

# The obstacles faced in educating children from less fortunate families

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In the book *Literary with an Attitude* by Patrick J. Finn, associate professor of the Department of Learning and Instruction, states that "our schools offer literary equally to students, but somehow the 'have nots' refuse to take us up on our offer. They're not smart enough or they're lazy or simply perverse. " I believe a good majority of the less fortunate students are lazy and not motivated, therefore I do agree with that part of the statement Finn puts forth. There are many examples of this in the various articles I have studied in class. In the article "Two Students" by Mitchell Landsberg, she portrays Henry as a completely capable student who could make his future in his education a success, but is too lazy. Henry's parents and family live in a rented single room in an apartment in Watts. They work in a hospital and "in Henry, they see hope for a success they were never able to achieve. " Henry's parents want him to have better than what they do and they know that if he stays in school and goes to college that goal is possible. Henry "was scheduled to take the PSAT [when] [the teacher] led a visitor to the classroom where students were working on the test [and] [the teacher] didn't spot Henry. " When she looked around and realized he didn't show up she was disappointed because he had so much potential and he was an intelligent person. It turns out Henry had company at his house and felt as if that was more important than his test. When Henry was asked about college he decided "after talking to the school nurse, a UC Santa Barbara graduate, he decided it sounded like a good place, because he likes the beach. " Henry did not have any other information regarding why he would want to attend UCSB besides the fact that he enjoys the beach. What Henry should have done was explore other possibilities based on majors or other factors that

would be important. Location is important when choosing a future school, but Henry should have gone the extra mile and researched the school more thoroughly. Kyle, the student from La Canada, explained how " he had taken an East Coast college tour with his parents, hitting eight schools in six days, and had met for eighty minutes with La Canada's college counselor. " Kyle obviously cares about college since he investigated the possible campus he would want to go to. Kyle claims that " maybe [he would] apply to UCSD because they have a good pre- med program. " Henry does not necessarily need to visit campuses like Kyle but he could have at least surfed the web or looked through brochures. Henry is capable of being a success, but it seems as if laziness is getting in his way. It may be a little more of a challenge for the less fortunate kids to be successful, due to the disadvantages they may face or the unstable home lives they live, but it is definitely still doable if you are motivated to succeed. Laziness is one of the key problems and in the article " She finally has a Home: Harvard" by Esmeralda Bermudez, Khadijah Williams was in one of the most difficult situations but she still managed to get through it and thrive. Khadijah shows that hard work and determination does prevail. The less fortunate kids are not stupid or incapable, but they are just lazy. Compared to Henry, Khadijah was much more worse off, because " she [had] attended 12 schools in 12 years; lived out of garbage bags among pimps, prostitutes and drug dealers, " Not only was she homeless but she was in and out of schools constantly. Khadijah was driven enough to make sure she did not fall behind when starting a new school. Many kids have troubles at home, especially Khadijah , but " every morning, she upheld her dignity, making sure she didn't smell or look disheveled. " Khadijah was

energetic enough to take time in the morning to look decent. Due to moving around so much Khadijah missed a significant amount of school but “ at every stop, Khadijah pushed to keep herself in each school’s gifted program. “ Khadijah is extremely active when it came to her education and motivated to get into college and be smart because she knew she was capable. “ In 10th grade, Khadijah realized that if she wanted to succeed, she couldn’t do it alone” so “ she began to reach out to organizations and mentors... teachers, counselors and college alumni networks. “ All the effort Khadijah put into her education was very time consuming and most of the kids she went to school with would not have thought about doing what she accomplished. Khadijah was far from lazy considering “ she awoke at 4 a. m. and returned at 11 p. m., and kept her grade- point average at just below a 4. 0 while participating in the Academic Decathlon, the debate team and leading the school’s track and field team. “ Khadijah was a prime example that the majority of the less fortunate kids are not stupid, but lazy, and graduating high school and even the hope of college is possible.