa, age 26, sharing her experience of when she was using drugs). The need to have one person to confide in, in a young person's life is vital to promote positive mental health (Gilligan 1982). It is noteworthy that several of the participants were talking about an educational experience that they could not tell anyone about "*I didn't say it to them. I was ashamed*" (Paul age 20, sharing an experience of exam failure). Furthermore, the participants that did attend college felt that their friends no longer understood them *"They thought that I was clever. That was then. Now they slag me for being on another planet. They just do not get it"* ([laugh] Lisa sharing her experience of when she returned to education). The need for better links between the community and education system was evident from participant voices.

Educational and Institutional Dimensions of Fear of Success

Education was seen as a key indicator for success by these participants; they highly valued education and viewed it as a currency to obtain what they desired. However, the cost of education did not permit these young people to stay on in the education system. Education was seen as a luxury, which this group could not afford. Third level education had become symbolic of sacrifice. These working class young people believed that they were faced with a trade-off dilemma; in order to become educationally successful they must sacrifice their relationships with their family, peers and their community. The majority of participants lacked identification in the education system, and moreover, they believed they wouldn't have anything in common with their middle class peers. The need to engage with students of similar backgrounds in a meaningful way is of utmost importance when trying to attract and retain working class youth to third level education Downes & Maunsell (2007). Each of the participants that did attend college articulated the difficulty they faced when trying to achieve their' 'success', with little or no sign of assistance.

There was a huge lack of information regarding the current assistance and support available to these young people to access education. Moreover, participants specifically mentioned the lack of links between their communities and the education system. The need to change *teachers' attitudes* were raised explicitly by almost half of the participants (n= 5). *"Teachers attitudes and aspirations for pupils. Encourage them [working class children] to go to college, not just take up manual jobs"* (Laura, age 26, left school after Leaving Certificate, returned to education age 20). According to Lynch (1999) educators can be major support to working class students, particularly in the absence of positive home-school relations.

What was fundamentally different from Horner's participants was that the current participants feared maintaining the status quo. Unlike some of Horner's (1970; 1972) participants, all of the current participants, when asked, could imagine themselves being successful. Similarly to Horner's (1970; 1972) findings, the perceived effects of success were named in terms of social and emotional 'consequences'. However, unlike Horner's (1970; 1972) participants, the current participants perceived consequences of success were more intrapersonal then interpersonal, in that Horner's (1970; 1972) participants' perceived consequences were limited to romantic rejection, the current participants consequences were much broader, they included their entire social network, namely family, friends and community.

In contrast to Kohn's (1977) participants the current participants highly valued education.
Moreover, unlike Kohn's (1977) participants those in the current study highly desired change and upward social mobility. However, similar to Kohn's (1977) participants, the male participants in the current study believed that their fate was in the hands of someone else.

In conclusion, the desire for education should never represent loss; working class students should be able to choose education without sacrificing their relationships with: family, friends and community. Education is a human right not a luxury, however, until equity in education is achieved through adequate: information, partnership, financial assistance and cultural recognition, the psychological battle

between desiring social mobility at the sacrifice of identity will continue for this group.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are four key recommendations based on the findings of the current study. The first relates to required changes in policy. These are based on achieving equality in education. The second recommendation is aimed at reforming current provision, while the third recommendation relates to future possibilities; it examines a framework to overcome fear of success. The final recommendation suggests (a) future directions for research.

Reforming structures of inequality in Society

If policy-makers are serious about encouraging equality in education, and guaranteeing the participation of more working class people, then they need to tackle the wider equality issues such as, the financial and cultural cost of education for this group. The current structures and aid that is given maintains the advantage that the middles classes continue to have in the Irish Education system. The need for a more equitable system is illustrated when participants were asked whether they got what they expected from the education system: *"Not from the school system. I had to figure out what I wanted to do with my life and then I had to enter the 'back door' of education"* (Laura, age 26), *"Not really. I got a job, but really I would have loved to stay in school and get more - a better job"* (Jane, age 26). Furthermore, the current initiatives in operation only serve to address the minimum targets set by the government. Equity in education will only be achieved through 'a radical systemic change' (Downes & Gilligan, 2007 p.14). It is only when these issues are tackled will we see an equitable increase in the participation of working class students.

Smyth & Hannan (2000) suggest that only in "Sweden (and to a lesser extent, the Netherlands) has there been any significant reduction in inequality of educational opportunity, a process that is attributable not merely to educational reform but also to diminishing social class differences in income and living conditions" (p. 113). It is by focusing on social class differences that educational reform can genuinely take place.

Recommendation 2: reform of current provision: communities as partners

Since its inception in the 1990's there is no denying that the Access Initiatives have made huge inroads by creating access for individuals, who previously would not have had these opportunities (O'Brien, 2002). Nevertheless, creating equity and a sense of ownership for traditionally disadvantaged groups is still a long way away. Communities have no stake in this partnership, they still remain targets not partners. The system needs to be bi-directional partnership between community, namely, parents, voluntary groups, youth services, local employments services and the educational system. It is not recommended that one system replace another, as the work that Access Initiatives have achieved through their links within the institutions has seen dramatic shifts in attitudes (O'Brien, 2002). Rather what is recommended is a forging a bi-directional partnership; instead of going into communities to base themselves in the community. This desire for partnership was named in suggestions for 'outreach officers' to come into the community and 'meet people half way' (Jane, age 26). *Maybe they [her peers] could be met half way, education outreach officers to have more of a presence in the community"* (Jane, age 26, returned to education and works in her community). This is been done by DCU/Ballymun community and has yielded significant results. There is a need to operate a service that allows

individuals to link in under their terms, while maintaining their sense of community. There is enormous scope for partnerships to be forged that would benefit all parties concerned and ensure a smoother transition for individuals that transfer from one sector to the next.

In addition currently children over sixteen years old participating in the non-formal education system receive a payment, however, a sixteen year old that decides to stay on in the formal education system receives no payment. In a low-income family this can be the difference between leaving and staying on in school as was demonstrated by the findings of the current study for example: *I wanted to go to college, but I couldn't.* (Why, was that?). *It just wasn't an option. I needed money*" (Jane, age 26), *"I just left, my head was wrecked all my friends had money I just wanted to start making money" (Donna, age 22).*

The current provision should be amended so that children in low income families that are sixteen plus receive the same payment as their counterparts in the non-formal education system, as it is inequitable that a child that is being educated in the non-formal education sector receives a payment, while a child with a similar background that attends the formal education sector cannot access this payment. The current provision that is given to students across the United Kingdom is much more fitting, as it targets both the formal and non-formal sectors and rewards students for staying on in education and doing well. This provision is given in the form of an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA); basically, EMA is money that is given to students from low-income households to help them continue their education. If a student is 16 plus and has left, or is about to leave, compulsory education, then they

are entitled to EMA. The EMA system covers all areas of learning; there are all types of courses covering lots of different subject areas – both inside and outside the classroom. If a student qualifies, the amount a student receives is calculated by looking at household income. If a household income is less than £30,810 then the child can get help with £10, £20 or £30 a week. EMA comes in weekly payments of £10, £20 or £30, which go directly into the student's bank account. This payment is not affected by any money a student earns from part-time work, and does not affect any benefits that their parents may get. However, students will only get the money if they regularly attend and work hard on the course. In addition to the weekly amount students may receive top up bonuses – but only if they continue to do well and meet targets set by their teacher, tutor or provider when they start.

The third recommendation relates to a programme that I would like to propose. Having achieved a significant increase in the participation of working class students in education we would still face the challenge of integration so that they are not simply subsumed and assimilated into a middle class mainstream culture. The following is a proposed framework to achieve this; however this is merely a projected future possibility:

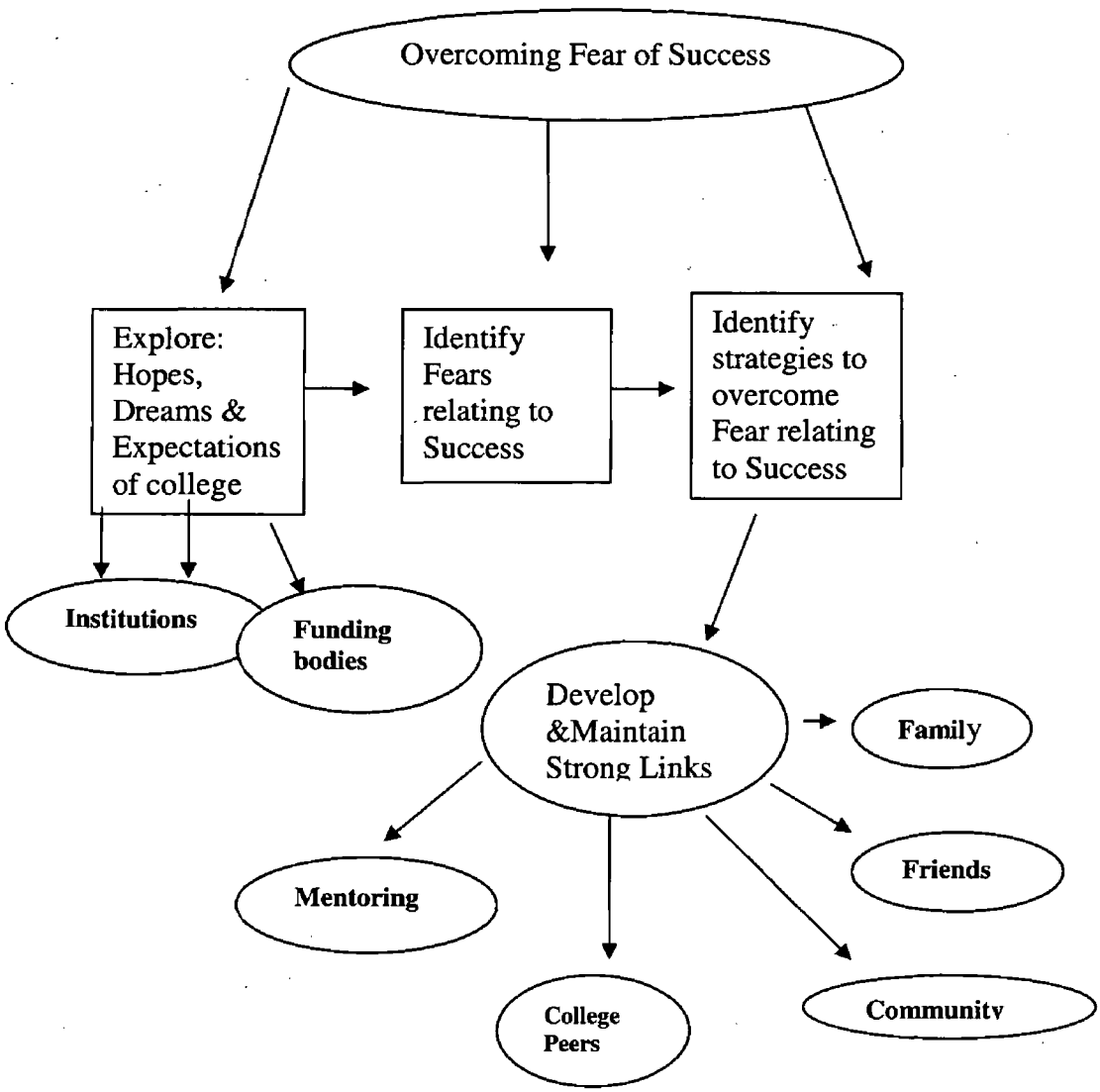
The focus of the programme would be on defeating any fears that are associated with continuing education for working class students entering a middle class world. According to Marra (2006) at the heart of fear is the desire for safety. Inadequate focus i.e. giving into the desire for safety by validating the importance of the threat, results in loss of freedom as the individual places huge restrictions on what they can and cannot do. This is illustrated in the following: *"Fears of losing*

everything that I have chasing a dream and for what?" (Leon, age 22), or *"Of forgetting myself, fearing that I won't fit in, this is my biggest fear"* (Laura, age 26). The focus of the programme then, would be to provide young people, at risk of early school leaving, with the time and space to explore their hopes, dreams and aspirations, while identifying possible fears and obstacles preventing these from occurring.

The programme would be guided by the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). The reason for this is twofold: firstly, CBT is the most effective treatment for overcoming fear and anxiety to date (Wilson & Branch, 2006). Secondly CBT is short and solution focused, its foundation is based on reason, and thus it is a technique that is very often easily understood and applied.

The strategies that would be employed during the programme would include: (a) defining changeable problems; (b) developing highly meaningful and specific goals; (c) asking respectful questions that promote solutions; (d) establishing cooperative relationships by accommodating people's language, beliefs, and preferences; (e) using change-focused questions and language in interviews with students, parents, and teachers; (f) building on exceptions to the problem; (g) reframing the problem; (h) applying paradoxical strategies; (i) presenting ideas and interventions as "suggestions" and "experiments" instead of directives; and (j) empowering and maintaining desired changes. These strategies were taken from: Murphy's (2004), brief solution-focused counselling with young people and school problems (p.210). The programme would centre on Wilson & Branch's (2006) Maxim FEAR, meaning, face everything and recover which is supported by numerous clinical trials and has been applied in thousands of clinical practices worldwide.

Figure 1: illustrates the elements of this programme:



The FEAR programme would operate a revolving door system, whereby older students would be encouraged to act as mentors for the younger students. In the interim, the programme would recruit students from third level education intuitions, with similar backgrounds to act as mentors to the second level students to as to overcome cultural barriers. The mentoring aspect of the programme is a vital component as this would be an aspect that would continue beyond the programme.

For the male participants in the current study there was an absence of personal role models. Downes & Maunsell (2007) highlight the need to engage with students of similar backgrounds in a meaningful way and that it is of utmost importance when trying to attract and retain working class youth to third level education.

Nearing the end of the programme, the co-ordinator acts as a broker for the student developing links with the relevant institutions and agencies. The programme co-ordinator would advocate on behalf of the student with the necessary body. Part of this role is to organise site visits and arrange for representatives of both institutions and professions to liaise with students.

Both the brokerage and mentoring are vital aspects to the proposed programme, as they offer students the opportunity to establish links and relationships within third level institutes while remaining in their community an aspect they highly value: *"The community spirit, the support"* (Donna, age 22), *"The people, they look out for each other"* (Jane, age 26), other spoke about the people: *"The idea that there was always someone. "The community support and the people I grew up with"* The programme co-ordinator will monitor the progress of each student throughout his or her progression from one level to the next. The prescribed time spent with a given student will depend on the needs of the individual.

The fourth recommendation refers to areas for future research.

As it is evident from the limited sample in this current study, when consulted, working class students not only want, but aspire to enter third level education. However, while the desire for upward social mobility is immediately apparent from

the current findings so too are the perceived losses. The literature would greatly benefit from a longitudinal in-depth study that would examine the direct experience of working class students entering and progressing through the education system. In addition the literature would benefit from further research in other areas of Ireland, with more male, different age cohorts, different cultures to examine variation in cultural factors affecting social class dimensions to fear of success.

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APPENDIX (A)

Case Studies

Case A
Jane is 26 years old. She has recently completed a degree in Social Science. She grew up and still lives in Dublin inner-city. She left school at 17, having completed her Leaving Certificate, as she could not afford to stay on in school. She is currently in a long-term relationship and has a four-year old son from a previous relationship. She also works full-time as a youth worker. However, Jane says, she would like *'to do more'*. Her father is a painter and decorator and her mother is a homemaker. Nobody in Jane's family has attended college.
Case B
Lisa is a 26-year old female. She grew up and still lives in her family home in Dublin inner-city. Lisa completed her Leaving Certificate and left school at age 17. She had a real desire to continue her education. However, finances did not permit this. She has a long-term plan of becoming a therapist and has returned to college on a part-time basis. She is currently in a long-term relationship. She is participating in a return to education programme. Her mother is a housewife and a part-time cleaner and her father was a builder. He is currently unemployed. Nobody in Lisa's family has attended college.
Case C
Maria is a 26-year old female. She grew up and still lives in her family home in Dublin inner-city. She left school when she was 16 years old, but she was asked to leave because she was pregnant. Maria plans to return to college someday. She is in a long-term relationship and has two children, aged 8 and 6 from a previous

relationship. She works in a local shop part-time. Her mother is a housewife and her father works as a porter for Dublin City Council. Nobody in Maria's family has attended college.

Case D

Laura is a 26-year old female. She grew up and still lives in her family home in Dublin's inner-city. She completed her Leaving Certificate and left school at 16. However, she returned to education at age 20 and received a Diploma in Law, after which she transferred to the B.A. More recently, she sat and passed the entrance exams to the Law Society. Her father works in haulage and her mother is a home-maker. She has a four-year old daughter and is currently single. Laura's two brothers attended college. Both of them studied Business and Accountancy at Diploma level.

Case E

Gerard is a 19-year old male. He grew up and still lives, in Dublin inner-city. He left school when he was 15 years old. He was expelled. He was in prison for two years. He completed his Junior Certificate while in prison. He is in a long-term relationship and currently lives with his partner. Gerard is unemployed. He is actively seeking employment. Both his parents are unemployed. Nobody in Gerard's family has attended college.

Case F

Paul is a 19-year old male. He grew up and still lives in his family home in Dublin inner-city. He completed his second level education. However, he failed his Leaving Certificate, and left school at age 17. He is currently single. He is unemployed at present. He is actively seeking an apprenticeship programme and wants to be a builder. His mother is a cleaner and his father is a builder. Nobody

in Paul's family has attended college.
Case G
Donna is a 22-year old female. She grew up and still lives in Dublin inner-city. She left school when she was 16. She was struggling academically and she states that the teachers did not offer her the support that she needed, so she left and got a job in a bakery. Donna is currently in a relationship and lives with her partner and their 2- year old son. She is currently unemployed. Her mother is a home-maker and her father works as a care-taker for the Dublin City Council. Nobody in Donna's family has attended college.
Case H
Nicola is a 19-year old female. She grew up and still lives in her family home in Dublin inner-city. She left school when she was 17. She became stressed as she had fallen behind in her studies for the Leaving Certificate and, believing that she would fail, she left. She undertook an administration course in the community and is currently working as an administrator in a local haulage firm. Nicola has returned to education on a part-time basis to take a Leaving Certificate course. She is in a long-term relationship. Her mother is a catering assistant and her father is a builder. Nicola's aunt attended college and obtained a degree.
Case I
Leanne is a 19-year old female. She grew up and still lives in her family home in Dublin inner-city. She completed her Leaving Certificate and left school when she was 17, as she needed to start making money. Leanne works as a receptionist in a local transport company. Her long-term dream is to be a professional choreographer. Her mother is a home-maker and her father is a car park attendant. She is currently single. Leanne's brother attended college and successfully

completed a Business Diploma course.
Case J
Leon is a 22-year old male. He grew up and still lives in his family home in Dublin inner-city. He left school at 15 when he was expelled for misbehaviour. He is currently in a long-term relationship. He is two and a half years into a plumbing apprenticeship. Both his mother and father are unemployed. Nobody in Leon's family has attended college. Leon dreams of being an English premier league footballer but he has recently sustained a serious injury and has had to rethink his future as a professional footballer.
Case K
Charlotte is a 22-year old female. She grew up and still lives in her family home in Dublin inner-city. She left school when she was 16 as her grandmother was unwell and she felt that she should be at home to help take care of her. She did return to education when she was 19. She did a social-care course and is currently working as a care assistant. This is something Charlotte always wanted to do. Her mother is deceased and her father is unemployed. Nobody in Charlotte's family has attended college.

APPENDIX (B)

Themes

1. Success: perception, experience of success: participant's perception of not achieving success, conventional ideals of success, personal role models of success, how participants' families felt about their success, how participants felt when they achieved success, how Participants perceived the 'cost of success', perception of the effect of success on friendships, perception of alienation as a result of career 'success', perceptions of the need for change, perceptions of the need for change, Participant's fears of success
2. Life Experience: personal achievements, perceptions of drug-use, participant's experience of drug use, participant's projections of guilt, experience of shame, participant's hopes, dreams and aspirations, participant's earlier aspirations, perceptions of struggles and hard work, participant's expectation for the future, factors influencing success
3. Participants Relations: community relations, the perceived impact of aspirational changes on relationships, perceived impact of career 'success' on family relations, perceived isolation from community as a consequence of success, perceived lack peer support, sacrificing relationships, effects on significant others, the role of determination/hard work, perceptions of peer problems, the effect of maintaining the status quo
4. Participants' educational experiences: negative educational experience, estimation of the value of education, expectations of

education, expectations of the education system.
5. Barriers to Education: cost of education, how the system overlooked personal difficulties, access to education, the value of supported access, perceived problems with accessing education, acquiring middle class peers, perceptions of teacher's attitudes, required changes in education system, power to change.

APPENDIX (C)

Sample Interview Schedules 1&2

Interview # 1

Background

I How old are you?

I Are you married or in a long-term relationship?

I Do you have any children

I Where did you grow up?

I What do you like about the area?

I What do you not like about the area?

I Can you explain a little more?

I What would you like to change about the area?

I What are the dangers for young people in the area?

Social Class

I How old were you when you left school?

I Why did you leave?

I What was your favourite subject?

I What was your least favourite subject?

I What did you expect to get from education?

I Did you get what you expected?

I What would you have liked to have learned that you didn't?

I What needs to change to keep young people in school?

I If you had the power to change one thing about education what would it be?

I How important is education to you? Explain

I Can you explain why.

I What do your parents work at?

I Has anybody in your family attended college?

-if yes where?

I What 3 pieces of advice would you give to a younger brother or sister?

Interview # 2

Experiences of Success or Failure

I How would you perceive Success?

(Tell me the first five images of success that come into your head)

I Give me examples of people that you think are successful.

I How would you define not succeeding?

(Tell me the first fives images of failure that come into your head)

I Give me examples or tell me a story of when you were successful.

I -What did your family think?

I -What did your friends think?

I What helped you to succeed?

I Give me examples or tell me a story of when you were not successful

I -What did your family think?

I -What did your friends think?

I Give me examples or tell me a story of when a friend was successful

I What have you felt like when you succeeded?

I What have you felt like when you had not succeeded?

I When you were younger what dreams would you have had for yourself?

- **If you succeed how much less or more time will you have with your families.**
- **If you succeed how much less or more time will you have with your friends?**

Hybridity / Identity;

- **How will/did you cope with success?**
- **What changes/adjustments are required of you?**
- **How would this make you feel?**
- **How will these changes impact on your life (family, friends, and partner)?**
- **What are the biggest problems your friends have?**
- **How can they be helped?**
- **If you had to do this again would you?**

Relations: Family/Friends

- **How will success affect your life?**
- **How will success affect your family?**
- **How will success affect your relationship with your friends?**
- **How will not succeeding affect your families?**
- **How will not succeeding affect your friends?**
- **If you succeed who would most benefit outside of you?**
- **If you fail who will it have the most impact on out side of yourself?**
- **What do you expect/imagine you're new friends to be like?**

Fear of success

I Is becoming successful in the future realistic?

I -how will this make you feel?

I Is becoming successful in new ways something you are trying to be?

-If yes, how?

I What hopes & dreams have you got of success?

I How have these changed from when you were younger?

I What fears would you have?

I What worries you about this situation?

I What would you expect to happen?

I How do you see yourself in this situation?

I Will this change your life? If so how?

I What will it cost you NOT to succeed? (Maybe money prestige,respect, dignity etc).

I Is taking drugs a sign of success or failure for people in the area?

Please explain.

APPENDIX (D)

Tables

Table 1: Offer s a breakdown of participants by: age, gender, occupation.

GENDER	AGE	OCCUPATION
Charlotte	22	Care assistant
Donna	22	Unemployed
Gerard	19	Unemployed
Jane	26	Youth worker
Laura	26	Apprentice Solicitor
Leanne	26	Administrator
Leon	22	Apprentice Plumber
Lisa	26	Student
Maria	26	Shop assistant
Nicola	19	Administrator
Paul	19	Unemployed

Table 2: Offer s a breakdown of these participants by: age, gender, and current successful circumstances:

NAME	AGE	GENDER	CURRENT SUCCESS
Charlotte	22	Female	Currently working as a care assistant in a remedial clinic.
Jane	26	Female	Returned to education to complete her degree in Social Science and currently works as a youth worker in her community
Laura	26	Female	Returned to education and completed her degree in Law and more recently completed entrance exams to the Law Society
Lisa	26	Female	currently participating on the return to education programme; has longer- term plan of becoming a therapist
Nicola		Female	Recently returned to education and is currently enrolled on a Leaving Certificate programme.