

WHAT ARE THE CULTURAL VALUES OF A CASE OF ASIAN HIGH-ACHIEVING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

Amy Pan*

Introduction

We always want to improve education. We look to other countries and see that the people of Asian countries consistently perform well in school and honor knowledge and education. How can we improve education if we do not understand how the “best” students study and perform?

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to examine the cultural values behind why a set of twin Asian Indian girls are high – achieving. The main question that this research is setting out to answer is, “What are the cultural values of Asian Indian high – achieving students?” The qualitative sub questions include: “How do high – achievers attain their high scores?” and “How can our society value education in such a way that promotes high – achievement?”

The definition of a high – achiever is anyone who has scored at the top of his/her class in regard to grade point average (GPA) and standardized test scores. What this interview is hoping to achieve is an understanding of high – achievers’ drive, motivation, and parental support that aids in their success. How can future students become like these high – achievers? How can educators motivate their students to achieve high marks? Are there underlining philosophies that guide high achievers?

The researcher chose this rationale because of a fascination with the respect and honor that Asian cultures place on education. After travelling to China numerous times, the researcher is enthralled that teachers are valued at the top of society in Asian countries. This fascination leads the context, methodology, and framework for this case study. The researcher is a doctoral candidate from a large public university in the southern United States. While completing her Master’s degree, the researcher focused on English as a Second Language and wrote her dissertation on Chinese Language Learners. This aided in knowledge of Asian cultures. The researcher also has nine (9) years of experience as a teacher at the elementary and middle school level. The researcher has also spoken with Dr. Tom Fischgrund, the author of the book, *1600 Perfect Score: The 7 Secrets of Acing the SAT* (2003). This text is as a monumental piece of literature in which Fischgrund (2003) surveyed 160 students who achieved a

* AMY PAN, Louisiana State University. Email: apan2@lsu.edu.

perfect score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. In the interview, Fischgrund stated that he had not asked questions in regard to ethnic nor immigrant status. He also stated that there is not enough research on immigrants who perform well on standardized tests. The focus of the case became clear because there is a need and purpose for this research.

Review of Literature

Multicultural lives are all around us and we must embrace our diversity. It is increasingly important to understand ethnic and immigrant variation in the United States. We are a nation of immigrants. One in four residents is foreign born or native born with at least one foreign – born parent. The definition of a foreign-born resident is anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. The definition of a native-born resident is anyone born in the United States. The definition of a first-generation resident is anyone who is foreign born. Second and third generation residents has a foreign – born parent or grandparent (respectively). The Asian Indian twins in this case study are foreign – born first generation residents. The United States Census Bureau estimates that in 2013, 38% of the population is considered a minority (US Census Bureau, 2013). It estimates that by 2060, this will increase to 56%. According to Tseng (2016), Asian Americans represent a rapidly growing demographic whose growth rate is currently the fastest in the nation, even surpassing Latin Americans. Asian Americans are defined as those individuals, children, and youth who reside in the United States whose ancestry stems from Asia (e.g., Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam).

Historical Background

Immigrants are a part of the United States and their journey is very important. It is the time now to discuss the shifting cultural – community contexts (Stein & Garcia Coll, 2016). The first wave of Asian Indian American immigrants was from middle class professionals. They were admitted into the United States by the *Hart–Celler Act* of 1965 (Rangasmy, 2000). Occupational preferences category were included in the *Hart–Celler Act*, which favored doctors, nurses, and engineers, who were in high demand. Even if the immigration growth remains constant by current standards, the Asian American population will have increased by 79% between 2000 and 2050 (Ortman & Gauneri, 2009). Tuan (1998) stated that Asian Americans are in the “model minority.” In one study of high school students in the Southeastern United States, over 99% of Asian Americans, which included East, South, Indian, and Chinese Americans, were reported to have been stereotyped as model minorities (Thompson & Kiang, 2010).

Reason for Achievement

A number of cultural factors influence the educational success of Asian Americans (Kao & Thompson, 2003). This may stem from high parental expectations of educational success, a characteristic that seems to transcend socioeconomic class (Louie, 2004). Kao and Tienda (1995) labeled the “immigrant optimism hypothesis,” which finds that immigrant youth, many of whom are Asian, are more likely to believe in the value of education for future success and to do better in school. Asian American cultural values regarding hard work, family, and education enable their success (Lee, 2009). Kao and Tienda (1995) also state that children of immigrant parents do well in school because they benefit from their parent’s recent arrival via their optimism about opportunities in the United States. There are specific cultural values and beliefs that immigrants use to enhance their achievement in America (Kim, 2002). Rivas – Drake (2014) stated that “recognizing their Asian heritage and establishing a positive sense of ethnic or cultural identity has widely beneficial consequences for youth development, including academic, health, and psychosocial adjustment.” Many immigrants hide their heritage because they want to assimilate into American culture. However, studies have shown that ethnic identity is important in one’s overall sense of self. Parents who attend school events, enroll children in classes outside school, or take children on outings may be more motivated or better informed about their child’s needs (Glick, 2007). The participants in this research study are both violinist in a Chamber Orchestra in a high school in Southern United States. They have studied the violin since third grade and there are concerts twice a year. Their parents have attended many concerts and have supported ventures of their daughters.

Methodology Design

The framework for this case study is single and holistic (Yin, 2009). The twins are single because they are interviewed individually. For example, they have similar values and are thus considered singular. The reason the case is holistic is because the researcher is looking at similarities. The researcher is studying the common experiences of twin Asian Indian high – achievers. The typology of sampling is maximum variation. The participants for this data were a set of twins who are Asian Indian. Priya Balamurugan (pseudonym), was first found out on the school system’s webpage. The researcher was browsing the website and saw the announcement that “Priya Balamurugan obtained a perfect ACT score.” The announcement included a short biography of Priya including that she was a violinist in the Chamber Orchestra in a high school in Southern United States. The researcher is a violist and Orchestra Director and her husband is a bassist and Orchestra Director. The researcher’s husband teaches these twins and they are violinists in his Orchestra class. The design of the research study was conducted using purposeful sampling. The typology of the sampling strategy in this qualitative inquiry was theory based, homogeneous, and maximum variation (Miles & Huberman, 2013). The reason the sampling strategy was theory based was because the theory was that Asian Indian students have a specific culture. In regard to the review of literature, the Asian Indian people value education and have

respect for teachers. The reason the sampling strategy was homogeneous is because the students are twins. Their parents were also interviewed and thus, the family included homogeneous members. The reason that the sampling strategy was also a snowball strategy was because the students were found as a referral. The researcher's husband teaches the twins violin in their Talented Music class at a high school in Southern United States. The researcher's husband has also met with the parents in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings. The researcher will also use this qualitative research as a doctoral dissertation.

The researcher's role in this particular research is of an interpreter (Stake, 2010). Creswell (2017) states that case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real – life, contemporary bounded system over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information.

Data Collection

On Saturday, February 25, 2017, I interviewed Priya Balamurugan for thirty (30) minutes, her twin sister, Parvathy Balamurugan for thirty (30) minutes, and their parents for another thirty (30) minutes. For the purpose of this activity, I will use the data only from Priya's interview. However, for the mini case study I will synthesize all of the interviews. The interview was at the Balamurugan's residence. The first interview was of Priya from 10:15 am. – 10:45 am. The second interview was of Parvathy (Par) from 10:45 am. – 11:15 am. The third interview was of their parents, Sreetha and Subremanen. The following interview protocol includes the questions asked for all three interviewees. All three interviews were transcribed (see appendices). The purpose of the interview is to gain information on how high achieving students are motivated and use certain study strategies.

Interview Protocol

Priya	Parvathy	Sreetha and Subremanen
Can you tell me about how you received your high score?	Do you think it would be different if only you would want to do well?	Can you tell me about how you've instilled these values of respect in your daughters?
Can you tell me about when you were younger? You were born in India, correct?	Can you tell me about the values you have for education?	They had mentioned the dance.
Can you tell me more about when you were younger? Did your parents help you?	Do you see students who don't pay attention in class?	Do you find Americans have a different level of respect.
Tell me how it's motivating (In response to motivation when studying with her twin).	Do you remember an age when you started working hard?	Do you think you have instilled a work ethic?
Do you think it is just yourself, would it be different (in response to studying with a twin)?	You talked about your friends.	Tell me they started learning how to read. You said, from 4 years old, right?
Tell me about your first	Can you explain your routine	Can you tell me how you

school experience.	with Priya?	established a mood for studying?
Tell me about how you value education. Maybe it's your parents, or how you feel this internally.	Have you had similar grades?	Did you ever feel you need to force or bribe them?
Do you ever talk to your sister about how you both value education and how it is important for each other?	Is there something annoying people ask you about being twins?	So they learned inner motivation.
You said that when you have a lot of homework you tell yourself, "don't get frustrated and don't give up." How do you feel not giving up has contributed to your success?	What city were you born in India?	Tell me about how you found out you were going to have twins.
Tell me about your friends.	You mentioned the schooling of your cousins. How did you notice things that are different?	I teach a set of twins where one twin failed a grade and one had to keep going.
Tell me about how your teachers influenced you.	Do you want to make your parents proud?	Tell me about how your parents influenced your way of parenting. Is it similar?
Tell me how your parents have instilled in you about respecting your teachers and elders.	Tell me how you value respecting your teachers and elders.	
You mentioned it is a part of your culture (in response to respect).	What would you say if a student says that they don't respect their teachers?	
Is that an Indian dance (in response to saying namaste to her dance teacher)?	Do you think that kind of value is something you have always had?	
Do you speak other languages as well?	When you say it is a part of your culture.	
Do some of your friends have similar passions as well as being high – achieving? Do you have the same valued?	Have you ever met someone who has similar values but doesn't work as hard as you?	
If you didn't work so hard, how do you think that would reflect on yourself and your family?	And, you think you have the confidence before you start.	
Do you ever think, "How do I get my drive?" If someone were to ask you, "I don't have a lot of drive," how could you help them? You seem to have a lot of drive.	You mentioned being aware. You're not lying to yourself.	

Even if you had your parents, teachers, and your sister pushing you, how do you think you have achieved so much, even if they have helped you? Still, mentally you are prepared because you passed an IQ test. So, do you acknowledge your hard work more than your intellect?	Tell me how you prepared for the standardized tests. Did you go to Princeton Review?	
Do you think there is a misconception with intellect and talent?	You seem very focused.	

Analysis

The codes that are present in the analysis of the interview include getting a *perfect ACT score* (36). For example, Priya stated that, “I practiced more than I had before, so I guess that is why I got a good score.” Priya spoke about her *parent’s involvement* at a young age. For example, Priya stated that, “I have to really thank my parents, because since we were little, they would make us practice. My parents have always supported me and if we need quizzing and stuff, they help me.” She also spoke about her *respect for teachers*. For example, Priya stated that, “Most people don’t know how to do things by themselves; they need to be taught and coached by other people. Teachers are very important and it’s really important to thank your teacher.”

The largest cluster of codes including putting *effort into education*. This is a cluster because Priya mentioned this numerous times throughout the interview. The label that is representative for these themes includes: “EFFORT”. For example, Priya states that, “Even for standardized tests, if you get a high score, people think you are smart; but not really. Standardized tests are how much you prepare, how much you practice, how much you know.” She mentions throughout the interview that hard work pays off and that there is a misconception between intellect and hard work. She stated that, “The misconception between intellect and hard work is the exact opposite. The people who are doing well are doing well because they are working hard. The other people aren’t doing well because they are not working hard. I don’t like when people think that those that get good grades do it effortlessly. I put a lot of effort into this.”

Report

The interviewees include Priya, Parvathy, and their parents. The twins are both “Number 1” in their junior class at a high school in Southeast Louisiana. The high school calculates scores based on GPA and test scores. Priya received a perfect American College Test (ACT) score in December, 2016. The perfect score is a thirty – six (36).

Priya was born in Travandrum, India. She has an identical twin sister named Parvathy and they are the only children of Bala (short for Subremanan) and Sreetha

Balamurugan. The girls were born in India and later moved to the United States. They were born in Trivandru, which is a city in the state of Kerala, India. Their parents speak Tamil at home, but the girls answer back in English. At the age of two (2) months old, Bala and Sreetha parents moved to New Mexico as post – graduate students. They both have Ph.D.'s in Chemistry and moved to Baton Rouge when the twins were three (3) years old. Their parents have worked at Louisiana State University (LSU) as post – doctoral students in Chemistry since 2003. Priya Balamurugan and her family do not mind if I use her full name in any documents. Thus, actual names are used of the respondents. Priya was dressed in a blue dress shirt and pants. Her demeanor is shy and very respectful. Her personality can be described as nice and driven. Her twin sister, Parvathy, received a thirty – three (33) on the ACT. I spent thirty (30) minutes interviewing her as well and will use the data in the “mini” case study for this course. My impressions of Priya were profound. She is very well spoken and presents her ideas in a concise manner. She was such an avid reader at a young age that her parents had to tell her to “stop” reading. As a punishment for misbehaving, Priya was not given “time – out” or reduction of privileges like “no internet,” or “no TV.” Because Priya and her sister would read all the time, the punishment was to not read. This impression will stick with me because not many people enjoy reading as much as Priya does.

There are several themes from the transcribed interview. For example, the interview started with Priya stating how important education is. She said she gives thanks to her parents for working hard with her at a young age and always supporting her. She spoke that, “in our culture,” which identifies with the Indian culture of respecting teachers and elders. She went into giving examples of an Indian dance where the students all begin the dance with three “Namastes:” one to the audience, one to their teacher, and one to themselves. She mentioned this because it is involved her culture as well as trying to prove her point that respecting teachers is important. For example, if she just said, “Yes, it is important to respect your teachers,” then we would assume that it is a value. However, because Priya described her dance experience, she painted a picture of what her culture identifies to reverence. This was a very important distinction and was very monumental in the interview. I was deeply moved and have reflected on her description of the “namaste” meaning that Priya provided in the interview.

Another theme in the interview was the amount of effort she perceives that she puts into her studying. She mentioned that it started very young, even before first (1st) grade. Her parents would help her practice math. Later on, her parents stated that they would buy an entire grade of math the summer before school and complete the Book before starting in August. An underlining theme throughout the interview was the fact that she strongly believes that there is a direct correlation between hard work and high achievement. For example, she stated that, “I don’t think I am good at math, but I have worked very hard at it.” She mentioned that, while she identifies there might be a concept such as “talent,” she gets mad when people think that she gets good grades and achieves a perfect ACT score effortlessly. Priya has reiterated that she works very hard and that is the reason she is so successful.

Data Reduction and Interpretation

The purpose of this interview was to answer the question, “How do high – achievers attain their high scores? What values do high – achievers have?” The definition of a high – achiever is anyone who has scored at the top of his/her class in regard to grade point average (GPA) and standardized test scores. What this interview is hoping to achieve is an understanding of high – achievers’ drive, motivation, and parental support that aids in their success. How can future students become like these high – achievers? How can educators motivate their students to achieve high marks? How can our society value education in such a way that promotes high – achievement?

The first theme that was found in these three interviews was parental, teacher, friends, and family support.

Theme 1: Parental, teachers’, twin, and friends’ support

Sub – Theme	Quotations
Parental support	Priya – I have to really thank my parents because since we were little, they would make us practice. They have always supported me and if we need quizzing, they help me.
Teachers’ help and support	Priya – In the gifted program, they let you advance and not wait. They help motivate me to take certain classes and compete. That gives me more confidence. One of my friends almost got a B and her teacher said, “Why do you have that B? If you need some help, let me know.” The teachers are very helpful.
Twin support	Priya – It’s helpful to have her because it is more interesting and more motivating. Par - It is easy for Priya and myself to do well because we have each other. I like studying with Priya because we are really focused. Because we are twins, our ability is the same.
Friends’ support	Priya – I think that is a big part. All of my friends work hard. If you are around people who don’t work as hard as you, then you don’t feel like continuing to do so. They are also high – achieving and you want to stay on that level. It depends on what school you are at. It’s a group effort and you don’t feel weird. Some of my friends are also Hindu with the same mindset. I have some other friends who are not Hindu with the same mindset. I guess it is not religion but valuing hard work. Par - Also, our friends are also high – achieving and it is a group effort. We all work hard and help each other out.

The second theme was about their culture. Both of Priya and Par's parents are Indian and both grew up in Kerala, India, which is in the state of Travandrum. The sub themes of culture include the value of education, respecting elders, and cultural values. The cultural values include respect, empathy for teachers' jobs, importance of knowledge, Indian dance, and Hinduism.

Theme 2: Culture

Sub – Themes	Quotations
Value of education	<p>Priya – “I think it is important.”</p> <p>Par - Yes, I know that they studied well when they were young. They haven't pressured us, but I know they would want us to do well. They are really supportive, so the least I can do is do well. It's nice to make your parents feel proud.</p>
Respecting elders	<p>Priya – “I have to thank my parents.”</p> <p>Par - I think it's really important because, if you think about it, all the things you have been taught is from your teachers. If you think about it, they have put in a lot of hard work to teach you their subject. The way to respect them is to be polite and show them that you care. You do your homework. They put in a lot of effort. A lot of students, including me, think, “this is a lot of homework.” But they are doing that to help you. So, I think it's important to respect your elders, and especially respect your teachers. They are working for you. You should at least show some respect for what they are doing for you.</p>
Cultural values	<p>Respect:</p> <p>Priya – Our culture really respects elders and teachers. You should have respect for that and for what they are doing. They are people who really care and take their time to teach. There's a lot of respect. What you are doing probably is because they taught you to do it. Most people don't know how to do things by themselves. They need to be taught and coached by other people. Teachers are very important.</p> <p>Par - Yes, my parents have always said you need to respect teachers. It is also a part of our culture to really respect your elders. It's very important. I think it has been ingrained since I was very young to respect your teachers and elders. Especially if they are helping you or teaching you something. That is something you will need and they are helping you. Indian</p>

	<p>culture it's important to respect your elders. Even in the language, when you are talking to someone older than you, that is the respectful part. Even, with our dances, we do this thing where we thank the audience, our teacher, and god. Especially for dance, your teacher is teaching you this dance, but it applies to other subjects. Knowledge is important and their work is important to get to where you need to be.</p> <p>Empathy for teachers' jobs Priya- It's probably not easy to keep teaching.</p> <p>Knowledge is important Priya – Knowledge is important.</p> <p>Indian dance Priya - You thank your audience, yourself, and your teacher. You say, “Namaste” and the dance is based on Hinduism.</p> <p>Hinduism Priya - We have Sunday school and there are two temples. We discuss the Gita.</p>
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The third theme includes effort, drive, mindset, self – awareness, and preparation. The girls spoke a lot about putting effort into their school work. They have attributed their success to these qualities.

Theme 3: Effort, Drive, Mindset, Self - Awareness Preparation

Sub themes	Quotations
Effort	<p>Priya – I always tried to do my best. You might get the grades you want, you might not. But, if you try at least you'll learn it and if you put all your effort into it, then it's bound to end up being good. Some of my friends are also Hindu with the same mindset. I have some other friends who are not Hindu with the same mindset. I guess it is not religion but valuing hard work. The people who are doing well are doing well because they are working hard. The other people aren't doing well because they are not working hard.</p> <p>Par - My parents have always said, “Try your best and work hard.” In class I have always tried to do my best, listen to the teacher, and get things in on time. I really listen to the teacher, do my homework correctly. My parents have really encouraged me to work hard. It's not that we are smart, but I pay attention because I know I can't learn it by myself. I think if you paid attention a really</p>

	long time, listened to the teacher, and have a good attitude about learning, then it helps you.
Drive	Priya - I have to do so much preparation, and I am used to that. They think we are really smart, but No, it's because we have been doing it forever. It is not a new thing for me to work hard. I have always done a lot of homework.
Mindset	Priya – The reason you are doing it is to learn, it will end up good. Don't get too stressed. If you feel like you failed a test, keep going. If you think, "I'm probably going to fail," you probably are going to fail. But if you think, "I'm going to try my best," then that is all that I can do for myself. It's a better mindset than, "I have to get this." There is something where you say, "I know I really worked hard on this, and I am happy it turned out well." But, if you didn't really work, and went through life, then there isn't the same satisfaction doing as if you worked really hard. If you work really hard then you have the satisfaction of, "Well, I guess it paid off." Yes, I don't think I am super great, but I also think that if I want to, and really try hard. I also acknowledge when I'm not good at something. For Social Studies, I am not good at remembering dates.
Self – awareness	Par - Being aware that you need to study is really important. You should understand you are not great at something. But, that doesn't mean I can't become good at this. Don't give up on something. If you think you don't need to do this, chances are you need to do this.
Preparation	Priya - Standardized tests are how much you prepare, how much you practice, how much you know. Sreelatha - Every summer, one week before we would cover the next school year. English, math, everything. We bought a lot of Books. I make them do the math. They will do it. We have to say that. Then when they go to school, they feel very good.

The fourth theme is the home environment. Sub – themes include inner motivation, a calm environment, and free of distractions. Sreelatha, the twins' mom, was very important for this data because she and her husband provided a framework for their home environment and house rules.

Theme 4: Home Environment

Inner motivation	Sreelatha - They want to feel good. You will
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	feel good if the teacher asks you something and you know it. They know the math because in the summer we would finish the next year's math Book. We went to Sam's Club and bought these Books. We helped them and then when they go to school and feel good. Parents should help their children. They don't like it if we bribe them. We never give them any money. They don't have any money. They would get up in the morning and start reading. If they do something wrong, then they cannot read for one week. There is no way we can stop them from reading.
Calm environment	Sreelatha - We helped them. We know they didn't like tv, but they used to like it. We knew that they needed silence. If we talk too much, they said, "why don't you go over there, we are concentrating." We understood that they need to concentrate. We used to have tv on at my house and I need to study. I think they need the calmness. They will be studying here (at the table) and I will be cooking. Otherwise they will get distracted.
Free of distractions	Sreelatha - At the end of the day, they asked, "Can you take our phones away from us?" I would ask them if they completed their homework and they would do it right away. No TV, nothing. We do our work so they can study. They don't like tv. In the holidays, we'll say, let's watch a movie (maybe from Mumbai). They don't like it, and they go and read. From the beginning, from 4 or 5 years, they would read, read, read.

Discussion

This research was very informative. This was the researcher's first research course and it has been very beneficial in regard to using data for the dissertation. The interest of high – achieving students has been something life – long. The researcher has always wanted to attend an Ivy League school because of the prestige. Having a perfect ACT score will assist any student to achieving their dreams of being accepted into a good college. This research is important because standardized test scores are considered "high – stakes" testing. In 2012, the Obama Administration launched "Race to the Top" (U. S. Dept. of Ed., 2012). This competition was designed to promote achievement and awarded states with finances to continue this achievement. It's objective is to provide incentives for states and local educational agencies to implement reform strategies. There is a lot of research in the field of standardized tests. Regardless of whether it is a debatable topic about "teaching to the test," there is value to standardized tests.

In regard to the *referential* function of communication, I was able to obtain information from Priya and Parvathy in regard to their demographics. For example, questions were asked about their schooling, how many times they have taken the ACT, and the demographics of their biography (place of birth, where she has lived, who is in her family). In regard to the *emotive* function of communication, Priya revealed how passionate she is about her work ethic. For example, when she started talking about the difference between people who work hard and the people who “rely” on their intellect, her mood became very adamant. In regard to the *conative* function of communication, I noticed that I complimented her on her drive. For example, I asked the question, “How do you give advice to people who think they do not have drive? You seem to have a lot of drive.” She said, “Thank you.” However, I do not think she was trying to please me. I think her passion for her education was revealed after this statement.

In regard to the *metalingual* function of communication, I was able to obtain a successful interview because of the agreement of terms. For example, when I first contacted Priya’s mom (Sreetha), she had a heavy accent that I had a difficult time comprehending. However, with the role of empathy and understanding, we were able to come to an agreement about meeting and it was quite successful. In regard to the *poetic* function of communication, Priya stood out as an advocate for hard work and determination. For example, when she was asked about her drive and motivation, Priya was very confident and “poetic” in her knowledge of motivation. In regard to the *phatic* function of communication, I felt that we ended on a high note. The ebb and flow was definitely that – the energy of the interview went up and down. However, the end was strong and we were able to connect as an interviewer and a respondent.

Future research includes expanding on this research to include other “Perfect ACT” scorers. Ideally, I would like to interview at least ten (10) students and their parents for my dissertation. I will take quantitative research in the summer and would like to develop a survey for the participants. Then I will combine the qualitative and quantitative data to used mixed methods research.

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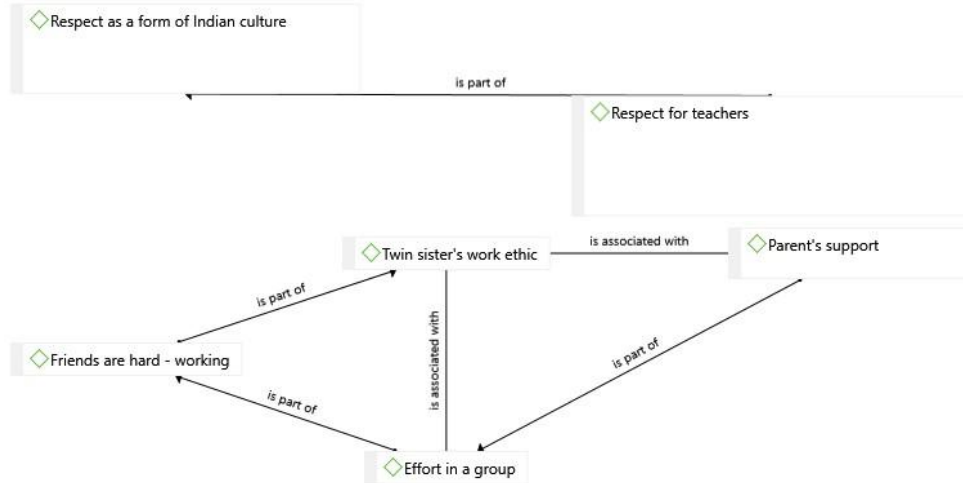
Appendices

Appendix 1: Reflections

Even though I know a lot of people are not proponents of standardized tests, I have to see the end line – college admissions. For example, I had a 3.9 GPA in high school. However, I wish I had known the ACT better so that I could have scored higher. I do regret not studying harder and now I am dedicating my life to helping my children achieve a high score on their ACTs and SATs. While to some this might seem menial, I see the value of standardized test scores. Those that score in the 99% on SATs can get hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships and be accepted into Ivy League schools. I would like that more people have this opportunity. I also wished I had gone to an Ivy League school. However, I hope that my research as a Ph.D. researcher will assist my children on this path. I think I could have had stronger interviewing skills. However, considering this was my first interview, I notice that “practice makes perfect.” For example, after interviewing Priya, and then her sister Parvathy, and then their parents, I kept getting more confident. A certain focus became the center of the interviews. I was trying to understand how these girls obtained their drive and focus. Their house was extremely calm and inviting, and speaking to their parents was

enlightening in more ways than one. The mini case study will be an important piece of repertoire as a doctoral researcher because I will be able to synthesize wonderful findings in the field of education and learning.

Appendix 2: Networks



Appendix 3 : Transcription

Interview – 2/25/17 10:15 AM.

Interview	Coding
Myself: So, can you tell me about how you received your high score? Is it the ACT or SAT? Priya – ACT. Myself – Ok. Priya - Well I took it, it’s like the third time taking it. I took it once in my 8 th grade year, like in the end. And the once at the end of my sophomore year and then last December. Um, and um, I practiced, I guess, and uh, prepared more than I had before, so I guess that is why I got a good score.	TOOK ACT 3 TIMES
M – You’re a junior, right? So, next year you’ll be a senior, right? And, you got the 36 score, correct? Could you spell your first name? Priya – Yes, I am a junior and I received a 36.	PERFECT SCORE
Myself - Ok, so now, could you tell me about when you were younger? You were born in India, right? Priya: Yes, I was born in India, but we moved	BORN IN INDIA, GREW UP IN LOUISIANA

<p>here when we were like four or five months old, so I don't really remember. We didn't come to Louisiana at first; we went to New Mexico. And then, when we were three, I think, we came here. So I have been here most of my life.</p>	
<p>Myself – Could you tell me more about, when you were younger, did your parents help you? Priya: Yes, I have to really thank my parents, because, like, since we were little, they would like, make us practice, like, since, I think because when I was in elementary, I think second grade, actually first grade, I was in the Gifted program, and they let you advance; like, if you finish a math or whatever, you can go the next one; so, like, because of that, I was able to, like, not wait, you know, if I already understood something, I could keep going. My parents have always like supported me and if we need quizzing and stuff, they help me. And then Parvathy, my sister, it's also really helpful to have her because, then it's kind of like group studying all the time. It is more interesting and more motivating, I guess, than just studying alone.</p>	PARENTS HELPED A LOT
<p>Myself – So, tell me how it's motivating. Priya – Well, I mean, if you're trying to study yourself or "less boring" I guess, than if you are doing it with someone. They can quiz you and they understand, like everything you have to do because they have to do the same thing. Both of you can help the other keep going. Myself – So, do you think if it is just yourself, it would be different? Priya – Yes, I don't think it would be as fun.</p>	TWIN MOTIVATION
<p>Myself - So, you make it fun as you go along. So, tell me your first school experience. Priya – Like, from first grade? Myself – Yes, even before that. Priya – Pre -K we went to University Presbyterian; for Kindergarten I went to Dufrocq for Kindergarten in the Montessori program. For First Grade I tested into gifted and went to Bernard Terrace for a year. Then, I went to Buchanan for the rest of elementary school. I went to Glasgow for middle school and McKinley for the first year of high school. Then I transferred to Baton Rouge High School for my</p>	BATON ROUGE HIGH STUDENT

<p>sophomore year. Myself – So, did you apply in 8th grade to go to Baton Rouge High, right? Priya – Yes, but now they are trying to have the Gifted high schoolers go to McKinley. It was fun there, but a lot of my friends had siblings at Baton Rouge High. A lot of them were applying to Baton Rouge High. I didn't want to be the only one there.</p>	
<p>Myself – So, tell me about the values, you feel, about education. Maybe it's your parents, or how you feel internally. Priya – Well, I think it is pretty important. I've always tried to do my best. Even if you try your best, I always thought, "You might get the grades you've wanted, you might not." But, if you try for it, at least you'll learn it and then next time... As long as the reason you are doing it is because you want to learn and you consider it important and you put all your effort into it, then it's bound to end up being good.</p>	PUT EFFORT INTO EDUCATION
<p>Myself – Do you ever talk to your sister about how you both value education and how it is important for each other? Priya – Whenever it's hard and you have a lot of homework, both of us together are like, "Well, if we try our best, and even if it's hard and we're like, we still have so much left, but that is part of the course, and having to learn it is part of struggling through it." We both say that, "Ok, we'll study this and try our best for the test or whatever is happening." And too also not get too stressed (if you don't get it or I don't know what I'm doing) and think, "It's ok, you still have a second time." If you feel like you failed the test, then keep going. Especially because a lot of days we have several tests in a row. You do one and you're like, "I don't know how that went, let's just try again for the next one." Hopefully, it will get better. Myself – When you're saying to keep going and you have a lot of homework, you said, "not to get frustrated and not to give up." How do you feel not giving up has contributed to your success? Priya – When I was younger I would take things way more seriously than I really needed to. I would think, "Oh, my god, I didn't do what I</p>	TRYING; CONFIDENCE

<p>should have.” However, that doesn’t help you because if you think, “I’m probably going to fail,” you probably are going to fail. But if you think, “I’m going to try my best,” then that is all that I can ask of myself or anyone can ask of me. It’s a better mindset to have than if you are thinking “I have to get this.”</p>	
<p>Myself – Tell me how starting in music and feel how that has assisted. Priya – I think it takes a lot of concentration to do music, but it’s a different kind of concentration. So, if you are really bored of studying or going over your notes, and you think, “Ok, I think I’ll go practice for a while,” that is a different kind of concentration. Sometimes with grades, it takes a while to understand how much you’ve gotten from it. But with music, if you keep practicing soon you can easily be able to tell you are getting better. It’s easier to tell that your hard work pays off. Both laugh- Myself – How did you start in music? Priya – In 3rd grade we had a violin, orchestra program at my elementary school. All my friends were going to join that, so I said, “Ok, I’ll try it.”</p>	MUSIC CONCENTRATION; EFFORT
<p>Myself – Tell me about your friends. Priya – I think that is a big part. All of my friends work hard. I think that is really part of it. If you are around people who don’t work as hard as you, then you don’t feel like continuing to do it. But, if you are like, “Well, everyone else is studying hard, don’t just stop now.” It is sort of a group effort. We all say, “We have so much to do.” We all talk about it together. But we all motivate each other and say, “Ok, we have only a week left. Come on, let’s finish strong.” If they are also high – achieving, you also want to stay at that level. If no one else is studying, you might be more inclined to think, “Well, I’m doing well enough, I’ll just stay this way.” Instead of you keep pushing yourself. Also, it depends on the school you are at. If they keep on pushing you to continue to do work, like, “Oh, you should take this class.” Then it is easier to keep going than for you to take your own effort and try even harder to be like, “No, I want to do this,” and even if no one else is doing it, it is harder than if</p>	FRIENDS ARE HIGH – ACHIEVING

<p>everyone else is doing it with you. It's a group effort and you don't feel weird.</p>	
<p>Myself – Tell me how your teachers influenced you. Priya – I think they all teach really well. I have never been extremely bored in any class. Also, they themselves will say, “Hey, do you want to compete in this, or because you know science, join this. Just try it out even if you are not sure about it.” Sometimes I don't have confidence, but my teachers will push me and say, “No, just go ahead and try,” and that gives me more confidence and it motivates me.</p>	<p>TEACHER'S PUSH FOR EFFORT</p>
<p>Myself – Tell me how your parents have instilled in you on how you should respect your teachers and your elders. Priya – My parents, and our culture in general, really respects elders and teachers. Knowledge is very important and they are the ones teaching you. You should have respect for that and for what they are doing. It's probably not easy to keep teaching people over and over even if they are not always interested. So, I have always been, like, “You should always respect them because they are the ones who are really helping you.” Right now, they are the main people I see every day and they are the people who really care and take their time to teach.</p>	<p>RESPECT FOR TEACHERS IS IMPORTANT</p>
<p>Myself – You mentioned it is a part of your culture. Priya – There's a lot of respect. We used to do dance, and when you start, you do a greeting or salutation. First, you do it to your audience and then you do it to your teacher and then you do it to yourself. It's really important to thank your teacher. What you are doing probably is because they taught you to do it. Most people don't know how to do things by themselves, they need to be taught and coached by other people. Teachers are very important. Myself- Is that an Indian dance? Priya – Yes, there are different kinds of dance. In South India, there is this traditional dance. The whole dance is that you have different hand gestures that symbolize different things. There are things to make a story, but with the hand</p>	<p>INDIAN CULTURE RESPECTS TEACHERS NAMASTE</p>

<p>gestures and your dance. Myself – Do you mind showing a way for your teacher? Do you bow? Priya – At first, you stamp the ground. There is a name for a god of earth. First you do this, and then you (turn around and bow). Then you bow to your audience, your teacher, and then yourself. Then you start. Myself – That’s beautiful. What is it called? Priya – This is called “namascal” because you have to do it before you start practicing or the dance. You also have to do it at the end. This is sort of like the beginning and closing. Myself – Is that similar to saying “Namaste?” Priya – I guess it’s also a greeting. Yes, they do this (bow with hands together) a lot for different things. “Namaschal” and “Namaste” have the same meaning. Myself – I read that Namaste means that “I see the god in you.” Is that correct, or is it a form of respect? Priya – Yes, it’s a form of respect. They call it different things around India. There are different languages so they call it different things. It is a greeting but also a respectful expression.</p>	
<p>Myself – So, do you speak another language as well? Priya – Not really. I can understand it but I can’t really speak. My dad speaks Tamil and my mom speaks Malalyam, a similar language. I know both of them. Myself - If you went to India, do you think you would be able to speak? Priya – I don’t think so. But, a lot of people speak and understand English, so it’s not that bad. But, I don’t think I would manage very well. Myself – Have you been to India? Priya – Yes, we went last – last summer to visit all of our relatives. Myself – Was that your first time to go back? Priya – We went one time before when we were young. I think we were nine (9) or eight (8). My dad’s parents have come. Myself – Are you able to speak with them? Priya – in English. Myself – They know English? Priya – Yes; that’s helpful. Myself – Is there a religion you follow?</p>	<p>SPEAKING TAMIL BEING HINDU TRAVELLING TO INDIA</p>

<p>Priya – We follow Hinduism. The dance is based on the religion.</p> <p>Myself – Can you tell me how you practice Hinduism at home?</p> <p>Priya – We used to have a cabinet with pictures. There are lot of songs that go with the gods. So, we sing the songs and light the lamp and bow. They also have different festivals that we attend.</p> <p>Myself – Is there a group of friends that also follow Hinduism?</p> <p>Priya – Yes, there are two temples – one on Burbank, and one near Target. We have Sunday school and, depending on your age you do different activities. In high school we discuss the Gita, which is one of the main Books.</p> <p>Myself – And, do some of your friends have similar passions as well as being high – achieving? Do you have the same values?</p> <p>Priya - I guess. Some of my friends are also Hindu with the same mindset. I have some other friends who are not Hindu with the same mindset. I guess it is not religion but valuing hard work.</p>	
<p>Myself – If you didn't work so hard, how do you think that reflect on yourself and your family.</p> <p>Priya – I don't think anything terrible would happen. But, I wouldn't be doing everything that I could be doing. If I didn't work so hard, I wouldn't take so much pride in it. There is something where you say, "I know I really worked hard on this, and I am happy it turned out well." But, if you didn't really work, and went thought life, then there isn't the same satisfaction doing as if you worked really hard. If you work really hard then you have the satisfaction of, "Well, I guess it paid off."</p>	PRIDE IN WORKING HARD.
<p>Myself – Do you ever think, "How do I get my drive?" If someone were to ask you, "I don't maybe have so much drive," how could you help them? You seem to have a lot of drive.</p> <p>Priya – Thank you. Sometimes I think, "Why am I doing this?" You look at other people and you think it would be a logical path. You ask people, "What are you taking next year?" and they say that they are taking all regular classes (neither honors nor AP classes). I think, "Why are you taking regular classes when you are perfect at</p>	<p>EFFORT</p> <p>PARENT'S REMINDER FOR HOMEWORK</p> <p>TEACHERS' SUPPORT</p>

<p>this?" They say, "Well, it's took much work." There are a lot of people who do not prepare as much. However, I think they would be as smart or smarter than me. I have to do so much preparation, and I am used to that. They don't do as much but when they try they do well. So, if they tried harder they would be so much better. I would say, "Remember, you didn't do anything but you got straight A's; why wouldn't you try?" I guess people are smart but they are just lazy. They don't want to do their homework. Well, if you just did that you could go way further. You already have it in you, so just do it. I guess my parents as well. If I am not studying, they will say, "Remember you need to do your homework." I will say I don't want to do it but they push me to do things because otherwise it won't reflect well. I think that is helpful as well because if you don't have someone to help you, then it is really easy to get distracted. If you have someone saying, "No, you can do it and you need to stop playing around," then you can do it. There are some teachers who help with that. They will say, "Why did you get a B? What are you doing? It's not that you don't know how to do it you just aren't putting the effort into doing it." One of my friends almost got a B and her teacher said, "Why do you have that B? If you need some help, let me know." She actually didn't end up getting the B, it was just a mistake before the grades were put in. The teachers are really helpful. They are not trying to penalize you, they are just concerned. They think if you didn't get a good grade, they ask, "Are you OK?"</p>	
<p>Myself – So, even if you had your parents, teachers, and your sister pushing you, how do you think you have achieved so much, even if they have helped you? Still, mentally you are prepared because you passed an IQ test. So, do you acknowledge your hard work more than your intellect?</p> <p>Priya – Yes, I do. I don't think I am particularly good at math. Some people are really good at analyzing math. But, because since I was little I have been doing that, I am better. Some people in middle school "do enough" to get A's. Then the get into high school and they want to do really well. They think we are really smart, but No, it's</p>	<p>WORKING HARD SINCE A CHILD</p>

<p>because we have been doing it forever. It is not a new thing for me to work hard. I have always done a lot of homework. Then it is not that different than people who generally did not have to do anything or were never forced to write a lot. They think the class is hard. But, other people you see that are doing well have just been doing it forever, so that is why they are good. I am pretty high level in math, but that is because I have been doing it for a long time. It's not because I was 2 years old and I already know all of it. Some people who are really good at math, but for them it comes naturally. But for other people it doesn't come naturally to them. Then they think they are not good and other people who are doing well it is natural for them. But it's not that it is just natural for them. It is because they know they have to work harder. They really want to get it and they try hard for it. I have a friend who is amazing at math but she said she has practiced since she was little. She does have a good talent for it, but because she has always practiced then by now it is almost fun. Like, if you do well in it, then you want to do it. I like science because I think I am good in science. But maybe English or Social Studies that I can't do as well because it is not my favorite subject. I think hard work is important because it can make you equal to someone who is just relying on intellect or talent.</p>	
<p>Myself – Do you think there is a misconception with intellect and hard work? (stopped) Priya – Yes, people who always take lower (less hard) classes, they might be thought of as not smart. But, even for standardized tests, if you get a high score, people think you are smart. But, not really. Standardized tests are how much you prepare, how much you practice, how much you know. You say, “I know they’re going to ask this sort of question, I should study this sort of stuff.” But if you don’t put any effort into it and you just go in there, you will think, “Well, that person is better at this.” No, that person just spent more time practicing. When I first took it, I didn’t practice. The second time I took, I still didn’t practice enough. After that I thought, “No, I should actually practice the test questions.” Also, your mindset is important. Some people</p>	<p>MISCONCEPTION BETWEEN INTELLECT AND HARD WORK</p> <p>HARD WORK PAYS OFF</p>

<p>underestimate others because they don't get good grades or they are not involved in things. But that is because their friends are not into it or their parents don't force them. I think it is natural. If none of my friends didn't care, I am not the person that would say, "I will personally go study by myself for hours." That is not the kind of person I am. If you are in a class where they give you enough of homework that forces you to study, then you'll do better than someone who takes a lower grade class and has lower expectations. I think it definitely is a misconception. They could be as smart or smarter with the little bit of effort they are putting in. I don't like when people think of those that get good grades and they say, "Well you are doing it effortlessly." Then the people who don't work as hard just don't have the intellect to understand. This is like the exact opposite. The people who are doing well are doing well because they are working hard. The other people aren't doing well because they are not working hard.</p>	
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ParvathyS

<p>Par: It is easy for Priya and myself to do well because we have each other. All the other schools have helped us advance. We have been able to do so well because our schools have helped support us. Also, our friends are also high – achieving and it is a group effort. We all work hard and help each other out. Do you think it would be different if only you would want to do well? I think I would be OK, but it is more fun. Ok, let's do this assignment together. I could probably achieve it, but it is more fun to do it with someone else. It helps me to keep going. Can you tell me about the values? My parents have always said, "Try your best and work hard." In class I have always tried to do my best, listen to the teacher, and get things in on time. I really listen to the teacher, do my homework correctly. My parents have really encouraged me to work hard. Do you see students who don't pay attention in class? I think people are not confident enough. People say, "Oh, you and your sister are smart." It's not that we are smart,</p>	
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<p>but I pay attention because I know I can't learn it by myself. I think if you paid attention a really long time, listened to the teacher, and have a good attitude about learning, then it helps you. If you say, "I'm not good in math, or remembering dates." But, I'm not good, but I really listen in class.</p> <p>Do you remember an age when you started working hard?</p> <p>Not much homework in kindergarten. In first grade, a lot of other people were smart and the teacher gave us a lot of homework. I really started working hard then.</p> <p>You talked about your friends.</p> <p>We all thought physics was hard, but we would text each other to help each other out. I like studying with Priya because we are really focused. If I study with my friends, we might get distracted. But, we do quiz each other.</p> <p>Routine with Priya</p> <p>We come home, have a snack, and spread out our books. We say, "let's work on Chemistry." We ask, "Did you get the same answer?" When it's test time we get out our books and read it out loud. That helps because you can listen to them. We help each other by saying, "Don't forget to remember this."</p> <p>Have you had similar grades?</p> <p>Mostly, yes. We both usually do well. We discuss it together and we say, "Oh, that's a good way to remember it." Because we are twins, our ability is the same.</p> <p>Is there something annoying people ask you about being twins?</p> <p>People will talk about us being twins but not asking us. We are not telepathic. We did play a game where we answered the same questions.</p> <p>What city were you born in India?</p> <p>Travantha, in the state of Caro. It's the same city my mom was born. We have been to India twice. We go to my mom's and my dad's place. We have cousins our age. My cousins speak English and we have fun. It's nice to be around family.</p>	
<p>You mentioned the schooling of your cousins. How did you notice things that are different?</p> <p>For each college you have an entrance exam. You have to write that exam. Yes, that is pretty tough because they don't consider anything else. 10th grade you take the exam and decide what you want to do. My parents went through it. My cousin is learning English, and we're learning French. It's interesting to see what is different and what is the same.</p>	

<p>Do you want to make your parents proud? Yes, I know that they studied well when they were young. They haven't pressured us, but I know they would want us to do well. They are really supportive, so the least I can do is do well. It's nice to make your parents feel proud.</p>	
<p>Tell me how you value respecting your teachers and elders. I think it's really important because, if you think about it, all the things you have been taught is from your teachers. If you think about it, they have put in a lot of hard work to teach you their subject. The way to respect them is to be polite and show them that you care. You do your homework. They put in a lot of effort. A lot of students, including me, think, "this is a lot of homework." But they are doing that to help you. So, I think it's important to respect your elders, and especially respect your teachers. They are working for you. A lot of them, at Baton Rouge High, they are really supportive. If they know you are interested in something, they recommend things. For example, they say, "Did you know you can do this math competition?" I think that is really good effort on their part. It's really important to respect them and be glad you have teachers like that.</p>	
<p>What would you say if a student says that they don't respect their teachers? I think you should really evaluate how much your teacher has influenced you. Also, even if you don't like their teaching style. Think if you were in their shoes. If you had to teach students who don't want to learn things, so think about it from their perspective and how much work they put into it. Maybe you think some people would rather a different teaching style, but at least look at the effort. You should at least show some respect for what they are doing for you.</p>	
<p>Do you think that kind of value is something you have always had? Yes, my parents have always said you need to respect teachers. It is also a part of our culture to really respect your elders. It's very important. I think it has been ingrained since I was very young to respect your teachers and elders. Especially if they are helping you or teaching you something. That is something you will need and they are helping you.</p>	
<p>When you say it is a part of your culture? Indian culture it's important to respect your elders. Even in the language, when you are talking to someone older than you, that is the respectful part. Even, with our dances, we do this thing where we thank the audience,</p>	

<p>our teacher, and god. Especially for dance, your teacher is teaching you this dance, but it applies to other subjects. Knowledge is important and their work is important to get to where you need to be.</p>	
<p>Have you ever met someone who has similar values but doesn't work as hard as you? I can't think of anyone. There are people who respect their teachers and who are polite. However, you do have to have that drive, "I can do well." Have confidence. "I might not be a genius at this, but at least I can try." That goes with respecting your teachers. It also goes with believing in yourself. I think that is important. Some people think, "I'm good at this, but not at that." They respect their teachers, but they don't think they are good at it. But at least try. Priya and I also agree that, we might not be the best at the subject, but we can at least put in effort. Get good grades. That helps you no matter what you end up doing. I think it is a lot of self-motivation and self-confidence.</p>	
<p>And, you think you have the confidence before you start. Yes, I don't think I am super great, but I also think that if I want to, and really try hard. I also acknowledge when I'm not good at something. For Social Studies, I am not good at remembering dates. In class, I tell myself, "You know you're not good at this, so you have to really work hard." You are confident that you need to deal with it. For standardized test, if you think, "I'm not going to do well," you probably are not. But, I'm going to try my best. Even if I am not good at this, you have the right attitude. If you have a bad attitude, it won't work out for you. Attitude is very important. If you have a good attitude and think, "I can do this," then it will go much better. At least I am going to really try. I think having a little bit of confidence is important before you start something so you don't get bogged down. The attitude is very important.</p>	SELF AWARENESS
<p>You mentioned being aware. You're not lying to yourself. Right, if you know you're not good at something, it doesn't help to say, "Oh, I'm great at this." You should understand you are not great at something. But, that doesn't mean I can't become good at this. It doesn't work if you say, "I'm great at all these subjects." It's being aware that you need to study. People say, "Why are you worrying, you already have a good grade in this class?" Well, first of all, I don't know if I'll keep that good grade. Also, if I don't prepare for this test, I might not be prepared for the next test or I might not understand what the teacher is saying. Being aware that</p>	<p>HUMBLE</p> <p>CONFIDENT BUT NOT ARROGANT WITH ABILITIES</p> <p>AWARE THAT YOU NEED TO STUDY</p>

<p>you need to study is really important. This is instead of thinking, “Oh, I don’t need to study, I have an A, I’ll blow this off.” It’s important to be aware of your abilities but don’t become discouraged if you think you can’t do it. Don’t give up on something. If you think you don’t need to do this, chances are you need to do this.</p>	
<p>Tell me how you prepared for the standardized tests. Usually, in the beginning I’ve taken a couple of times. Me and Priya prepare by getting sample questions. You might know it but it’s the way they ask it. In English, it’s not a question. It’s like, “which is the better option” All these might be beautiful answers. Sometimes they might want the most concise. Just do many practice tests. Then you are ready for the time constraints.</p>	
<p>You took the first one in 8th grade, right? Did you take practice tests beforehand? I didn’t do that many because I thought I had time. I wanted to see how well we did. I prepared better in my 9th grade year. Something that helps me, is that in the math portion, we already finished our high school math in the 8th grade. In 9th grade I had to prepare more because I had to remember previous years.</p>	FINISHED MATH IN 8 th GRADE
<p>Have you taken the SAT as well? Yes, but I will take it at least one time more to improve my score. Have you seen differences between the ACT and the SAT? I prefer the SAT. It might be that I am more accustomed to standardized testing. I am good at science, but the ACT section of Science throws me. It might also be my frame of mind. They say it’s important to be well rested. It’s easy to get distracted. If you are well rested and not sleepy, and not spend too much time on a question. I think I was in a good frame of mind. For the ACT, even though I didn’t get a perfect score, I think I was in the right frame of mind. It’s important to be in the right state of mind to answer questions really fast and not get distracted. These students on this side are done, and I think, “Am I really this late?” Somehow, block this all out. Especially standardized tests because it was timed.</p>	RIGHT FRAME OF MIND
<p>Did you go to Princeton Review? No, we just used Books. SAT we used College Board and ACT we used Barrons. They have good tips, like eat a snack. I didn’t think that was important, but it is. Not thinking about the previous section. This is important to walk out of the testing site for a little bit. Focus on the new portion. It’s easy to do if you move away and collect yourself. It helps your nerves. Don’t dwell and take a breather and come back.</p>	NO PREP COURSES ONLY PREVIOUS TESTS
<p>You seem very focused.</p>	FOCUS

<p>I try to be because on standardized tests, I always have to sneeze or cough. I had to cough for 5 minutes but I have to focus. I try to stop myself, but this time, think about doing the problem and forget the cough. I was working while coughing. Instead of thinking about the cough, which makes you cough even more, I thought only about the question. It's important to be focused. Don't lose concentration. I always have to cough, so I try to be as focused as possible.</p>	<p>SELF AWARENESS</p>
<p>You handled that very well. I was very happy that I handled that.</p>	
<p>Go a "33." That's great. I guess. I think maybe I can improve my score. I am going to try and get a better score like a 36 or a 35. That's great.</p>	<p>HUMBLE ABOUT "33" ON THE ACT.</p>

Parents

<p>Can you tell me about how you've instilled these values of respect in your daughters? I think from the beginning, we wanted to be a role model for them. They are small, they don't know a lot of things. We always to respect elders because that is how we learned. Every time a professor speaks, you stay where you are and if you get out of your seat, we ask, "Why are you getting up?" That is how we learned. You have to respect elders. If you are sitting somewhere, you have to give them the seat. You have to get up from the seat. Those kinds of things we told them from the very beginning. Respect the teacher, because without the teacher, you won't be anywhere. I think they got it. I think like it. Sometimes the teacher will ask them to write an essay, "How do you feel growing up in American being India?" Two different families. They handled it very well. They said they are like tea. The milk is one part of culture, and the tea is the other part. They are a mixture. I enjoy that.</p>	<p>RESPECT FOR TEACHERS LEARNED AT A YOUNG AGE. INERGENERATIONAL</p>
<p>They had mentioned the dance. This is called, "namaste." Namashal" is northern Indian. That's if you see an elder person.</p>	
<p>Do you find Americans have a different level of respect? I think, in my language, the way we talk to kids is different than elders. (husband) In my language, it is the same as English. (mom) Right away, I need to be aware to say the certain thing. But in America, you don't have things to show respect but they are nice and give respect. Science fair, I have judged that the kids are polite. It doesn't come like that, it is their family to teach them.</p>	

<p>Do you think you have instilled a work ethic? I think it is also that they are together. They want to finish together. They can help each other. (dad) When they were young, I would check all their homework. In Mumbai, I would teach them. I teach them and make sure they finish it. In science fair, we help them. During middle school we would still help but little less. No, we don't help (in high school); they are doing it all themselves. It is important. Now, they are doing it by themselves but we can see they are doing it the way we taught them. In math, he used to help. Now I teach them how to cook. They need to learn how to be self-sufficient. During the summer they do house chores and cook. During school, they do nothing. (no responsibilities). We don't own a television. No TV, nothing. We do our work so they can study. They don't like tv. In the holidays, we'll say, let's watch a movie (maybe from Mumbai). They don't like it, and they go and read. From the beginning, from 4 or 5 years, they would read, read, read. They would get up in the morning and start reading. If they do something wrong, then they cannot read for one week. There is no way we can stop them from reading. Story Books...3rd grade during Gustav, they finished reading Harry Potter Books. And then they have AR tests. They used to read a lot of Books and get a lot of points. Now there is no time to read. (mom)</p>	<p>NO RESPONSIBILITIES EXCPET STUDYING DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.</p> <p>DURING THE SUMMER SOME CHORES AND LEARNING HOW TO COOK.</p> <p>NO TV.</p> <p>4 or 5 YEARS OLD THEY WOULD READ</p> <p>PUNISHMENT WAS NO READING FOR 1 WEEK.</p>
<p>Tell me they started learning how to read. You said, from 4 years old, right? Initially, we used to read to them. I make my own stories. The school teachers are very important. The gifted program helped them. We need to find a good program for the students. They were on Face Book, and I would ask if they did their work. At the end of the day, they asked, "Can you take our phones away from us?" I would ask them if they completed their homework and they would do it right away. There needs to be some sort of pushing also. A little bit. If I don't ask them, how can we expect them to study? It's a small push and they would want to do it. Even if</p>	<p>TAKE PHONE AWAY BECAUSE THERE WERE TOO MANY DISTRACTIONS.</p>
<p>Can you tell me how you established a mood for studying? We helped them. We know they didn't like tv, but they used to like it. We knew that they needed silence. If we talk too much, they said, "why don't you go over there, we are concentrating." We understood that they need to concentrate. We used to have tv on at my house and I need to study. I think they need the</p>	<p>CALM HOUSE FOR STUDYING</p>

<p>calmness. They will be studying here (at the table) and I will be cooking. Otherwise they will get distracted. They know everything we know. We talk in front of them and don't hide. They are like friends to us. They want to learn everything but we tell them. It's distracting because they want to know everything.</p>	
<p>Did you ever feel you need to force or bribe them? They don't like it if we bribe them. We never give them any money. They don't have any money.</p>	<p>NO MONEY NO BRIBES</p>
<p>So, they learned inner motivation. Yes, they like to get good marks. I think that school and friends is important. They want to be challenged. Staying on task and finishing assignments. They want to feel good. You will feel good if the teacher asks you something and you know it. They know the math because in the summer we would finish the next year's math book. We went to Sam's Club and bought these Books. We helped them and then when they go to school and feel good. Parents should help their children. Every summer, one week before we would cover the next school year. English, math, everything. We bought a lot of books. I make them do the math. They will do it. We have to say that. Then when they go to school, they feel very good. We need to support them and give them to access and get more knowledge. If you study well it doesn't matter what you do, you will have success. We need to direct them. They don't know about the world. Some parents say, "Let them do what they want." Maybe I am selfish, but I think we need to direct them into it the right way. My friends all spoke well about the gifted program. Some things we don't know and we need to talk to parents. We need to have friends' parents. I got a lot of points from other parents. We came to know about the ACT, SAT from them. When should we "write the test." That is very important. You should make friends. We have to be responsible.</p>	<p>INNER MOTIVATION FEEL GOOD IF YOU KNOW THE ANSWER PREPARE IN THE SUMMER FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR</p>
<p>Tell me about how you found out you were going to have twins. At that time, they said there was only one baby. It is kind of shocking. We weren't expecting that, and now we know it is so good. They are a joy to our life. They are very close to each other.</p>	
<p>I teach a set of twins where one twin failed a grade and one had to keep going. From the beginning, I made my mind that they were both equal. I am going to make one like the other one.</p>	

<p>When Parvathy was born, she was small and she was not drinking milk. But, she was smart. Whatever the case, both of them are the same. I think I thought that both of them know everything. You should think that – they are both good. We thought, when we went to gifted testing, either both should get it or both should not get it. The teacher said that, Par finished the math so quickly! They are both good and doing the same. You should not say, “This one is good, that one is not.” No, parents should say, “You are both capable and good students.” Let of parents think, “Let them go in their own way.” But, think of their future. Take an effort. You can do it. Work hard, and then they don’t have a fear: Just study and do your work. You have to do what you have to do. I always made them do the math. Whether you get it or not, you do your best. Maybe there are other students who are really smart, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t participate. That way, there is no stress. I never say something if they get a bad grade. I know some parents who get made if their child doesn’t get a certain grade. There is no point in that. I always say, “Did you study?”</p>	
<p>Tell me about how your parents influenced your way of parenting. Is it similar? No, it’s different. My mom is a teacher. You have to pass the exam. I never studied, but I think I got either 3 or 4 rank in the class. But, my parents never pushed me, it just happened. I tell my mom, “You should’ve pushed me.” I wanted to become a doctor. I was confused, I didn’t know where to go. After high school we can go to engineering. All of my friends went into medicine after high school. My parents didn’t think about that. In India, pass is fine. During the exam time, there is only one test. There are no assignments. You have to study only for the final exam, so then we only study one time. My mom would take leave to make us study. But, she doesn’t have any expectations. I feel she should have forced us. I felt really bad when my friends went to medical school. After that, I really studied and working on my own because I knew I needed to be somewhere.</p>	