

# Never , Never Gonna Get It: The Effects of Social Class on Academic Achievement Among Marian College Students

*Sociology*

Cristi Downing, Marian College  
B.A. in Sociology  
Class of 2008

---

## ABSTRACT

*Over the past fifty years, researchers have gained interest in exploring class inequalities in education. While early studies focused on racial inequalities, later studies found race to be insignificant, compared to the results that focused on socioeconomic status. The results presented in the study of Marian College parallel that of the prior research and also provide insight to specific phenomena happening at this institution. The sample of the data collected and analyzed was drawn from a sample (N=64) of the student body at Marian College located in Indianapolis, Indiana. The findings present significant relationships between income and how it has and continues to affect the academic achievement of the students sampled. Of the respondents sampled, most reported an average family income well above the national poverty level and Indiana's median income. All respondents reported a cumulative college grade point average of 2.9 or higher, supporting the claim that socioeconomic status does affect academic achievement.*

## INTRODUCTION

“School is a battlefield” argues Willis (1977); it is intended to reproduce the social and technical needs of the standing government and economy through conflict and contradictions. Those who attend school are expected to conform and study hard to achieve “lieutenant status” in a given

country or they will rebel and serve as “infantry soldiers.” They will serve nonetheless and continue to maintain the social class structure in place as redeemed through the appropriate opportunities of their education. Although actions and policies dealing with educational equality have undergone much scrutiny and renovation in the past fifty years to overcome racial barriers, educational inequalities continue to be presented to the “underclass” and among “at risk” students (Coleman 1988: 101).

Beginning in the mid 1960s, researchers began studying why various kinds of inequalities seemed to be reproduced in education. At this time, the focus was mainly on race and the effects of segregation on schooling. One study done by Coleman, et al. (1988), concluded that there was not much of a difference between minority students and white students concerning learning ability. Due to factors like educational advantages among whites, including curriculum and available facilities, the differences in educational outcomes were a result of students’ familial backgrounds such as poverty level, health, and parents’ education (Coleman 1988: 95-96). Jencks, et al. (1968: 64) also came to the same conclusions: academic performance in school had little or virtually nothing to do with race but primarily was a direct result of a student’s socioeconomic status.

Additional studies suggest that educational segregation of the affluent and the underclass is on the rise. Students whose families can afford for them to go to private schools or can afford to live in upper class neighborhoods where schools are

adequately funded receive a better education than those students who live in low income neighborhoods and attend poorly funded public schools. The traditional impoverished peoples of the inner cities around the United States are now “jobless poor,” where before the poor were at least receiving a minimal amount of earned income (Wilson 1996: 567). This has resulted in children receiving an insufficient education, lacking the context needed to be successful in the world as working adults. These students are then left to mimic the lives of their parents.

Post-industrialization theory as presented by Sassen (2006: 163) proposes and supports this fact, revealing that technological and economical advances in global capitalism have created new inequalities and worsened existing ones. Since America is comprised of global cities that employ a few professionals and technological labor, few high paying jobs are to be found; therefore, there is little or no need to educate the masses of Americans to perform at those levels. However, corporate institutions do in fact have needed positions for the undereducated work force to perform. These include cleaning tasks, secretarial duties, and clerical work, and are now being performed by the same people who would have worked in factory positions at the beginning of the twentieth century (Sassen 2006). Overall, as society has changed from being racially segregated to integrated and from industrial to global, the education system has maintained its advantage for the middle and upper classes and its disadvantage for the lower and impoverished classes. All in all, schools reinstate and preserve the social bounds to keep the affluent educated and the poor just barely reading (Coleman 1988; Jencks 1968; Sassen 2006; Willis 1977; Wilson 1996).

In this study, the relationship between social class and academic achievement is evaluated on the campus of Marian College, located in Indianapolis, Indiana. This research is based on a random sample of students surveyed regarding their economic and educational backgrounds. The purpose of the study is to determine who gets admitted into Marian

College, how one gets there, and what one’s entering intent is for one’s future upon graduation from Marian College. The survey (see Appendix A) includes questions about academic achievement as measured by high school graduating grade point average, college grade point average, chosen major, past family income, parent(s) encouragement for the respondent to go to college, family ability to support the student financially while in school, attained family education, introspective view on social status, and future plans upon graduation from Marian College. This data contributes to the active studies on the educational inequalities in the American education system and could be useful for overall comparison and analysis.

#### SOCIAL CLASS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The effect social class has on academic achievement continues to be analyzed by many social researchers. Drawing on Coleman’s work, later researchers highlighted that schools were not built solely for education but were also designed to impose and maintain social order and constraint. Coleman (1988) himself elaborated on the idea that the school was designed to render differing quantities and qualities of social capital. In reference to education, social capital is the networking availability for parents in a given educational environment and the outcomes that the able involvements turn out. It reinstates the existing social structure in a given society by limiting an individual’s ability to be mobile within that society. In other words, schools where parental involvement is high produce higher achieving students than those which do not have as high of a parental involvement. Supportive research found the United States National Education Longitudinal Study, NELS (1988) affirms that available school networking matched with parental involvement—or, that *school ambiance* (Coleman 1987) results in higher achievement (Haghighat 2005).

In regard to the social outcomes accomplished

through social capital, studies also suggest that the school serves to produce a worker to reinforce the existing economic structure in place (Mickelson and Ray 1993; Spring 1996; Willis 1977). For instance, consider the masses of students enrolled in business courses in both high school and college that are not necessarily equipped to become heads of corporations, but only the workhorses who will be stationed in middle management positions in the restaurant and sales industries. Weaver (1969) compares the idea of social capital to schooling by evaluating the previous institution that provided the means for economic success: the factory. This comparison lies on the former use of children in the factory in order to prepare them for the future: more work in the factory as an adult. The idea Weaver presents about the factory and now the school is to prepare the youth for the long hours of the work day, to follow directions, and in the end, maintain order in the economy.

How this plays into social class and academic achievement, however, depends on the type of school and the type of student. For instance, Weaver gives the example of elementary schools working primarily to enforce the structure of the way a school should work; students are to be quiet; teachers are to make sure the students stay in line. High school, however, is used to sort out workers, thinkers, and supervisors, providing students with “tracks” for learning their role in the economic world. A longitudinal study involving high school sophomores (NELS 1980) shows that high school placement in the college track significantly benefits growth in overall academic achievement in mathematics and language arts and the likelihood of high school graduation. Conversely, those not placed into college tracks showed a lower likelihood to go to college and in some cases, a failure to graduate from high school. Tracking helps to reinforce preexisting inequalities in achievement among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Gamoran and Mare 1989). Social class contributes to inequality by dictating what kind of school one is able to attend and what “track” will

be offered (Coleman 1988; Domina 2006; Gamoran and Mare 1989; Haghigat 2005; Weaver 1969).

## THE CHANGING CLASS STRUCTURE

In more recent years, the change in achievement has been attributed to the change in the American economy. The late nineteenth century and the beginning to the middle of the twentieth century focused on industrialization, which gave many people jobs and more importantly, job security (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2002: 350). In relation to schooling, there was not much demand for a higher degree in order to do factory work because most of the skills needed would be found in vocational classes.

In the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, the American industry has been disappearing, and in its place high technological job fields that require highly educated and highly skilled workers have sprouted. However, these jobs do not employ nearly the amount of workers that could be found in a factory, resulting in job loss, pay decrease, low demand for unskilled workers, and ultimately a rise in the lower social class (Sassen 2006; Spring 1996; Wilson 1996). Another contributing factor to be considered when discussing the decreased demand for factory workers is the revolution of the machine. More machines are designed to replace jobs of the worker, or the payroll employee period (Rottenberg 1964).

Since Coleman’s (1988) initial study, more sociological theorists have begun to argue that a student’s family’s economic background shapes his or her academic performance, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or any other demographic variables (Jencks 1968: 107-108; Moore and Renner 2004: 238). This view asserts that while a minority student may perform at lower levels, it is the family’s income level rather than race which precludes this occurrence. When measured statistically, more minorities are poor than are whites (Bauman and Graf 2000), but lower academic achievement can be found in poor white students as well (Indiana

Department of Education 2005).

Also relevant, in relation to family economic background, or socioeconomic status, is the student/teacher relationship. In support of the findings in census data, one study showed that teachers' willingness to help and effectiveness in helping a student is often determined by the materials the student has to offer, ranging from the physical tools like pencils, paper, etc. to his or her mental and emotional "character" tools; even the personality that one is equipped with by and from the familial environment may have impact (Stephenson 1951).

Overall, social class shapes the educational opportunities students are presented with and the likelihood of having a better education. The more affluent or wealthy a family is, the more likely the child(ren) of that family will be better educated due to the family's ability to place the student in the "better" institution or school, in order to remain in his or her current socioeconomic standing (Kerckoff 2001). In contrast to that, the poorer the family is, the less likely the child(ren) of that family will be well-educated, as shown in the initial studies of Coleman (1988) and in the recent statistics of the United States Census (Bauman and Graf 2000).

## METHODS

### *Data*

Data for this study were drawn from a sample of Marian College students including those students living in campus dormitories and those students who commute. Marian College is a small private campus with a student enrollment of less than 2,000, and is located in an urban setting on the west side of Indianapolis, Indiana. Data was collected by the use of in-person, self administered surveys. The students included in the sampling processes that live in campus dormitories were chosen using a table of random numbers to select specific dorm rooms. The person who answered the door was chosen to be surveyed, provided he or she attended Marian College. The time and date of the sample was Tuesday, April 3, 2007 from approximately two

o'clock in the afternoon to five o'clock in the afternoon. Those students who commute to Marian College were taken from a convenience sample in the Ruth Lilly Student Center located on the Marian College campus at ten o'clock in the morning on Monday, April 9, 2007.

All chosen respondents were given an identical survey that was used to evaluate the various aspects of his or her education, family background, socioeconomic status, and future goals (see Appendix A). These questions were then categorized and assessed to find specific links between academic achievement and socioeconomic status. Finally, the results were used to make an overall correlation between Marian College students and past studies done in this field of research.

### *Measures*

**Academic Achievement** is derived from a series of close-ended questions that ask students to gauge his or her high school achievement, and the questions included: "What was your high school graduating grade point average?" and "What is your accumulated grade point average thus far at Marian College?" The analysis of this data includes frequency distributions and cross tabulations.

**Socioeconomic Status** is a composite measure that includes family educational background, yearly household income, and importance of education. Reported socioeconomic status is derived from the questions, "How important is it that your education be from at least the middle class" and "What type of environment did you grow up in (inner city, urban, rural, etc.)." Family educational background is derived from the questions, "What is the highest earned degree of your mother," and "What is the highest earned degree of your father"; yearly household income is derived from the question, "To the best of your knowledge, what is your family's yearly household income?" The analysis of this data includes frequency distributions and cross tabulations.

*Demographics*

Other questions on the survey asked about the general demographics of the respondent as a student: sex, age, major area of study, minor area of study, years spent at Marian College, years spent at other colleges/universities, current status at Marian College, and if the respondent lived on or off campus. The analysis of this data includes frequency distributions and cross tabulations.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 suggests that the disparity in income is not representative of previously collected United States based data (U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division 2005). Over 65% of all the respondents surveyed in the sample reported an average annual household income of \$50,001 or more. This percentage of reported income level is much higher than the recorded poverty level. The poverty level is measured by number of persons living in one household; for instance, a four person household would have an average annual income level of less than \$22,000 (\$17,029 x 1.25) (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services 2007). The average annual income levels reported by the respondents are in fact even higher than the median income level for the state of Indiana which is approximately \$44,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division 2005).

Other statistics presented in Table 1 show that more female respondents were available for surveying than male students at Marian College. Most students surveyed (75%) were aged from 19 to 22 years old. Also, of the students surveyed most reported that his or her status at Marian College is at the freshman (31.3%) and sophomore (39.1%) level. This common statistic among the students surveyed can be assumed to be due in part to their similar living situation, the Marian College dormitories.

**TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics of Sample**

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Total Number of Respondents in Sample (n): 64   |       |
| <u>Sex</u>                                      |       |
| Male  | 42.2% |
| Female  | 57.8% |
| <u>Age</u>                                      |       |
| 17-18   | 6.4%  |
| 19-20   | 53.9% |
| 21-22   | 23.8% |
| 23-24   | 3.2%  |
| 25-28   | 4.8%  |
| 29+   | 8.0%  |
| <u>Marian College Status</u>                    |       |
| Freshman  | 31.3% |
| Sophomore                                       | 39.1% |
| Junior  | 18.8% |
| Senior  | 10.9% |
| <u>Reported Average Annual Household Income</u> |       |
| Under \$20,000                                  | 4.8%  |
| \$20,001-\$30,000                               | 6.3%  |
| \$30,001-\$40,000                               | 9.5%  |
| \$40,001-\$50,000                               | 11.1% |
| \$50,001-\$60,000                               | 9.5%  |
| \$60,001-\$70,000                               | 19.0% |
| \$70,001-\$80,000                               | 6.3%  |
| \$80,001-\$90,000                               | 11.1% |
| \$90,001+                                       | 22.2% |

Table 2 illustrates a significant relationship between average annual household income and bill paying responsibilities of the respondent. ( $\chi^2(df)=8.006(7)$ ;  $p<.008$ ). Students with a reported familial average annual household income below \$40,001 were more likely to have to help with bills around the house than students whose average annual household income was above \$40,001. Over 50% of all respondents in the less than \$40,001 income level reported helping with household bills while in high school.

**TABLE 2. Bill Responsibilities of Respondents and Average Annual Household Income**

| Reported Average Annual Household Income | Respondents w/ Bill Responsibility | Respondents w/o Bill Responsibility |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Under \$20,000                           | 66.7                               | 33.3%                               |
| \$20,001-\$30,000                        | 75%                                | 25.0%                               |
| \$30,001-\$40,000                        | 33.3%                              | 66.7%                               |
| \$40,001-\$50,000                        | 14.3%                              | 85.7%                               |
| \$50,001-\$60,000                        | 0%                                 | 100%                                |
| \$60,001-\$70,000                        | 0%                                 | 100%                                |
| \$70,001-\$80,000                        | 0%                                 | 100%                                |
| \$80,001-\$90,000                        | 28.6%                              | 71.4%                               |
| \$90,001+                                | 7.1%                               | 92.9%                               |

Chi-Square: 8.006      df: 7      N=63      P=64

Table 3 shows significance in the data related to the respondents' cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) and the highest degree earned by the mother/female guardian. ( $\chi^2(df)=110.004(6); p < .05$ ).

**TABLE 3. Respondents' High School GPA and Degree Earned by Mother/Female Guardian**

| Highest Degree Earned by Mother/ Female Guardian | Cumulative High School Grade Point Average |       |
|--|--|-------|
|  | Below 2.9                                  | 3.0+  |
| Some High School                                 | 0%   | 1.6%  |
| High School Diploma/ GED                         | 9.8%                                       | 42.6% |
| Some College                                     | 3.3%                                       | 8.2%  |
| Associates Degree                                | 3.3%                                       | 6.6%  |
| Bachelors Degree                                 | 1.6%                                       | 14.6% |
| Masters Degree                                   | 3.3%                                       | 60.0% |
| Doctoral/ Professional Degree                    | 0%   | 0%    |

Chi-Square: 110.004      df: 6      N=61      P=64

The table shows that students at Marian College whose mother/female guardian earned a minimum of a Bachelors Degree had higher percentage (74.6%) of having a high school grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Those whose mother/female guardian

earned less than a Bachelors Degree were more likely to have a high school grade point average of 2.9 or lower (16.4%). Further, no respondent reported that his/her mother earned a degree higher than a Masters Degree. This data reveals that the mother/female guardian's education level may have an impact on the respondent/student's academic performance. The value in this finding asserts that social reproduction is a result of parental involvement, specifically the mother/female guardian's participation.

In association to Table 3, Table 4 examines the relationship between the highest earned degree of the father/male guardian and the cumulative high school grade point average of the respondent. The Chi-Square test was not significant, suggesting that the mother/female guardian's education level does not affect student academic achievement more than the father/male guardian's education level. However, there was a noticeable pattern that suggested that the higher the father/ male guardian's degree the better the respondents academic performance. Again this finding asserts that parental involvement and parent's level of education is insignificant to the academic achievements of the student.

**TABLE 4. Respondents High School GPA and Degree Earned by Father/ Male Guardian**

| Highest Degree Earned by Father/ Male Guardian | Cumulative High School Grade Point Average |       |
|--|--|-------|
|  | Below 2.9                                  | 3.0+  |
| Some High School                               | 0%   | 3.4%  |
| High School Diploma/ GED                       | 6.9%                                       | 36.2% |
| Some College                                   | 0%   | 19.0% |
| Associates Degree                              | 3.4%                                       | 5.2%  |
| Bachelors Degree                               | 5.2%                                       | 12.1% |
| Masters Degree                                 | 1.7%                                       | 5.20% |
| Doctoral/ Professional Degree                  | 1.7%                                       | 0%    |

Chi-Square: 126.286      df: 6      N=58      P=64

Table 5 examines the effect average annual household income has on the respondents' cumulative high school grade point average. Although the Chi-Square test is not significant, this table helps to support the primary statement made about Table 1, citing that the reported average annual household income of the respondents does not account for all social classes. Therefore, because there is no significance found in this study, according to Chi-Square, this does not mean that in a larger sample significance would not be found. It does suggest, however, that because the income levels of the respondents are high, his or her grade point average should be high as well, which is found in the data; no respondent reported a cumulative high school grade point average of less than 2.0.

**TABLE 5. Cumulative High School GPA and Average Annual Household Income**

| Average Annual Household Income | Cumulative High School Grade Point Average |       |
|---------------------------------|--|-------|
|                                 | Below 2.9                                  | 3.0+  |
| Under \$20,000                  | 1.7%                                       | 3.3%  |
| \$20,001-\$30,000               | 0%   | 6.7%  |
| \$30,001-\$40,000               | 0%   | 8.3%  |
| \$40,001-\$50,000               | 5.0%                                       | 6.7%  |
| \$50,001-\$60,000               | 1.7%                                       | 8.3%  |
| \$60,001-\$70,000               | 1.7%                                       | 15.0% |
| \$70,001-\$80,000               | 1.7%                                       | 5.0%  |
| \$80,001-\$90,000               | 1.7%                                       | 10.0% |
| \$90,001+                       | 6.7%                                       | 16.7% |

Chi-Square: 8.637      df: 8      N=60      P=64

Table 6 examines the effect average annual household income has on the respondents' cumulative grade point average at Marian College. Like the findings in Table 5, this table supports the descriptive data found in Table 1. It is consistent in the affirmation that there is poor representation of a variety of social classes in the sample; therefore, Table 6 cannot adequately represent/contradict the findings in previous research.

**TABLE 6. Cumulative GPA at Marian College and Average Annual Household Income**

| Average Annual Household Income | Cumulative GPA at Marian College |       |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
|                                 | Below 2.9                        | 3.0+  |
| Under \$20,000                  | 1.6%                             | 3.2%  |
| \$20,001-\$30,000               | 1.6%                             | 4.8%  |
| \$30,001-\$40,000               | 1.6%                             | 8.1%  |
| \$40,001-\$50,000               | 4.8%                             | 6.5%  |
| \$50,001-\$60,000               | 3.2%                             | 4.8%  |
| \$60,001-\$70,000               | 4.8%                             | 14.5% |
| \$70,001-\$80,000               | 1.6%                             | 4.8%  |
| \$80,001-\$90,000               | 1.6%                             | 9.7%  |
| \$90,001+                       | 9.7%                             | 12.9% |

Chi-Square: 8.905      df: 8      N=62      P=64

Table 7 refers to the frequencies of the respondents' reported plans after graduation from Marian College. The table shows that over 60% of all the respondents plan to enter the workforce with a Bachelors Degree upon graduation. Nearly 30% plan to acquire a higher degree, such as a doctoral, law, or medical degree. A mere 3.1% had other plans, which was specified on the survey as "joining the military."

**TABLE 7. Frequencies of Reported Plans after Graduation from Marian College**

| Plans after Marian College |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Grad/ Law/ Med School      | 29.7% |
| Enter Workforce            | 67.2% |
| Other                      | 3.1%  |

N= 64      P=64

**DISCUSSION**

This study suggests that there is valid data that can be found at Marian College to support the studies of

previous research. Although this study does not confirm major injustice of concern in the background research, it does suggest an association between income and academic achievement. The results presented show that most of the respondents reported their average annual household income to be greater than the average annual household income of most Indiana residents and of the nation as a whole. No respondent reported a cumulative grade point average at Marian College to be lower than a 2.0, suggesting that there is high academic achievement or those students are discharged. These results affirm the prior studies' allegations that the higher the income level or socioeconomic status the higher the achievement level of the student.

Other results suggest that income affects the lives and opportunities of the respondents. Significance was found in relationship to income and whether or not the respondents were responsible for household bills. This result suggests that the respondent may have had to work or somehow get income to help the family afford its lifestyle in some way.

Also found in the results of the survey was the emphasis of the mother/female guardians' education level on the respondents' grade point average while in high school. This could be associated with what has become known as the "second shift" (Hochschild 2003) that is endured by mothers/female guardians simply due to gender roles and socialization. The second shift includes housework, transporting the children to and from activities, but more importantly to the focus of this research, the effect the mother/female guardians' education has on the high school achievement level of her children. To support the finding of the mother/female guardians' vital effect on a child's high school achievement, the results of the study provided evidence that the father/male guardian's level of education had no effect. Chi-Square was not significant in that relationship. Further, no respondent reported a mother/female guardian as having earned a degree higher than a Masters Degree; whereas, the reported father/male guardian did earn above a Masters Degree.

My study, therefore, supports and parallels the other studies that have presented the original and the progressive research on the effects of social class on academic achievement. The results are consistent in the findings that income matters in regard to academic achievement and academic access. Although the findings in the results do not explicitly coincide with the noted prior studies, there is definite evidence that social class affects academic achievement and entrance into Marian College. The majority of respondents that reported above average income levels and above average achieved cumulative grade point averages support this fact.

In order to better represent the population of Marian College, a larger sample would have been beneficial, and to better represent the overall population in general, a sample would need to be drawn from a more diverse location. Also, because the majority of the sampled students were between the ages of 19 and 22, there may be some discrepancy as to whether or not the reported average annual household income is accurate. In order to alleviate this potential misinformation, the parents of the respondents involved should also be represented and sought out to participate in a survey.

Table 7 resonates with the argument about globalization and the pertinence for an extreme amount of education in order to potentially be successful in the changing world. The respondents, however, show a strong tendency to enter the work force immediately after graduation which may in fact prove to be detrimental to his or her future if the economy continues to change as rapidly as it has been in recent years.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the data collected here suggests that a general middle class income is needed in order to afford Marian college. If the research were to be repeated again in the near future, it would be beneficial to know the occupations of the parents, whether or not affording the expenses of Marian



College are a burden to the family, and if there was any specific reason that the student chose the college to begin with. This information would have helped to explain the reported average annual household income levels of the respondents and if indeed there was potential discrepancy in the reported data that was collected.

From the collected data, there would not be a need to for policy to be instated; however, in order for all people, lower, middle, and upper classes, to succeed, it is necessary to make attaining a college education more affordable in order to help combat educational inequalities. Also, it would be interesting to find out if the family has or will be affected by the globalizing economy; although some respondents reported that his or her parents/guardians have earned a Bachelors Degree or higher, there were many more who reported that their parents had earned less than a Bachelors Degree. More often the results of the data showed that the parents/ guardians earned a high school diploma or GED. With that in mind, globalization will soon, or expectedly, change the United States economy more. This will have significant effects on the job market and ability for the currently employed to keep their job without a higher degree. It will also impede on the expectations of the respondents if they are relying on 'making it' like their parents/guardians did without a higher degree, potentially even higher than that of a Bachelor's Degree. This information should be presented on a grand scale to college students, high school students, and grammar students alike in order to prepare them mentally for the amount of education they may have to endure or should want to pursue to live in or continue living in a 'middle class' world.

---

## REFERENCES

- Bauman, Kurt J. and Nikki L. Graf. 2000. "Educational Attainment: 2000." *Census 2000 Brief*: 2-13.
- Coleman, James S. 1987. "Families and Schools." *Educational Researcher* 16: 32-38.
- Coleman, James S. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *The American Journal of Sociology* 94: S95-S120.
- Domina, Thurston. 2006. "Brain Drain and Brain Gain: Rising Educational Segregation in the United States, 1940-2000." *City & Community* 5: 387-407.
- Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf, and Todd Swanstrom. 2002. "Economic Inequality and Public Policy: The Power of Place." *City & Community* 1: 349-372.
- Gamoran, Adam and Robert D. Mare. 1989. "Secondary School Tracking and Educational Inequality: Compensation, Reinforcement, or Neutrality?" *The American Journal of Sociology* 94: 1146-1183.
- Haghighat, Elhum. 2005. "School Social Capital and Pupils' Academic Performance." *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 15: 213-235.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russel. 2003. *The Second Shift*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Indiana Department of Education. 2005. *School Data: Accountability System for Academic Progress*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Department of Education. Retrieved Feb. 1, 2007. (<http://mustang.doe.state.in.us/SEARCH/s3.cfm?county=49>).
- Jencks, Christopher and David Riesman. 1968. *The Academic Revolution*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Publishing.
- Kerckhoff, Alan C. 2001. "Education and Social Stratification Processes in Comparative Perspective." *Sociology of Education* 74: 3-18.

Mickelson, Roslyn A. and Carol A. Ray. 1993. "Restructuring Students for Restructured Work: The Economy, School Reform, and Non-college-bound Youths." *Sociology of Education* 66: 1-20.

Moore, Thom and K. Edward Renner. 2004. "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: The Elusive Search for Racial Equity in Higher Education." *Analyses of Social Issues & Public Policy* 4: 227-241.

National Center for Education Statistics. 1980. *High School and Beyond: National Education Longitudinal Study of 1980*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics. 1988. *High School and Beyond: National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Rottenberg, Simon. 1964. "Adjustment to Senility by Induced Contraction." *The Journal of Political Economy* 72: 575-583.

Sassen, Saskia. 2006. *Cities in a World Economy*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Spring, Joel. 1996. *American Education*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Publishing.

Stephenson, Richard. 1951. Education and Stratification. *Journal of Educational Sociology* 25:34-41.

U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division. *Income 2005*. Retrieved April 11, 2007. (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/income05/statemhi2.html>).

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. *The 2007 HHS Poverty Guidelines*. Retrieved April 11, 2007 (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/07poverty.shtml>).

Weaver, James H. 1969. "The Student as Worker."

p.p. 59-65 in *The University and Revolution*, edited by G. R. Weaver and J. H. Weaver. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Willis, Paul. 1977. *Learning to Labor*. New York: Columbia University Press Morningside Edition, Columbia University Press.

**APPENDIX A**

**FAMILY BACKGROUND AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG MARIAN STUDENTS SURVEY**

This survey evaluates the effects social class and economic status on the academic achievement of Marian College students. Your participation is completely voluntary and all responses will remain anonymous.

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years

Major(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Minor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Years at Marian College  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Years at other colleges or universities

Current Status at Marian College:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Freshman \_\_\_\_\_ Sophomore  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_\_ Senior

What is your current cumulative grade point average at Marian College? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you plan to do after you graduate from Marian College?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Attend Graduate/Law/Medical School  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Get an Internship  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Enter the Workforce  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other\* please specify \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week do you work off campus while in school? \_\_\_\_ Hours

Do you live on campus? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Type of high school you attended:

- \_\_\_\_ Public
- \_\_\_\_ Private religious
- \_\_\_\_ Private non-religious
- \_\_\_\_ Home schooled

Your estimated high school grade point average at the time of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

What type of hometown environment did you grow up in?

- \_\_\_\_ Urban
- \_\_\_\_ Rural
- \_\_\_\_ Suburban
- \_\_\_\_ Other

What is your current cumulative grade point average at Marian College? \_\_\_\_\_

Highest degree earned:

MOTHER/ FEMALE GUARDIAN

- \_\_\_\_ Some high school
- \_\_\_\_ High school diploma/ GED
- \_\_\_\_ Some college
- \_\_\_\_ Associates Degree
- \_\_\_\_ Bachelors Degree (BA, BS, BSN, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_ Masters Degree
- \_\_\_\_ Doctoral/ Professional Degree (PhD, JD, MD)
- \_\_\_\_ Other\* *please specify* \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER/ MALE GUARDIAN

- \_\_\_\_ Some high school
- \_\_\_\_ High school diploma/ GED
- \_\_\_\_ Some college
- \_\_\_\_ Associates Degree
- \_\_\_\_ Bachelors Degree (BA, BS, BSN, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_ Masters Degree
- \_\_\_\_ Doctoral/ Professional Degree (Ph.D, JD, MD)
- \_\_\_\_ Other\* *please specify* \_\_\_\_\_

When you were in high school, were you responsible for paying any household bills?  
 \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

How much encouragement did you get to go to college from your parent(s)/ guardian(s)?  
 \_\_\_\_ They insisted I go.  
 \_\_\_\_ They insisted I go and they are paying for my schooling.  
 \_\_\_\_ They wanted me to go but could not pay my way.  
 \_\_\_\_ They said it was not for me.  
 \_\_\_\_ It was my decision.

Were you ever encouraged to just get a job right after high school?  
 \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If so, by who were you encouraged?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you are in college, how much financial support do you receive from your parent(s)/ guardian(s)?  
 \_\_\_\_ They are paying for all my tuition and other costs.  
 \_\_\_\_ They are not paying because my student loans and scholarships cover all my tuition expenses.  
 \_\_\_\_ They are not paying for anything.

Approximately how much financial aid do you receive on average per year?

SCHOLARSHIPS

- \_\_\_\_ Nothing
- \_\_\_\_ Less than \$5,000
- \_\_\_\_ \$5,001-\$10,000
- \_\_\_\_ \$10,001-\$15,000
- \_\_\_\_ \$15,001-\$20,000
- \_\_\_\_ More than \$20,001
- \_\_\_\_ Full ride scholarship

OTHER GOVERNMENT SOURCES

- \_\_\_\_ Nothing
- \_\_\_\_ Less than \$5,000
- \_\_\_\_ \$5,001-\$10,000
- \_\_\_\_ \$10,001-\$15,000
- \_\_\_\_ \$15,001-\$20,000
- \_\_\_\_ More than \$20,000

Think about your education generally and rate **how important** you think each of the following is for getting ahead in life:

|  | <u>Very</u> | <u>Somewhat</u> | <u>Little</u> | <u>Not at All</u> |
|--|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Having well educated parents?                          | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |
| Having a good education yourself?                      | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |
| Having a college degree (BA/BS/BSN or higher)?         | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |
| Having a high school grade point average, above a 2.0? | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |
| Having a college grade point average, above a 2.0?     | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |
| Being from at least a middle class family?             | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |
| Having a high family income?                           | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                 |

To your knowledge, how much is your family's combined average annual income?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Under \$20,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$20,001-\$30,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$30,001-\$40,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$40,001-\$50,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,001-\$60,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$60,001-\$70,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$70,001-\$80,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$80,001-\$90,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$90,001 or More

---

*Cristi Downing is a recent graduate of Marian College, majoring in Sociology with minors in Business Administration and Spanish, and a concentration in Peace and Justice Studies. Cristi now lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, working in marketing and promotion, and intends on returning to school once she establishes residency.*