UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS

Social Class Influences: Student Engagement of Upper

Middle Class African American Students

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Leadership for Educational Justice

By

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ABSTRACT

Social Class Influences: Student Engagement of Upper

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Doctor of Education, 2014

University of Redlands

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This study examined the social class of African American students in an upper middle class

high school and their engagement in school influenced by a parent advisory group consisting

of upper and middle class African American men. Student engagement has become a hot

topic for school policy makers, administration, teachers, and parents at all educational levels.

The question of how best to engage students for academic success is the priority. Although

research suggests middle and upper class students do well in school as compared to lower

class and working class students, the upper and middle class African American students in

this particular school were failing until a group of parents intervened. The school

experienced increased student engagement resulting in higher GPA, increased graduation

rates, increased numbers of college enrollments and graduation rates, and a reduction in the

achievement gap. Using the narrative inquiry method, a qualitative approach, the researcher

listened to the participants' authentic voices and conveyed their story. Using a semi-

structured conversational interview protocol, the participants shared their "lived" stories

about the impact that a parent advisory group had on student engagement at the high

school of interest. Findings suggest that when adults exhibit care, build meaningful

relationships, and communicate that students are valued, student engagement increases and

students are successful in school. The participants explained how the identity, behavior, and

status of a group of parents gave options to a group of students in order to increase their

academic success and hope for the future.

Dedication

I dedicate this work in loving memory to my mother, Flora Fortner, and my grandmother, Kitty McConnell. They always believed in me.

Acknowledgements

"I've heard it said, that people come into our lives for a reason, bringing something we must learn. And we are led to those who help us most to grow if we let them . . . and because I knew you I have been changed . . . For good."

– Wicked

For all your hard work, wisdom, and encouragement . . . Dr. Lalas you have truly changed me for good. It was a blessing to have you as a chair and now as a friend. Please, no more Panera, can we please find another place to strategize how to "shock and awe." I would also like to acknowledge my committee members Dr. Sullivan, Dr. Franklin, and Dr. Hunt for their advice and encouragement.

To my family, who encouraged me and made me laugh when things got hard, thank you. To my sister Michelle, my best friends Marlen, Michelle, and Jim, and my teammates, Pearl and Marcus; all of you have helped me grow in so many ways throughout this dissertation process. We did this together. Thank you for taking time in your own journeys to encourage me to stick to the path and reach my goal. I love you all. Thank you, God, for your mercy, your grace, and your love.

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Preface

 The research findings reported in this present study were one piece in a larger three-part thematic research project. The three members of the research team studied the parent group found in the study and their impact on student engagement in order to discover emerging themes in the areas of social class and social and cultural capitals as they related to social relations and parent involvement. All members of the research team were together when the participants' consent forms and interviews were completed. Each researcher focused on a specific conceptual area and its influences on student engagement when they co-transcribed and analyzed the interviews. This current study focused on student engagement and social class. Following are the complements to this study: Dr. K. Pearl Vongprateep's study entitled "Parents' Social and Cultural Capital: One Parent Group's Influence on Student Engagement in an Upper Middle Class High School;" and Dr. Marcus Hanson's study entitled "The Influence of Social Capital through Social Relations: Student Engagement in an Upper Middle Class High School." These are available in the Armacost Library at the University of Redlands or through ProQuest.

Chapter One

Introduction

The conflict over the role of education as a public good or a private good does not address the fact that the educational system in the United States continues to fail to meet the needs of all children. Bowes and Gintis (2002) talked about an educational system where the outcome is a more productive and equitable economy. In the economy they speak about, every person has the freedom to pursue their individual goals without hindrances such as social bias, lack of opportunity, or material want. These hindrances tie closely to the socioeconomic status in which a person lives. Socioeconomic status, in the form of identity, behavior, and structural systems play a powerful role in the educational opportunities afforded to students in U.S. schools (Howard, 2010). This study examined student engagement from a social class perspective as a part of the solution to increasing academic achievement and life opportunities. The researcher captured "lived stories" interviewing participants about student engagement as well as how an upper middle class group of parents influenced a group of minority students in a public high school in Southern California. Furthermore, this study focused specifically on how student engagement of middle class and upper middle class African American and other minority students changed through their relationship with a parent advisory group.

Background of Study

Social class can be a gateway or a barrier to opportunity for students in US schools. Issues of social class and barriers to academic achievement are: suggestion of a hidden curriculum (Anyon, 1980), reproduction of social inequities (Bourdieu &

Passeron, 1977), idea of deficit based thinking (Valencia, 1997), marginalized students and micro-aggressions (Ladson-Billings, 2007), and the idea of "privilege of domination" that refers to the exclusion of certain groups from the dominant context (Lewis & Macedo, 1996). Privilege (London, Downey, & Mace, 2007; Ostrove & Cole, 2003), access (Anyon, 1980; Sianou-Kyrgiou, 2010), power, opportunity, and resources (Berliner, 2007) are also issues of social class that are gateways for some students yet barriers to others. Each of these issues impact social class groups in various manners.

Children, especially minority children, need opportunities to learn and be successful in school; however, recent reports from the Schott Foundation for Public Education show minority students continue to disengage in school and learning, go to ill-equipped schools, dropout of school, and lack adequate grades to enter good colleges and universities (Holzman, 2008, 2010, 2012). For the past 10 years, the Schott Foundation for Public Education has diligently worked to clarify the educational needs of Black males. The 2012 Schott Report (Holzman, 2012) included data on Latino males. Findings revealed 52% of Black males and 58% of Latino males graduated from high school in four years compared to 78% of White, non-Latino males in US schools. Although the graduation rate is improving nationally, 38 of the 50 states report Black males continue to have the lowest graduation rates with Latino males having the lowest rates in 11 states (Holzman, 2012). These students fail to graduate high school and often do not enter college.

Financial needs and a lack of quality information about college, coupled with negative academic experiences deter students from considering college, specifically first generation students, minority students, and students from low-socioeconomic

backgrounds (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). Although reports show a decrease in the gap between Whites and minority students who entered college between 2001 and 2011, the completion rate for Black and Latino students continues to decrease (Baum et al., 2013). The College Board's Trends in Higher Education Report 2013 noted that a person who gets a college education increases their chances to improve their quality of life and their chances for upward social mobility (Baum et al., 2013). The Schott Report (Holzman, 2012) and the College Board Report (Baum et al., 2013), written with the hope of providing decision makers with the information needed to create policies for student success, continue to give examples of the educational system's failure to educate all children.

With the changing demographics and most recently the Great Recession, a greater need for policy reforms focused on the success of all students is evident. Increased diversity in schools, socially, ethnically and economically, rising unemployment, and the rising cost of education has created an educational system that struggles to take into account the needs of all students. Currently research shows that approximately 15% to 20% of the population in the United States is lower class; 30% to 40% are in the working class or lower middle class; 40% to 50% are in the upper middle class; and 1% to 3% is in the upper class (National Poverty Center, 2012). The poverty rate shows that the number of Blacks and Hispanics living in poverty exceeds the national average. In 2010, 27.4% of Blacks and 26.6% of Hispanics were poor, as compared to 9.9% of non-Hispanic Whites and 12.1% of Asians (National Poverty Center, 2012). Forty percent of Black children and more than 33% of Latino children of those mentioned above lived in extreme poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The unemployment rate for non-

graduating adults is 12% and for adults with a Bachelor's Degree or higher is 4%. These

challenges create barriers to educational success for students. In addition, barriers such

as language, socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, race, values, hunger, homelessness,

transportation, health care, and lack of resources have a negative influence on student

engagement and academic achievement (Beegle, 2009; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings,

1995; Mitchell, 2009; Sleeter, 2001). The intent of this study was to identify strategies

focused on increasing student engagement, raising academic achievement, and promoting

academic success for students in spite of the barriers mentioned above.

Social Class. Social class plays a variety of roles in the education of children.

Historically, socioeconomic level was the limited perspective of social class. This single

perspective limited the use of social class in research. Looking at social class as a

multifaceted construct gives researchers, scholars, and educators a clearer understanding

of how it plays out in the lives of people. Its relevance lies in the use of the term social

class. This researcher is asking readers to broaden the way in which they think about

social class and to consider social class as a multifaceted construct including components

of identity, behavior, and socioeconomic structure.

The traditional or Marxist conception of social class defined class as a group of

people sharing common relationships with the political and economic power of a

particular society (Marx & Engels, 2006, 1932). Although Marx brought to light the

struggle for equity and equality, the Marxist concept gave little account for other aspects

of the human experience such as race, gender, identity, or cultural capital that researchers

include in the social class conversations today. Max Weber (1978), reasoned that a better

definition of class included concepts of culture, values, politics, and lifestyle. He

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believed that there could be a difference in socioeconomic class and social class. People who fall within the same economic class may nevertheless occupy different social class positions and have differing opportunities for acquiring work, earning income, developing skills, obtaining education, and owning property. Weber stated one's class is based on these life chances: cultural background, status, and life outside of work more than on one's relationship to the ownership and control of the means of production. Nesbit (2006) stated the Weberian perspective of social class defined class as a group of individuals categorized by socioeconomic indicators again limiting the breath of understanding truly needed to talk about social class. Whether one looks at class through a political and economic, or Marxist lens, or using socioeconomic indicators, or the Weberian lens, social class is a dynamic construct.

Use of a more broaden understanding of social class captures the depth and complexity of social class and allows researchers to open the conversation to include aspects such as social networking and cultural practices. Bettie (2003) included styles of hair, extracurricular activities, choices made in curriculum, styles of clothing, as well as lipstick and nail polish colors in her descriptor of social class when talking about identity. Langston (1988) included the way one dresses and talks, the type of car one drives, and the school one attends as well as when one gets married as descriptor of social class. The concept of social class used in this study comes from an interactional model. The interaction between one's identity or social networks, one's behavior or cultural practices, and one's environment or financial resources provide a broader scope in which to understand social class.

Identity. Identity is an internal construct of social class that relies on personal networks. All people develop their identity through social and political relationships. Factors such as race, gender social class, ethnicity, language, and sexual orientation shape identity (Nieto, 2008). Other dimensions of identity are economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital. Aries and Seider (2007) used the social identity theory and interviewed 45 students on the importance of social class in the formation of identity. Thirty of the students were from a highly selective liberal arts school; 15 from a lower income background and 15 from a more affluent background. The remaining 15 were from a lower income background attending a state college. They found that "social class plays an important role both as an independent variable that shapes the formation of identity and as a domain of identity exploration" (p. 151). Students' identities are not constant according to Pearce, Down, and Moore (2008). Their research described the change that takes place as students interact with their environment, their families, and with other groups (Bingham & Okagaki, 2012).

Structure. Structure is an external construct of social class that looks at systems of measurement for socioeconomic levels. To classify an individual or group into the various classes, indicators such as income, educational attainment, or occupation are used. These measures indicated the levels of poverty among the different races and ethnicities. Currently the greatest number of people resides in the socioeconomic level of middle class; however, there still exists a gap in the educational achievement, wealth, and health within the middle class. Research revealed that middle class volunteerism in the classroom can be an intervention strategy; however, it should not be the only strategy

because it has a tendency to create unnecessary tensions between school and parents because of the extremes within this socioeconomic level (Posey-Maddox, 2013).

Behavior. The construct of behavior encompasses both conscious and unconscious behaviors of people. The interaction between the internal and external factors with the institutional habitus, like schools, affects the way in which we perceive information changes. As we learn or as we interact with teachers, classmates, and administration, the habitus of the will affect the way we see the world. After observing a sample of 4,341 preschool to sixth-grade classrooms, research on the interaction between teachers and students showed that through the interaction is where learning is affected (Hamre et al., 2013). They found that effective teaching strategies positively affect student learning and that intentional staff development affects teaching. Thus, one's behavior changes when learning occurs.

For the purpose of this study, social class is the interaction between three constructs: identity, structure, and behavior. In this conceptual framework, social class becomes more than just occupational prestige or educational attainment. When we limit social class in that way, it becomes a product of cultural capital. When limited to only worldview, social class becomes limited to psychological behavior. In addition, social class should not be limited to environment only as it asserts that it is only about groups of people. When we broaden the definition of social class, we can better understand it in the context of the multifaceted construct that it is and open the conversation for deeper thoughts and ideas.

The idea of social class is voiced in various ways as research on social class comes from many perspectives. For this study, the researcher used this framework to

conceptualize the constructs of social class to take a deeper look at student engagement. Figure 1*: Social Class as a Multi-Construct* depicts the multi-construct of social class as the interaction of an individual's identity, the structural hierarchy used by society, and the behavior created when the identity and the structure interact with institutional habitus.
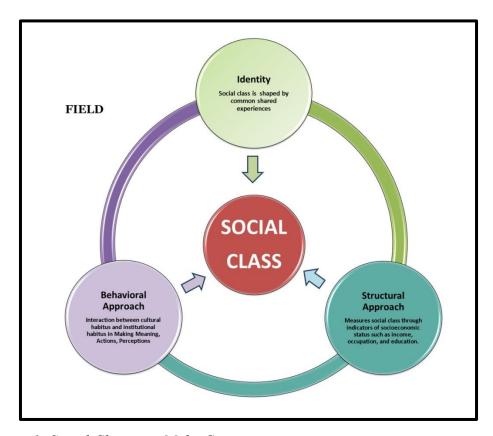
Figure 1: Social Class as a Multi-Construct

Student Engagement. The contextual framework used in this research is an adaptation of the contextual framework created by Shui-fong Lam, Bernard P. H. Wong, Hongfei Yang, and Yi Liu (2012) which was rooted on the ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1986. His theory postulated that the human development took place through a set of seated systems. Each system resides in the

subsequent system. School, family, and the workplace are the most fundamental

microsystems in which development occurs (Lam et al. 2012). The relationships of these

systems created a dynamic relationship that was intricate in human development and

affected the process of engagement. Figure 2 shows the factors that influence student

engagement along with the definitive aspects of student engagement.
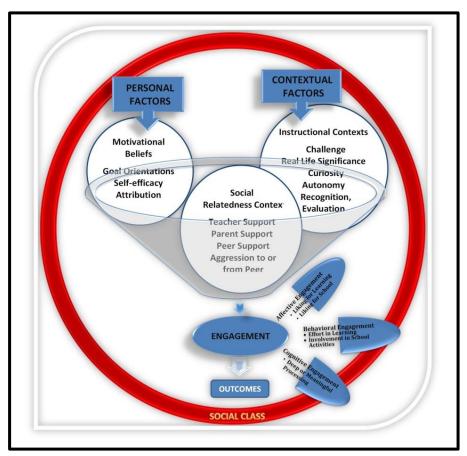
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework – Student Engagement
Adapted from Lam, S., Wong, B. P. H., Yang, H., & Liu, Y. (2012). Understanding Student Engagement
with a Contextual Model. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of Research
on Student Engagement* (p. 406). New York, NY: Springer.

Statement of Problem

There is a need for an educational system that truly provides the necessary resources, supports, and opportunities that enable students, specifically minority students and students living in low-socioeconomic households, to rise to the challenge of meeting raised standards (Anyon et al., 2009; Holzman, 2008, 2010, 2012). The fact that the achievement gap continues to exist demonstrates only one fragment of the problem. Until all students, especially minority students and students living in the low socioeconomic level, begin to have successes in school the US schools will continue to fail its children.

The creation of a support-based system, focused on establishing learning environments and conditions that promote academic success for all children should be the focus of educational reforms according to Holzman (2012). Anyon et al. (2009) also suggested that educational reform should work to provide opportunities and resources for funds for college degrees or make "available jobs with wages that are enough above the poverty line to support a decent life" (p. 15) are problems that educational reform faces. A gap in academic achievement continues to exist between African American and Latino students and their White classmates even after decades of school reform efforts and federal policy mandates focused on reducing the achievement gap between Blacks and Whites.

Purpose of the Study

With this need in mind, this researcher looked closer at student engagement using a multi-constructed social class lens. Ultimately, this researcher hopes to add to the conversation on student engagement and social class. Despite the fact that little

consensus has been made about the inner workings of student engagement although student engagement has recently come to the forefront in educational research, this researcher looked at social class as constructed through personal identity, group behavior, and societal structure to identify components that influence student engagement. Through the identification of common patterns and themes that emerged from the authentic voices of research participants regarding social class and student engagement, discovery of attributes connected to student academic success evolved. The ultimate goal was to add to the conversation on how best to reduce the achievement gap between Whites and minority students.

The achievement gap is closing between Black and Latino students and their White peers all over the United States. This study specifically sought to identify factors that lead to the success for Black and Latino students participating in this current study in hopes of replicating these strategies for other Black and Latino students in other areas. The finding from this study can offer options on how researchers, educators, and policy makers discuss social class and student engagement.

Significance of the Study

No one definitive approach has proven to narrow the gap in all settings although the "achievement gap" has been viewed from multiple directions. Due to the need for sound theoretical- and researched-based perspectives in analyzing, remedying, and evaluating the problem, there is much need for continued research. There is also a need for courageous ways of attacking this problem by including factors such as social class, poverty, and race in the achievement gap conversation. This study includes the "authentic" voices of school teachers, administrators, parents, and students in the

discussion in an attempt to discover strategies consistent with the conceptual frame to be included in the conversation on how best to engage students, specifically Black and Latino student, in school and the learning process for academic success.

Research Questions

This study will address the following questions:

1. To what extent does social class influence student engagement?

2. What common themes related to the influence of social class on student engagement emerge when observing and listening to the voices of teachers, administrators, parents, and students?

3. Based on the study's findings, what recommendations can be made about the role of social class on student engagement?

The first research question on the influence of social class on student engagement addresses the connection between the issues of social class with student engagement. Extensive amounts of research have been completed on social class, while very few studies have linked student engagement with social class. This present study will deepen the understanding of this connection by listening to the authentic voice of parents, teachers, administrators, and students. The second research question compares the common themes found in research and the findings gathered from the authentic voices of the participants in this present study. Research question number three examines the connection between the findings and the elements of the conceptual framework used in this study in hopes of validating the assumptions of the framework.

Definition of Terms

- *Academic Achievement:* "at any point is a cumulative function of current and prior family, community, and school experiences" (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005, p. 422).

- *Social Class:* In this study, conceptualization of social class is through the constructs of identity, behavior, and structure. The idea that social class is dynamic comes from this interactional model. Identity looks at the common shared experiences of groups of people. Social class is an internal indicator that encompasses a person's personal networks. Structure looks at class in the form of fixed categories in which individuals move up or down a continuum. Structure is the external measures used to identify social status. Structure includes measures such as income, occupation, and education. Behavior looks at the interaction between cultural habitus of people and the institutional habitus of organizations such as school, church, and community. In this study we look at a school and the role it plays in how students make meaning, act, and perceive the world around them (Wyatt-Nichol, Brown, & Haynes, 2011). Socioeconomic status becomes one component of social class rather than the central component.

- *Student Engagement:* Student engagement, in this study, refers to the learner's commitment to the product and process of learning. It is a meta construct incorporating various elements of involvement in school or commitment in learning (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Summary and Organization of the Study

This narrative inquiry includes the following chapters. Chapter One was an overview of the study. It included an introduction, statement of problem, significance of study, the research study questions, and definition of terms. Chapter Two will have a review of current literature on student engagement, academic achievement, and social class. Qualitative methodology is located in Chapter Three. It includes a detailed section on the research methods used in the research as well as descriptors of the 15 participants from an upper class high school in the Southern California where Black and other minority students were not being successful in school. Chapter Four will contain a detailed discussion of the findings. Chapter Five will provide a brief summary of the methods and limitations; it will also answer research questions and provide conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This review of literature pertains to student engagement and social class. The review looks at current research on student engagement as well as the mandate of the school reform movement to transform schools. First, it takes a brief look at school reform and its mandate to transform schools. Next is a discussion of current research pertaining to key constructs of social class in relation to education and school reforms. A broaden definition of social class is introduced. Third, to serve as a common understanding for the benefits of this paper a definition of student engagement is established. Fourth, a review of the recent reports on educating African American and Latino students is included. Afterward, included will be a discussion of parent involvement. Finally, a brief discussion of the tenets of transformative leadership as a strategy to address the mandate to transform schools along with an exploration of studies promoting the effectiveness of transformative leadership is included.

The intent of federal mandates to improve the academic achievement of all students, specifically addressing the achievement gap that exists between White students and their marginalized peers, continues to fall short of transforming education for all students. The fact that the gap continues to exist raises a plethora of questions as to what policies or practices may hold the answer to closing the gap and improving student achievement. Moreover, although there has been much research on social class and education, much of that research focuses on negative aspects of education as it pertains to people living in the lower socioeconomic level. This research study will attempt to address issues of social class and education as it pertains to positive student engagement

and achievement. More specifically, this dissertation will address issues of engagement

for minority students of color, specifically African American students by examining the

practices of one parent advocacy group who has created significant and positive changes

for the students that they work with. My hope is to shed light on strategies to help

members of all social class groups to engage students for academic success.

Federal Mandate to Educate Everyone's Child

The last half of the 20th century witnessed an assortment of reform efforts

intended to mend the US educational system. With the passing of the No Child Left

Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, expansion of educational responsibilities between the

Federal, State, and local governments changed (Sunderman, 2010). NCLB placed

additional responsibilities on the state department of education to follow stringent

federally established guidelines requiring the formation of accountability systems,

identification of failing schools, raised student achievement, goals for yearly progress,

and a qualified teacher force. These guidelines are enforced under the pressure of

sanctions, fiscal restraints, and incapacity (Sunderman, 2010). One central goal of NCLB

was the elimination of academic achievement gaps by race and ethnicity (Gorey, 2009).

In the 12 years since the passing of NCLB, a floodgate of reforms has been implemented

in an attempt to improve schools and eliminate the achieve gaps. Reforms that are both

externally and internally created have flooded the marketplace (Datnow, Hubbard, &

Mehan, 2002; Sunderman, 2010). Although school reform calls for transformed schools,

it fails to identify the mechanism by which schools' transformation should occur. Even

with the increased responsibilities at the various levels, there is little evidence as to which

school reform design is effective in transforming schools (Sunderman, 2010).

The federal mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, U.S. Department of Education, 2001), is that every child or everyone's child be educated, no matter who the parent is. Historically, educating everyone's child has not been the national norm. Reforms like NCLB and President Obama's Blueprint for Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) are designed to help children within the school setting *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002* (NCLB). Berliner (2005) argued that the inherent problem with school reform is that issues with children do not happen in just one isolated setting, the school. He argued that all the problems children experience, especially children in poverty, cannot be corrected or fixed in the school setting. He reminded us that children live in homes in communities where schools have no control over what takes place. He postulated that school reform needs to take into account that the interventions taking place in the school setting may be reversed when children return to their homes or neighborhoods (Berliner, 2005). Lawson and Lawson (2013) explained, "Young people spend most of their time in out-of-school contexts and family, peer, and neighborhood ecologies, like schools, are powerful developmental contexts for children" (p. 462). American tradition has been to place the blame on students for their academic failure rather than looking at educational practices or other issues affecting children (Newmann, 1992).

Educators, educational researchers, and policy makers find it hard to come to agreement on reasons for academic failure in US students. The following highlight a few of the many faceted reasons researchers identified as having connections to student achievement:

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- the need for changes in school policy (Berliner, 2005, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Friedlaender, 2008; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007);

- the need for changes in social policy (Anyon, 2005a, 2005b; Bower, 2011);

- a lack of qualified teachers (Ahuja, 2012; National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM), 2008; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2000);

- ineffective teaching practices (English, 2010; Griner & Stewart, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, Robinson, & Sebastian, 2012);

- deficit thinking (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Valencia, 1997; Walker, 2010);

- a lack of understanding of student's diverse backgrounds and needs (de Wet & Gubbins, 2011; Pang, Stein, Gomez, Matas, & Shimogori, 2011; Riehl, 2000); and,

- issues surrounding parental involvement (Abrams & Gibbs, 2002; Howard & Reynolds, 2008; LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011; Olivos, 2006).

Recent research has taken a look at student engagement as a strategy for increasing student achievement (Kaiser & Wisniewski, 2012; Lysne, Miller, & Eitel, 2013; Mokoena & Africa, 2013; Yurco, 2014). This paper will take an extended look at student engagement to increase student achievement from a social class perspective.

Social Class

Social class has been a topic of discussion, debate, and research as far back as Aristotle, who talked about social class in relationship to population. He recognized groups of individuals who share relationships rather than just sharing attributes or events

as subgroups to the population. The notions of social class today, or the segmenting of groups of individuals by social, cultural, and economic distinctions, is a fairly new concept introduced by sociologists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber (Nesbit, 2006). Today sociologists speak of class in terms of those who occupy a similar position in the economic system of production (Nesbit, 2006).

Although Marx (Marx & Engels, 2006, 1932) spoke of different classes, his works most often focused on the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie or owner and controller of the money and the proletariat, the worker, who sold their labor to the bourgeoisie in exchange for money, were the topic of his writings. He wrote about the unequal relationship which mainly benefitted the bourgeoisie and the constant struggle or fight of the proletariat (Marx & Engels, 2006, 1932). The political economy, through a Marxist lens, contributed to failure in school.

Neo-Marxist have expanded the conversation to examine structural inequalities that disadvantage whole groups and cultures of people (Anyon, 2011). Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, and Melissa Groves (2005) wrote in their co-edited book, *Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success,* that there is nothing fair about the economic system in the US. However, they spoke of hope in social policy in the creation equality of economic opportunities. The gap in economic and educational attainment between the classes is apparent in the research. The findings show that a high percentage of children will have the same attainment outcome as their parents in social, behavioral, educational, and economic patterns. One finding, from a 4-year mixed-method ethnographic study following high- and underachieving-students from diverse backgrounds in a Blue Ribbon public high school in a Midwestern suburb, evidenced

education's role in perpetuating class inequities. The finding highlighted the ever increasing gap between children in the middle class and children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Demerath, Lynch, Milner, Peters, & Davidson, 2010).

Max Weber's (1978) reasoning on class differed from Marx (Marx & Engels, 2006, 1932) with an emphasis on economic distribution and the additions of concepts such as culture, values, politics, and lifestyle growing out of the opportunity to appropriate property rather strictly property ownership. Weber also separated economic class from social class. He felt that the chances or opportunities that one had in their life, their cultural background, and their economic status was a better implication of one's social class (Weber, 1978). Annette Lareau, (2000) examined the lives of middle class children outside of the school setting. She wanted to see what impact parent involvement in extracurricular activities had on student engagement in school. She found that the pace or time rhythm greatly differed between middle class children and children living at the lower socioeconomic level limiting the opportunities for parental involvement in school. Middle class children had schedules that taxed parents and parents of children from lower class levels had the overextended schedules. The out-of-school activities also differed greatly between the classes. Activities such as football practice, dance recitals, and piano lessons for middle class children created wait time for parents. Moreover, for children living in the lower socioeconomic activities such as watching TV or playing outside while parents were working created wait time for the children.

Sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (2000) built upon Marx and Engels (1932) and Weber's (1978) idea to say that class consisted of any grouping of individuals with similar affinities and inclinations expanding it to include various forms

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of capital possessed by the individual or the group–economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1986) philosophy inferred reproduction of class structures are from within rather than the predetermination from outside forces. For Bourdieu, individuals sharing a position in social space are simply individuals. He suggested that when individuals occupy a social space, it shapes their identity, lifestyle, and habitus which are avenues to mobilization and representation (Crossley, 2010)

The development of conceptual framework used for social class in this study is from an interactional perspective. The concept of social class for this study is a multifaceted relational construct. Keeping in mind the importance of the contributions of Marx ((Marx & Engels, 1932), Weber (1978), and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), and borrowing from the writing of Lucio Mendieta y Nunez (1946) and Will Barratt (2011) on different types of classes, social class is constructed through identity, behavior, and social structures. Mendieta y Nunez (1946) talked about the stratification of the three social classes and their interrelatedness. He called the relation, between the economic and cultural aspects of the group or individual, social life (Mendieta y Nunez, 1946). Barrett on the other hand talked about models of social class and the interaction between the person, the person's behavior, and the person's environment. He talked about social class as a multifaceted construct.

Many sociologists today continue to group people and use wealth, influence, and status in determining social class. The classes most often referred to today are lower, working, middle and upper class. Poverty, unemployment, lack of education, food, medical care, and adequate housing are stereotypical attributes assigned to the lower class (Nesbit, 2006). The working class has two subgroups: the blue collar worker or those

who have vocations that require less education and more physical work, and the working poor, which requires less or no education and offers little to no advancement (Nesbit, 2006). There are also two subgroups of the middle class or white-collar workers. Both subgroups have acquired more education and have earned more money than those in the classes below them. However, within this class, differentiation between the lower middle class and the middle class are made in education attained and the income earned. The lower middle class earns less income and attained less education than the upper middle class has. The upper class consists of groups with "new money" and those with "old money." They are wealthy and prestigious people who occupy less than 3% of the population (Nesbit, 2006). Class has different meanings to different people. Describing class in terms of power, wealth and income continue to be the most popular way of dividing people along the continuums of power and privilege.

Social Class Conceptual Framework

For this study however, conceptualization of social class is through the constructs of identity, behavior, and structure. Identity looks at the common shared experiences of groups of people. The behavioral context looks at the interaction between cultural habitus of people and the institutional habitus of schools. It also looks at how students make meaning, act, and perceive the world around them. Structure looks at class in the form of fixed categories in which individuals move up or down a continuum. Structures such as income, occupation, and education are used to measure social status (Wyatt-Nichol et al., 2011).

Identity. Identity is an internal construct that relies on one's personal networks. An important feature of identity is that it can be influenced through shared experiences

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with people of other cultural groups (Nieto, 2008), experiences in educational settings (Paulsen, 1991), and family (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Bourdieu's (1986) economic, social, and cultural capitals are connected to an individual's social class. One example of this concept is that African American students learn best when schooling is culturally relevant to their identity development. Additionally, African American students pursue relationships built on interest, trust, and shared experiences (Hale, 1986; Nieto, 1996; Shujaa, 1994).

The impact that identity has on learning and academic achievement is due to the fact that most schools are organized to support middle class and upper class English speaking Whites whose identity comes with an unspoken privilege (Nieto, 2008). Pearce et al. (2008) found in their research that students changed their position in relationship to the challenges created obtaining a university education that caused a change in their perception of who they are. They found that even when the educational process was interrupted students' identities continued to change. This exemplifies the interaction of one's identity with their environment, which changes behavior.

Structure. Social class as it relates to structure looks at external measures of social class. It takes into account indicators of socioeconomic status such as income, education, and occupation. These indicators are most evident in the physical space or the environment that one occupies. These indicators reflect the immediate physical, economic, cultural, and social environment. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, many factors contribute to poverty. Parent educational level, the type of employment of the parent, and race/ethnicity are a few of the factors that contribute to children living in poverty (Addy, Engelhardt, & Skinner, 2013). Across the

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United States the highest rate of child poverty is among Black, Latino, and American

Indian Children (Addy et al., 2013). The poverty rate for Blacks and Hispanics exceeds

the national average. A recent report from the 2012 Program for International Student

Assessment (PISA, OECD, 2013) pointed to socioeconomic status as the cause of low

performance by America's youth. The report also noted that other countries with similar

numbers of students in poverty did better on the assessment than the US (OECD, 2013).

Currently approximately 15% to 20% of the population in the United States is in the

lower class, 30% to 40% are in the working class or lower middle class; 40% to 50% are

in the upper middle class; and 1% to 3% is in the upper class (OECD, 2013). In 2010,

27.4% of Blacks and 26.6% of Hispanics were poor, as compared to 9.9% of non-

Hispanic Whites and 12.1% of Asians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Extreme poverty

rose in the United States between 1996 and 2011. In 2011, approximately 2.8 million

children living in approximately 1.46 million households survived on $2 or less in

income per person per day in a given month, which means almost 20% of households

with children were living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

The estimated number of households living in extreme poverty for a full calendar

year was 866,000 (National Poverty Center, 2012). These families lived in the poorest

communities and spent much of their time trying to put food on their tables and keep a

roof over their heads and the children attend their neighbor public school. This is in

contrast to people living in the upper class. Both upper class groups had more money

than they could possibly spend which left them plenty of time to indulge in their

individual interest. These families lived in exclusive neighborhoods, belonged to

expensive social clubs, and their children attended some of the finest schools in the nation; they had influence and power both nationally and globally.

The U.S. Department of Education (2008) found that only 41% of low-income students entering a four-year college managed to graduate within five years. This was a contrast to 66% students from high-income families. Jean Anyon (2005b) argued that education policy failed to address neighborhood poverty and David Berliner (2005) referred to poverty as a 600 pound gorilla affecting American education.

Behavior. The construct of behavior encompasses both conscious and unconscious behaviors of people. Bourdieu's (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000) notion of habitus was exhibited through the interaction between behavior, individuals, and their environment . When one interacts with the school setting or learning, the way in which one acts and perceives information is changed. When these interactions take place, our perceptions change the way we act and influence the way we understand situations or problems. Schools have habitus; when children interact with school their perceptions of themselves and their world changes. This change can be negative or positive. After observing a sample of 4,341 preschool to sixth-grade classrooms, research on the interaction between teachers and students showed that through the interaction is where learning is affected (Hamre et al., 2013). They found that effective teaching strategies positively affect student learning and that intentional staff development affects teaching.

Social Class in Education

One of the least debated findings in educational research is that socioeconomically disadvantaged children experience school success at a lower rate than children from the middle- and upper-socioeconomic levels do. Although children may have equal

cognitive skills at birth, students who live in low-income families tend to start kindergarten less prepared for the academic experience than children from families in higher income levels (Jeynes, 2007; Lubienski & Crane, 2010; Raag et al., 2011), and these initial cognitive differences increase as children progress through school (Froese-Germain, 2009). Contemporary research demonstrated how an individual with training and awareness could modify their perceptions and the way in which they make meaning (Skinner & Chi, 2012; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). As noted in the research of Froese-Germain (2009), there was a communication difference between middle-class and lower-class children when help was needed. Middle class children more often requested the assistance from the teacher when they had a problem or needed help (Froese-Germain, 2009). Boyd-Zaharias and Pate-Bain (2008) noted educators played a critical role in bridging the communication gap across groups and encouraging broad participation that could ameliorate the educational situation for all students specifically at risk students.

Many theories about the impact that social class has on education are available from a variety of researchers and viewpoints. The one thing they all agreed on is that children of middle and upper class parents have a decided advantage. In the US, social class "continues to be the best predictor of adult educational and occupational achievement" (Jones, 2003, p. 804). However, a longitudinal study of over 1000 New Zealand children, gave evidence that although the socioeconomic status of a child at birth can shape educational attainment,, it is not a determinant (Gibb, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2012). Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000) postulated that education served the interest of the privileged by giving learners' access to and uses of limited forms of social and cultural capital. Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000) argued that education itself

is a major contributor to the reproduction of the social structure. Class effects in political socialization initiated at home are reinforced by education (Paulsen, 1991). The structure of education treated class groups differently in the tracking process, and curricular emphasis addressed differently within each community. Paulsen (1991) found that education both encouraged and discouraged accomplishment of one's goals dependent upon their class position. Professionals also position parents differently by social class. Middle-class mothers and fathers are able to impose their own definitions of a situation – which often coincided with professional frameworks – and exert their influence. In contrast, working-class parents struggle to assert their viewpoints and control interventions. In particular, we have demonstrated how, on one side of the relational coin, middle-class parents are able to position themselves as consumers who choose and evaluate expert advice, and who have their understanding of their child as unique attended to and reflected back to them by parenting support, provision, and professional practice. On the other side of the relational coin, working-class mothers and fathers experienced professional advice as cutting across their commonsense knowledge of their particular child. Their efforts were often directed towards ensuring that their child blended in, rather than risk the sanctions and interventions associated with economic standing (Edwards & Gillies, 2011).

Student Engagement

Student engagement has moved to the top of the list for educational researchers, policy makers, and school reform groups when it comes to students' academic success. Even though the dropout rates are decreasing, millions of students continue to drop out of high school and college. In the new education policy, engagement has gained new

meanings and become more significant (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2013). As recent as January 2014, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama addressed more than 100 college presidents and leaders to discuss steps to help ensure that every child has the opportunity to get a high quality education. The First Lady, using herself as an example, encouraged educational leaders to look for ways to "embrace and empower" students for academic successes (M. Obama 2014). She encouraged educational leaders to seek better ways to engage students in the learning process.

Engagement consists of two aspects, the definitive aspects and the influencing aspects. By definition, student engagement is a multifaceted process employing three types of engagement. Affective engagement directly relates to how a student feels about learning and school. Behavioral engagement relates to the efforts that students place on the learning process and their involvement in school activities. Cognitive engagement relates to the depth of understanding and the reasoning behind the process of learning. However, contextual factors and personal factors also influence student engagement. Contextual factors deal with how the student relates to the instructional context. It also deals with the social relatedness. It talks to the supports that surround the students and how the student related to others in the learning process. The personal factors have to do with the motivational beliefs of the student.

There is a multitude of models of student engagement found in current research. Because of the many factors that can be included in student engagement it is of critical importance to clarify the conceptualization used in this study. Most researchers agreed that student engagement is a metaconstruct utilizing various aspects of involvement or

commitment to learning (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004).

Indicators clarify the definitive aspects of engagement. Facilitators or influencers of

student engagement are outside of the definition yet essential in motivation for

engagement. Influences such as being goal oriented or having teacher support or parent

support increase student engagement. Teacher support in and of itself is not student

engagement; however, it does influence student engagement.

Conceptual Framework for Student Engagement

A general consensus has emerged in recent research that characterizes

engagement as a multifaceted multidimensional construct which includes affective

connections with school and active behavior in school (Appleton, Christenson & Furlong,

2008; Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992). An additional construct of cognitive

engagement was introduced by some researchers and scholars (Appleton, Christenson,

Kim, & Reschly, 2006). Findings in recent research on engagement found that engaged

students perform well academically and exhibit persistence, self-regulating behavior, and

work diligently challenging themselves to do their personal best and enjoy the process

(Klem & Connell, 2004). Many researchers and scholars considered student engagement

a step in the right direction to decrease dropout and promote graduation from high school

and college (J. D. Finn & Rock, 1997; Reschly, Huebner, Appleton, & Antaramian,

2008). In addition, there are short-term and long-term benefits of student engagement

which range from student conduct and grades (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Marks, 2000) to

academic achievement, and higher self-esteem (J. D. Finn & Rock, 1997; Marks, 2000).

For the purposes of this study, student engagement is a multifaceted process that

consists of two distinctive components, the definitive aspects and the influencing aspects.

The definitive aspects of student engagement, often called indicators, assist in defining what student engagement looks like (Lam et al, 2012). The influencing aspects of student engagement, found in resent research, utilize three indicators of student engagement. It looks at student engagement as a multifaceted process employing affective, behavioral, and cognitive engagement. Contextual factors and personal factors influence student engagement.

Efforts to increase student engagement have been a theme of school reform over the past decade. Newmann et al. (1992) noted that disengaged students are an immediate and persistent issue with student achievement. Engagement pertains to both students' affective and behavioral participation in the experience of learning. Definitions of engagement by other researchers consistent with this notion include:

- engagement reflected through students' participation in and with school (Finn & Voelkl, 1993; Zhao & Kuh, 2004);

- engagement reflected through students' determined attempts and psychological or cognitive investment in mastering the work of school (Newmann, Wehlage et al., 1992); and

- engagement reflected through students' emotional attachment to and interest in or ability to influence school (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007).

Engagement encompasses institutional, situational, and individual influences that have the potential to impact all students (London et al., 2007). Because engagement is connected to achievement and "optimal human development," it is an important aspect of the school experience for all students (Marks, 2000, p. 155)

Contextual Factors

There are contextual factors that influence student engagement. These factor in and of themselves are not student engagement however, they can positively or negatively affect student engagement. The categories of these factors are in the context of social relatedness and context of instruction.

Social Relatedness. Social-relatedness factors such as relationships with teachers and peers can also affect student engagement. Allen (1992) analyzed survey data from 1,800 respondents and found that academic achievement was influenced when students had positive social experiences with diverse peers and engaged with faculty members about their learning. Strayhorn (2010) found that it was extremely important for parents of Black and Latino boys to discuss their expectations for their sons to attend college. The study provided empirical evidence that these discussions have a positive impact on academic achievement for these boys.

Students disengage when they do not have personal relationships in school (Newmann, 1992). Table 1 is adapted from the framework for Achievement Motivational Theory proposed by Martin and Dowson (2009) when studying interpersonal relationships and their effects on student engagement and achievement. They concluded that students perform more effectively in an academic setting when they have meaningful positive relationships (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Table 1 summarizes theories and concepts relevant to relatedness as outlined by Martin and Dowson (2009).

Numerous benefits associated with relatedness have been found to improve academic achievement (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; E. Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). In cooperative situations, students work with others to

reach goals jointly as well as with their partners. In competitive situations, students work

individually or in competition with others to reach their goals (Martin & Dowson, 2009).

Mentoring is another product of relatedness that has been found to contribute directly to

engagement and academic gains (Williams & Sanchez, 2011)**.**

Table 1

Summary of Key Theories and Key Concepts Relevant to Relatedness

Theory	Key concepts	Links to Relatedness to Others
Attribution theory	Perceived causes of an event or outcome shape behavior, affect, and cognition; key causal ascriptions—control, locus, stability	Perceived causes learned or inferred from significant others; dimensions such as control shaped by feedback from others
Expectancy-value theory	Positive expectations and high value placed on task or outcome enhances motivation	Socializers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors communicate level of expectation and nature of value
Goal theory	Reasons for engaging in a particular behavior or pursuing a particular goal	Communicated through others' values, expectations, and group norms
Self-determination theory	Relatedness a psychological Need	Relatedness need met through warmth, support, and nurturance
Self-efficacy	Belief in capacity to achieve in a specific domain or task	Modeled and communicated by significant others; vicarious influence from others
Self-worth motivation theory	Link between worth and achievement; fear of failure	Relationships (approval, affirmation) conditional on level of achievement; specific response to fear of failure linked to how significant

Note: Adapted from "Interpersonal Relationships, Motivation, Engagement, and Achievement: Yields for Theory, Current Issues, and Educational Practice" by A. J. Martin, and M. Dowson, 2009. *Review of Educational Research*, *79*(1), 308.

Instructional Context. Students given power in the learning process and given

learning connected to their interests are more likely to engage in school. Students are

more likely to withdraw from the learning process when this connectedness is not found in schools (McInerney, 2009). He also observed that students were more engaged when the teachers to student relationship was built on respect and affirmation, allowing the student to participate in the construction of knowledge. Marks (2000) studied a sampling of 3,669 students from 143 math and social studies classrooms in 24 elementary, middle, and high schools. He reported that when norms of respect, fairness, safety, and positive communication were present in the school environment, student engagement enhanced at all levels. He also found that when teachers and peers have high expectation in a supportive school environment student engagement for elementary and high school showed an increase (Marks, 2000).

   Personal Factors. There are personal factors that have direct impact on student engagement. There are findings that students' intrinsic interest about goal orientation and motivational beliefs may be determinants of student engagement. These beliefs include goal orientations, attribution, and self-efficacy (Lam et al., 2012). Students who are persistently goal oriented have the ability to focus on gaining new skills and knowledge. When examining behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, behavior disaffection, and emotional disaffection in 1018 third through sixth graders. Skinner, Kindermann and Furrer (2008) found a positive correlation with personal and social indicators promoting student engagement. The more engaged students also showed higher confidence in their capacities, more intrinsic and identified regulatory styles, higher relatedness to all teachers and classmates, and more optimism as well as more supportive relationships (E. A. Skinner et al., 2008).

Motivational Beliefs. Findings from a study of 822 middle school students from three cities in China, reported self-efficacy has a positive influence on student engagement. When students believed in their capacity, they were engaged in all three areas affectively, behaviorally, and cognitively in school. The study showed the highest correlation to student engagement was effort attribution. Effort attribution helps students believe in their capacity to perform better in school (Lam et al., 2012).

Minority Students and Engagement

Reported in Education Week by Leslie Fenwick (2013), Americans as a society "have been socialized . . . to accept . . . negative data about blacks and have been trained to be skeptical about and question any positive information about black people" (para. 4). One false perception that she focused on pertained to Black parents not being invested or engaged in their children's education. The National Center for Educational Statistics reported in 2008 that the parents of 65% of high school students checked to ensure that their children's homework was completed and that this trend was more prevalent among the parents of Black males (86%) than among the parents of White males (61%). Data also showed that fewer Black parents reported being satisfied with the academic standards, order, and discipline of their children's school (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Black and Latino students continue to have less success in US schools than their White classmates do. Federal mandates such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and more recently President Obama's Blueprint for Education Reform and Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), continued to fail to meet their intended goal. These mandates were designed to transform education and help every child or everyone's child to be educated, no matter what their socio economic level (A blueprint

of reform: The reauthorization of the elementary and secondary education act, U.S. Department of Education, 2010; No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, 2002). However, the fact continues that Black and Latino students struggle more to be successful in US schools than their White classmates.

Criticisms of the above mentioned mandates are that legislation does not take into account the needs of every child (Anyon, 2005b; Holzman, 2008, 2010, 2012), or the lived experiences of children outside of school (Berliner, 2005), as well as incomplete demographic data skews results (Lubienski & Crane, 2010). In addition, these mandates contained involvement strategies that limit participation rather than increasing it for all families (Hill & Tyson, 2009). The mandates ignored programs with faulty designs especially for gifted children (Munn-Joseph & Gavin-Evans, 2008), and they were embedded with unexamined assumptions about children and achievement, as well as race, class, and ability (Dutro & Selland, 2012; National Association for Gifted Children, 2014). Ladson Billings (2007), using Critical Race Theory, discussed how the voices of all stakeholders are not being heard and more specifically Galen, (2010) talked about the fact that a silence exists when it comes to the academic and public discourse when it comes to class issues. Instead of creating schools that provide opportunities for all students to have academic successes, David Berliner (2005), Jean Anyon (2005b) along with Bower (2011) and many other sociologists believed that educational policies create schools that disadvantage certain students.

The Schott Report (Holzman, 2012) called the problem systemic. The Schott Report argued that reform created a climate that is "standards driven and punitive" (p. 13) minimizing opportunities for engaging student-centered learning to take place (Holzman,

2012). The ideal that education brings with it a future filled with successes is still elusive to the Black and Latino student. According to the Schott Report, current policies continued to be capitalist in nature focusing on winners and losers. Rather than creating opportunities for all students to succeed, the focus is on testing students to see who can meet the challenge without giving the needed support that enables students to meet that challenge. School becomes a place of failure for both teachers and students rather than a place of success.

Parent Involvement and Engagement

Motivational development model focuses on parent involvement as a positive influence on children's academic achievement by fostering student engagement in school (Pomerantz et al., 2007). Research has linked parent involvement and academic skills and motivation for learning. Pomerantz et al. (2007) found that when parents stimulate skill development in children, motivation might be a byproduct of that stimulation. When we talk about parent involvement, the type of involvement is important. When parents communicate with their child about having academic success and when they speak to them about homework, there is a positive affect to academic achievement. Linked to student achievement was consistently checking homework. Parents' involvement that creates a conversation that informs children about their expectations and value for education fosters positive engagement (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Parents, who are involved in their children's academic lives in a non-controlling manner, benefits children. Autonomy-supportive involvement provided opportunities for children to expand their skills in problem solving (Pomerantz et al., 2007). d parent involvement qualities.

Table **2** shows examples of home-based and school-based parent involvement

qualities.

Table 2

Examples of Qualities of Parents' School – and Home-Based Involvement

Type of Involvement	Quality of Involvement	
	School Based	Home Based
Autonomy support	Parents encourage children to show them around the classroom during open houses	Parents support children in developing their own schedules for doing their homework.
Control	When volunteering in classrooms, parents monitor children's work habits.	Parents make decisions without children's input about the topic of their school research projects.
Process focus	When attending open houses and seeing children's work, parents focus on what fun children might have had in doing the work.	While helping children with homework, parents focus on the process of mastering the work.
Person focus	After attending parent teacher conferences, parents emphasis to children issues regarding children's innate ability	In praising children's success at homework problem emphasize the role of children's innate ability in solving them
Positive affect	Parents express enjoyment and love toward their children when taking part in a field trip	Parents converse with children about their day at school and characterized by support are characterized
Negative affect	Parents express enjoyment and love toward their children when taking school fieldtrips	Parents are hostile and critical while checking over children's homework
Positive beliefs about children's potential	At a parent-teacher conference, parents are sure to attend to children's strength.	While assisting with homework, parents convey to children's homework
Negative beliefs about children's potential	In attending open houses, parents ignore the difficult tasks because they believe children have little potential for such tasks.	Parents focus their conversations with children on avoiding complete failure in school rather than on how children might achieve success.

Note. Adapted from "The How, Whom, and Why of Parents' Involvement in Children's Academic Lives: More Is Not Always Better" by E. M. Pomerantz, E. A. Moorman, and S. D. Litwack, (2007). *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(3), 382.

Ream and Palardy (2008) found that behaviors across social classes are different

and can facilitate the gathering and sharing of academically beneficial resources for some

people while inhibiting and limiting resources for others. Bourdieu and Passeron's

(2000) theory of reproduction addresses the idea of limitations. They said that when the capital of parents is limited, it affects the child in negative ways academically. Parents from different social classes bring differing expectations to the discussion on academic achievement. These discrepancies are reflected in lower student expectations and lower academic engagement (Andres, Adamuti-Trache, Yoon, Pidgeon, & Thomsen, 2007). In contrast, another study found that parent-child talks about the school experiences and graduation expectations better prepared children in all grades and academic progress was higher (Zang, Hsu, Kwok, Benz, & Bowman-Perrott, 2011).

Transformative leadership is an avenue in which all school leaders, district leaders, school administration, teachers, parents, and students can use to transform their school. It brings awareness of the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of the school systems, reflects on how the system advantages or disadvantages members, analyzes inequities, and takes critical action to deconstruct wrongs and reconstruct a more just and equitable system (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). It takes transformative leaders to change the core beliefs and social context of a school (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006). Shields (2013) described it in the following passage:

> Transformative leadership starts at the end. It argues, with Foster (1986), that leadership is 'critically educative' not only looks 'at the conditions in which we live, but is must also decide how to change them' (p. 185). It begins by recognizing that the material realities of the wider community impinge on the ability of any organization to achieve success and on the ability of individuals within the organization to succeed. (p. 18)

Transformative leadership recognized that an uneven playing field existed in education between low-income students and minority students and White middle and upper class students. It also recognized that to assist impoverished students it would take greater effort. It acknowledged that minority children have more than one culture to

master. Transformative leadership understood that a safe space is necessary for the lived

experiences of all children (Shields, 2013). The eight tenets of transformative leadership

theory are:

- the mandate to effect deep and equitable change;
- the need to deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate inequity and injustice;
- a focus on emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice;
- the need to address the inequitable distribution of power;
- an emphasis on both private and public (individual and collective) good;
- an emphasis on interdependence, interconnectedness, and global awareness;
- the necessity of balancing critique and promise; [and]
- the call to exhibit moral courage. (Shields, 2013, p. 21)

When promoting transformation in schools, leaders facilitated courageous

conversations and rational discourse that inspired all stakeholders to become aware of

their responsibility to understand and recognize "the pervasiveness of institutionalized

oppressive beliefs and practices" and "subsequently better serving traditionally

marginalized students" (Kose, 2009, p. 643). His findings supported the use of

transformative leadership in the following roles:

- as the transformative visionary leader who develops and communicates the

    transformative vision and sets the direction and goals of the school;

- as the transformative learning leader who encourages teacher growth fosters

    "organizational learning development for social justice" (p. 644);

- as the transformative structural leader who develops learning teams in an

    inclusive environment with common work space and resources;

- as a transformative cultural leader who connects school with social justice

    through collaboration and collective responsibility for all students;

- as a transformative political leader who establishes school-wide support for change by "maximizing resources and opportunities for professional learning" (p. 649).

School leaders who practice transformative leadership have a great opportunity to transform their campuses. They use transformative leadership skills such as being dialogic and opening up the lines of communication that break barriers separating stakeholders. They use critical reflection and critical actions in every aspect of their leadership to combat policies and practices that limit transformation. They build strong caring relationships with staff, parents, students, and the community through courageous and critical conversations to break down habitus in their schools. Transformation can take place when a school leadership functions as transformative leaders.

Summary

The truth is that the oppressed are not "marginals," are not people living "outside" society. They have always been "inside"–inside the structure that made them "beings for others." The solution is not to "integrate" them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become "beings for themselves" (Freire, 1970, p. 74).

School reform clearly has mandates to transform education to allow better education for the underserved population of minority and low socioeconomic students. School habitus continues to promote inequities, injustices, and educational practices that exclude students. Amidst these challenges, children must continue to engage in school to be academically successful. Parents have an important part to play in the academic success of their child as a school leader. Parents, no matter what their socio-economic

status, have never been "outside" the educational system. Past and present knowledge and experiences with the educational system is the basis for their involvement or non-involvement with school.

The idea that parents are outsiders creates a barrier to their involvement, which is central to current school policies and reforms. Parent involvement has the potential to affect student engagement in positive and lasting ways. The following chapters of this dissertation will examine a parent advisory group that used transformative leadership through collaboration with a high school to create positive student engagement for Black and minority students closing the achievement gap at their school.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to describe facilitators of student engagement through the lens of social class in order to identify successful strategies to use in creating academic success for minority students. Specifically, we tried to capture "lived stories" through conversations with the 15 participants in this study and the influence of a parent advisory group on student achievement for a group of minority students in a public high school in Southern California. Furthermore, this study focused specifically on the engagement of African American and other minority students through their relationship with the parent advisory group. The intent of this research was to add to the conversation on student engagement, to identify successful strategies used by the parent advisory group to increase student engagement, and to make recommendations to other parent groups who work to create academic success for all students. This chapter provides details of the methodology used in this research, including information on research design, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of study. The chapter concludes with a short summary of the methodology and a description of how it led into the analysis of the collected data.

Research Design

In order to elicit the authentic voices of the participants, the present study utilized the narrative inquiry design, which is a qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach was the most appropriate approach for this study because of the need to empower people to tell their story. The qualitative approach better answers the

questions "why" and "how" in order to communicate accurate personal stories using an authentic voice. The transformative aspects of qualitative research provided a framework to examine social justice issues and the inclusion of the unheard voices of the community (Creswell, 2013; Mertens, 2007, 2010). The researcher was able to hear the authentic voices of the participants to discover how they approached the problem of the achievement gap for minority students in their school by using the qualitative research.

Narrative Inquiry

The narrative inquiry approach is an appropriate method to use when examining the lives of groups of people. This method of qualitative research collects and studies stories surrounding events (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2013). Narrative inquiry "inquires" into, asks questions about, and looks for deeper understanding of life experiences by allowing the research participant to tell their story (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This method entails the telling of the human experience through stories. Narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both the method and phenomena of study. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) defined narrative as the experience studied as well as type of inquiry used in the study. Thus, the phenomenon becomes the story and the inquiry becomes the narrative. They concluded, "People by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). The procedures described by Creswell (2013) for conducting narrative research are as follows:

- Analyze the problem or question to ensure that narrative research is the best method of acquiring the story.

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- Spend time with the individual or people selected to tell the stories and gather various types of information

- Take into consideration how the data will be gathered

- Collect the information

- Analyze the information

- Collaborate with the participant to ensure the meaning of the information is not lost

This approach allows for both the formal and informal collection of information. The researcher and the participant through collaborative dialogue and interaction co-construct the story (Creswell, 2013).

It uses lived and told stories from various settings, scenes, and situations to express and reconstruct a person's or group of people's experiences and give them meaning (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2013). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) wrote, "Stories function as arguments in which we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as lived" (p. 8). These "storied lives" occur both in individuals and socially. Chase (2008) outlined five analytic lenses used in contemporary narrative inquiry. She explained that narrative researchers have the following perspectives about narratives:

- narrative are treated as a distinct form of discourse,

- narratives are forms of verbal action,

- narratives are constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances,

- narratives are socially situated interactive performances, and as the researcher interprets and finds ways to present or publish their ideas, they become narrators of the story.

Although Chase (2008) explains that all lenses are interconnected and present in the process, emphasis on each lens is dependent on the approach of the researchers. As an educator and a storyteller, this method situates itself to the way I understand the lived experiences of the participants. Table 3 describes both the "characteristics of narrative research" (Creswell, 2013, pp. 104-106), and this researcher's own summary of the steps in this qualitative inquiry.

Table 3

Characteristics of Narrative Research

Characteristics	Narrative Research	Researcher's Application of Qualitative Inquiry
Focus	*Exploring the lived experience of an individual(s)*	Listen to authentic voices of the research participants.
Type of problem best suited for design	*Needing to tell stories of individual experiences*	Use conversational interview design to allow research participants to share their own life experiences.
Discipline background	*Drawing from the humanities including anthropology, literature, history, psychology, and sociology*	Factors of social class and student engagement were the primary context for the study.
Unit of Analysis	*Studying one or more individuals*	Gathering oral history from research participants
Data collection forms	*Using primarily interviews and documents*	Person-to-person interviews conducted, audio-recorded, and field notes taken to gain deeper understanding of the research participants' experiences.

Table 3 (Cont'd.)

Characteristics	Narrative Research	Researcher's Application of Qualitative Inquiry
Data analysis strategies	*Analyzing data for stories, "restorying" stories, developing themes, often using a chronology*	Emerging themes surfaced after the data were transcribed and analyzed
Written report	*Developing a narrative about the stories of an individual's life*	Generation of a narrative and a report sharing the findings

Note: Adapted from "Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches" (3rd ed.), pp. 104-106, by J. W. Creswell, 2013.

Authentic Voices. The narrative approach allows the researcher to actively utilize the voice of the participant to recreate the story that is being told (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The characteristics of voice reflect the individual's experiences on linguistic, historical, cultural, ideological, and social levels leading to a more comprehensive and accurate story. According to Sperling and Appleman (2011) "voice is taken to be more than one's speaking or writing personality or style, but rather the ideas one assumes by virtue of one's social positioning to count in the world" (p. 75). The ultimate goal of this study was to capture the authentic voices of the participants and in order to do this the researcher must have a clear understanding of the metaphorical meaning of 'voice.' Voice was defined by Sperling and Appleman (2011) as "a language performance–always social, mediated by experience, and culturally embedded" (p. 81). The authors explained the importance in literacy and through reading and writing activities how voice is impeded or matured. With this in mind, the explanation there are no incorrect answers to the open-ended questions was given to the participants; they were free share whatever information they felt comfortable sharing and that the research is and will remain anonymous**.**

Oral History. *"Oral history"* is not an individual interview but a collection of interviews weaved together to create a narrative (Turrini, 2013). *"Oral history"* uses the recorded interview to allow people to tell their story in the first person narrative and is inclusive by nature. It demands an environment of trust, understanding, and mutual respect. Participants need to understand that both participation and disclosure is voluntary (Manning, 2010). *"Oral history"* is a type of narrative inquiry that provides the researcher an opportunity to discover perceptions, strategies, and patterns that will broaden understanding of a specific event or life experience (Creswell, 2013). This researcher hoped to find strategies that other parent groups could utilize to help close the achievement gap for their children.

<center>**Population and Sample**</center>

The target population for this study was all persons who have knowledge of the Parent Advisory Group and the participants coming from a purposive sampling in that they possessed information pertinent to the phenomenon being studied. Purposeful sampling according to Creswell (2013) has three specific considerations: participants in the sample, type of sampling, and sample size. This strategy for sampling is one of the most common used in qualitative research. This strategy allows the researcher to group participants according to preselected criteria relevant to the research question. Purposive sampling provides opportunity for the researcher to utilize participants based on selection criteria needed to inform the research. Both the participants and the site selected aided to inform the researcher in relation to the research problem. In purposeful sampling, the sample size is variable dependent upon the resources available and may or may not be set prior to the collection of data.

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Participants

        Research participants were purposefully selected using the following criteria:

- Participants were associated with the high school in which the parent advisory group was located;

- Participants were presently or previously associated with the advisory group;

- Participants had presently participated in an event or activity sponsored by the parent advisory group;

- Participants worked directly with individuals, teachers, administrator, parents, or others who were associated with the parent advisory group.

        The rationale for selecting the first criteria was to enable the researcher to have a better understanding of the school context in which the parent advisory group worked. The second criteria provided opportunity for informants who had knowledge of the parent organization to participate. The third criteria provided an opportunity to gather information from those informants who participated first hand in activities sponsored by the parent advisory group. The fourth criteria helped the researcher to identify relationships that were influential with the parent advisory group. Because this research focused on engagement of the school, it was important for the researcher to hear the various voices and the various perspectives involved in the phenomenon.

        Participants chosen had the ability to inform the researcher on aspects of background, practice, and relationships of the parent advisory group. Questions used to assist the researcher in gathering this sampling were:

- Does this participant have information that will inform the study?

- Does the participant have the time to tell their story?

- Does the participant want to tell their story?

- Does the participant meet the sampling criteria?

Participants included both members of and non-members of the parent advisory group. Participants considered as members of the parent advisory group were individuals who took an active part in the leadership of the parent advisory group. Non-members were participants who met the above criteria, however were not part of the leadership of the parent advisory group. Of the 15 participants interviewed, 11 were non-members and four were members. Participants who were non-members included district administration, previous school administrators, teachers, students, and community members. There were six student participants. Four of the student participants were not directly involved with the parent advisory group; however, they were able to provide information to the researcher on the relationships and impact that the school has on students in general. See Table 4 for a list of participants and the defining attributes of those participants. The labels for the table are P# = participant number, E = ethnicity, M = member, SES = socioeconomic level, ED = educational level, P = profession, G = gender, Y = years associated with the school, parent advisory group, or the district, and AR = age range.

Table 4

Characteristics of Participants

P#	M	E	SES	ED	P	G	Y	AR
1	No	White	Upper	11th grade	Student	Female	3^s	15- 20
2	No	White	Upper	11th grade	Student	Male	3^s	15- 20
3	No	Hispanic	Upper Middle	12th grade	Student	Female	4^s	15- 20

Table 4 (Cont'd.)

P#	M	E	SES	ED	P	G	Y	AR
4	No	Hispanic	Upper Middle	12th grade	Student	Male	4^s	15- 20
5	No	Black	Upper Middle	12th grade	Student	Female	4^s	15-20
6	No	Black	Upper	12th grade	Student	Female	4^s	15-20
7	Yes	East Indian	Upper	Masters	Community Member	Female	15^s	21-35
8	Yes	Black	Upper Middle	Masters	Teacher	Male	13^s	36-50
9	Yes	Black	Upper	BA	Parent-Regional Manager Edison	Male	7^p	51+
10	No	Black	Upper	Masters	Administration	Male	6^s	51+
11	No	Black	Upper Middle	Masters	Teacher	Male	8^s	51+
12	No	Black	Upper	Masters	Administrator	Female	9^s	51+
13	No	White	Upper	Masters	Assistant to the Superintendent	Female	27^d	51+
14	Yes	Black	Upper Middle	AA	Community Member -Retired Firefighter/ Paramedic	Male	10^p	51+
15	Yes	Black	Upper	BS	Parent - International Director - Xerox	Male	7^p	51+

Note: [s] = years with the school; [d] = years with district; [p] =years with parent advisory group

Communicating with Gatekeeper. Conducting this research required communication with two "gatekeepers" (Creswell, 2013) who assisted in providing the required access to the district and the parent advisory group. Communicating with the assistant to the superintendent and the school-parent advisory group liaison were vital. The assistant to the superintendent provided the necessary permission to conduct research and to interview the faculty, administrators, students, and parents connected to the

phenomenon. The school-parent advisory group liaison provided names and contact information for faculty, administrators, students, parents, and other vested parties. These positive relationships facilitated both access and insight to the participants. The research team communicated both verbally and in writing with the gatekeepers, about the purpose of the study in order to gain access to the purposefully chosen participants who provided insight for this research. The researchers received full access to invite participants for involvement in the study. The researchers coordinated with the participants' respective schedules in order to gather data through interviews, field notes, and personal observation.

Protection of Participants. Upon gaining permission from the University of Redlands IRB, the District, and the Board of Director of the parent advisory group, conversational interviews took place with each participating member. Through the gatekeepers, recruitment of the participants was completed. The gatekeepers invited perspective participants to be involved in the study and then passed this information of interested persons to the researchers in order for the researchers to contact them about participating. Researchers gave potential participants multiple opportunities to voice their interest in volunteering prior to participating in the study. Participants received a formal explanation of the study and then asked to sign a formal written consent form. The form explained that participation was voluntary, no compensation was involved, and declared their right to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were required to complete a consent form (see Appendix A through Appendix H). The confidential responses from the research participants did not include their names. To maintain an ethical study no "deception" (Creswell, 2013) was used in this study. The

identities of all participants will remain protected, all participants were treated with respect, and no physical or psychological harm was tolerated (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

The Setting. The location chosen was the school and district in which a parent advisory group had worked with minority students since 2003 resulting in raised student academic achievement and a reduction in the achievement gap. The parent advisory group continues to work at this site. The school's location is a middle to upper middle class residential suburban community. The community consists of commuters who work in metropolitan areas 10 to 25 miles outside of the local community. Over the past 25 years, the community has experienced rapid growth yet it remains a close-knit family oriented community. The US Census Bureau (2013) reported that the mean and median household incomes in the high school neighborhood is substantially higher than the average mean and median household incomes of the entire city in which the high school is located. Additionally, a greater percentage of households in the high school neighborhood take home a higher income than the average percentages for the city at large (see Table 5).

The district population was over 53,000 students and approximately 4,633 employees. The graduation rate was 91% and students participating in the free and reduced lunch program was 44% at the time of this study (Strategic Plan, 2010-2015). The school is located in an upper middle class neighborhood in Southern California. It served students in grades 9 through 12. It opened in the 1995-96 school year and its current population was 3,724 with 9% of students in special education, 11% qualified for English Language Learner support, and 27% qualified for free and reduced

Table 5

Median and Mean Household Incomes and Percentages

Income Earnings	Incomes from households with the same zip code as the High School	Incomes from households in the same city where the High School is located
Median household income ($)	$97,327	$78,982
Mean household income ($)	$117,014	$92,607
$100,000 to $149,999	22.0% of households	20.7% of households
$150,000 to $199,999	14.6% of households	10.1% of households
$200,000 or more	12.3% of households	6.0% of households

Note. U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). American Fact Finder (2008-2012). Retrieved from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/

lunch program. The current graduation rate for this school was 100%. Their Academic

Performance Index (API) score for 2013 was 809. The Board foundation recognized the

District for its diligent efforts to decrease the achievement gap between the White and

Asian students and the lower achieving Black and Latino students. The district, as noted

on the parent advisory group website and in recent articles, accredited much of this

success to the work of the parent advisory group.

Over the last few years, this school has seen an impressive decrease in the

achievement gap. Students have more focus and engagement in the academic process.

Consequently, more Black and Latino students are applying to prestigious universities.

Figure 3 provides the ethnicity of the current school population.
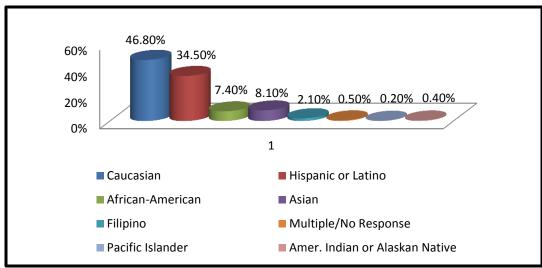
Figure 3: Student Population Demographic
Adapted from the District of Interest Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for this inquiry was adapted from a study conducted in the

Philippines in 2011 and field tested on more than 70 participants from selected school

sites. Participants included teachers, students, parents, and administration. A

presentation of the preliminary findings took place at the International Conference on

Teacher Education in the Philippines in July of 2012. Subsequently in the United States,

several researchers used the instrument for studies that focused on the influence of funds

of knowledge, social and cultural capital, and social class on student engagement with

over 50 participants (see Appendix I). Presentation of the US studies' findings at the

American Education Research Association (AERA) is currently scheduled for April,

2015.

This researcher chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. It is the researchers'

belief that this type of questioning provides more opportunity for flexibility to the

participants in telling their story and more opportunity for the researchers to follow-up

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with clarifying questions. This allowed the interviewer to use clarifying questions to gain

a deeper understanding of the participants' perspective. The openness of the questions

also allowed for diverse input from the participants. The use of semi-structured open-

ended questions provided the clearest and most efficient route to the information needed,

while avoiding leading questions (Creswell, 2013). The researcher was seeking a

balanced flow of conversation between the interviewer and the participant. The study

questions allowed for depth of information as well as breadth of information. The

interviewee had the opportunity to share with prompting for more information as needed,

or for clarification of information. The goal was to be authentic during the interview

process. The understanding that conversations are not one-sided is important to this

process. This process allowed the researcher to rephrase and clarify for deeper

understanding as necessary.

Although this study used conversational interviews, general guiding questions

pertained to (a) the school, (b) students achievement, (c) engagement activities/strategies,

and (d) parent participation. Also specific to the parent advisory group, topics pertaining

to their involvement were included. Questions posed during the conversational

interviews related to the information shared and the guiding topics that framed the

interview process. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, and the

transcripts then served as the basis for generating findings. The flexibility of using

conversational interviews permitted the researcher and the participants to co-create a

space for the narrative to develop. The open-ended questions (numbered) became part of

the conversation. The follow-up questions (lettered) clarified and allowed for further

understanding. Questions pertaining to the parent group related to their participation and

involvement in the school and its academic progress. Table 6 shows these interview
questions.

Table 6

Interview Questions

Open-Ended Questions		Follow-up Questions
1) **Tell me about your school and what it offers.** (expected responses covering the school curriculum, delivery of instruction, language medium of instruction (bilingual or English only with native language), school climate, demographics (diversity, free and reduced lunch), etc.	a. b. c.	Tell me about yourself. (looking for background, work experience, education level, socioeconomic status, educational experience) How do parents learn about this school? What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?
2) **Tell me about the type of learning that is happening in this school.**	a. b. c. d. e.	What does it look like? What types of interactions are taking place? What types of supports are in place for this learning to be successful? Are there any challenges to this type of learning? What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?

3) **Tell us about the achievement of students. Share your perception on whether or not family income or social status has an effect on the achievement of students in this school, and why.**	a.
	b.
	
	c.
		Tell me about the teachers in this school
		Who do you believe contributes to the achievement of students?
		  i. What does that look like?
		  ii. How are they supported to do this?
		What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?

4) **Share some traditions (cultural practices) and activities that you do in school and any effects on children?**	a. b. c.	What traditions and activities are practiced at this school What effect do you see them having on student involvement and students' relationships (with peer, adults, family) What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?

Table 6 (Cont'd.)

Open-Ended Questions	Follow-up Questions
5) Name some challenges that the school faces.	a. What takes place to make parents feel welcome? i. What does that look like? b. What supports are in place for student, teachers, parents, admin, or other stakeholders? c. What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?
6) Tell me what you are proud of about your school; what do you like and don't like about your school. Tell us about it.	a. What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?
7) What do you think are the community resources that are helpful to student learning? Share how you make use of them for student engagement and learning.	a. What does it look like? b. Tell us about how people gain access to these resources and make use of them. c. If no, then why? d. What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?

TO PARENTS AND PUPILS ONLY

8) Do you feel welcome in this school? Tell us about your impression on how the school personnel welcome you and involve you in the school's activities? Are the teachers approachable? Explain.	a. What is the routine that you go through if you want to talk to a teacher? b. What ways/opportunities are available for you to express your concerns about the school ? c. What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?

9) Tell us how you spend your time at home. Share with us how you communicate at home? Type of conversations?	a. Parents: When your child is not at school what do you do together? What do you talk about?
	b. What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?
	c. Students: What do you do outside of school? What do you talk about?
	   i. If parents, what about your friends?
	   ii. If friends, what about your parents?
	d. What is the role of the parent advisory group in this?

10) Please share anything else that you would like to about the school? The parent advisory group? Share.	

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection took place in February and March of 2014. Before the collection

of information, research participants received informed consent letters along with a brief

description of the research study. Implementation of the following steps to gather

research data took place:

1. research participants were invited to participate;

2. research participants were interviewed and field notes taken;

3. interviews were transcribed;

4. transcribed interviews and the researcher's field notes were reviewed in order to

    gather concrete and specific meaning.

Conducting conversational interviews with the research participants began after

receiving approval from the University IRB, the school district, and the parent group

Board of Directors. Conversational interviews, also known as unstructured or

ethnographic interviews were chosen for their open-endedness and flexibility (Turner,

2010). With this informal conversational approach, the researchers asked open-ended

questions that relied on the interaction with the participants to guide the interview process

(Turner, 2010). This researcher chose to conduct the interviews in a conversational

manner, focusing on questions that allowed participants to tell their stories, specifically

their story as it pertained to their involvement with the academic success of students

participating with the parent advisory group. Interviews began with general questions to

clarify identity of participants in relationship to the parent advisory group and finished

with specific questions about their experiences as they related to the parent advisory

group. Focusing on the strategies and activities utilized by the parent advisory group as

well as interactions with the school, parents, and community, the researcher endeavored to capture the complete story.

Data Analysis

Constant comparison analysis developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is one of the most commonly used forms of analysis for qualitative research. The interviews were semi-structured with probes evoking descriptions of how the parent advisory group assisted students to engage in the learning at the school. The data was systematically organized, analyzed, and synthesized to identify patterns, emergent themes, and categories (Creswell, 2013). To identify emergent themes, categories, and patterns, the Nvivo10, a qualitative analysis software program, analyzed the interviews to conduct constant comparisons to organize, review, and code transcribed interviews, field notes, and documents pertaining to the research. The constant comparative method divides the data into in vivo or open codes. Reduction of these codes to axial and selective codes in the recursive process of identifying patterns, themes and concepts then occurs. Using an open coding strategy, the researcher rereads each interview in order to identify and name significant and repeated concepts. Axial coding identified relationships among significant concepts into categories or themes. During axial coding, the concepts developed during open coding are generalized and organized into categories linked to the phenomena, context, or structure being studied (Creswell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Three members of the research team discussed and created initial nodes and categories. Two additional researchers working with the primary researcher validated the coding ensuring that there was a high degree of confidence and reliability for the three transcripts coded separately. The researchers reached consensus on 12 codes from

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15 interviews or 80% of participant's recorded transcripts. Creswell (2013) provided the steps in the data analysis for the narrative inquiry researcher, which includes preparing and organizing the data for use, condensing the data into themes or concepts, and representation of the data for discussion. Table 7 shows the data analysis and representation for narrative inquiry.

Table 7

Characteristics of Data Analysis for Narrative Inquiry

Data Analysis	Representation for Narrative Inquiry
Data Organization	Create and Organize files for data
Reading, Memoing	Read through text, make margin notes, form initial codes
Describe the data into codes and themes	Describe the story or objective set of experienced and place in a chronology
Classifying the data into codes and themes	Identify stories Locate epiphanies Identify contextual materials
Interpreting the data	Interpret the larger meaning of the story
Representing/visualizing the data	Present narration focusing on processes, theories, and unique and general features of the life
Written report	Developing a narrative about the stories of an individual's life

Note: Adapted from: "Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches," (3rd ed.), pp. 190-191 by J. W. Creswell, 2013.

Analysis triangulation refers to the practice of analyzing data with more than two methods for the purpose of validation. Triangulation of the data from multiple informants and multiple collection methods (interviews, field notes, and documents)

provide validation of the emergent themes consistent with the conceptual framework

(Hussein, 2009). Benefits of triangulation include improved confidence in research data,

the generation of original ways of comprehending a phenomenon, discovery of unique

findings, testing or integration of theories, and assistance in determining a clearer

understanding of the problem (Olsen, 2004). Figure 4 illustrates the triangulation process

used to validate findings.
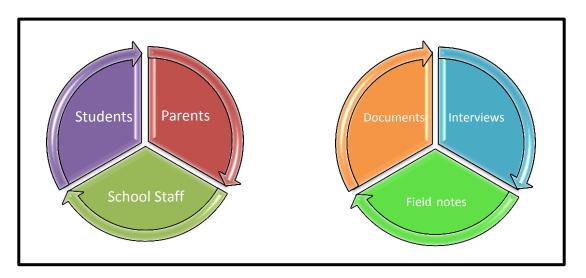
Figure 4: Triangulation of Informant and Triangulation of Data
Note: Adapted from: "Triangulation in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
Can Really Be Mixed" by Olsen (2004), (p. 12).

Data Control

The researcher kept the data secured at all times in her possession. Digitally

transcribed interviews and digital field notes were located in a password-protected folder

on the researcher's computer while paper field notes and documents were in a locked file

cabinet in a controlled environment. A master list of the various types of information

gathered as well as backup copies were made of all computer files and placed in a secure locked cabinet. There was no use of names during the transcription of the data.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is crucial. It is through the researcher data is collected and interpreted into realities. The researcher is the primary research instrument in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). It is imperative for a researcher to identify his or her biases and perspectives in order to recognize them in their research. Justification for a study is central to the narrative inquiry in three ways: personal, practical, and social (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007). Their research talked about the importance that the researcher must place on their personal interest in the research, how the research will change practice, and what overarching social need the research will meet.

The qualitative research process uses a variety of labels including theory, method, analysis ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Behind these terms stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multi-culturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology), which are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways. From the questions, a collection and analysis of empirical evidence as well as documentation occurred. Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012, p. 23).

As a Black educator, having experienced racial and economic marginalization, I am ever hopeful to discover effective methods and techniques to assist minority students and students living at a low-economic level to have academic success. In addition, as a

principal working in a school that serves predominately minority students from low-socioeconomic levels, I strive to provide opportunities for the community, parents, and school staff to work together with students to help them engage in school and learning. I strive to see school leadership build communities of learners equipped for success in life.

Limitations

Although I had no personal knowledge of the participants, it was my assumption that all participants were a truthful and trustworthy representation of the total population. I made every effort to confine my biases during the interpretation and synthesis of the data. In addition, the small sample size and the study was completed in only one setting, limited the opportunity for the study to be generalized. Because of the specifics of the research, it is safe to assume that if taken to another school site or district the results may or may not be the same. A few limitations of the study are noted:

- The study was restricted to one site, one district, and only administrators, teachers, parents, and students from that site are included in this study
- The sample size was small
- The study was not generalizable
- Sample location

Summary

This chapter included the methods, procedures, and steps necessary to complete this research. It also explained the methodological approach used in the collection, analysis, and synthesis of the data. The purpose of this study was to look at student engagement through the lens of social class; specifically looking at the parent advisory group at an upper middle class high school and the impact that they had on the African

American students on campus. Narrative inquiry was used to capture the authentic voices

of the participants through conversational interviews in which the participant and the

researcher became co-creator of the story being told. My role as the researcher was also

discussed providing a background to my interest in this research. Chapter four will detail

the information gained through the conversation.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study was to take a closer look at student engagement using the lens of social class by listening to the authentic voices of parents, students, administrators, teachers, and community members. All participants were associated with a public high school parent advisory group in Southern California. Listening to the voices of the participants revealed emergent themes sorted out to the constructs of social class as identity, social class as behavioral, social class as structural, and student engagement facilitators. The themes that emerged from the data analysis tell a story of caring relationships, broken stereotypes, and a school and community that has pulled together to help students engage in the educational process. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the data analysis process, show the themes that emerged from the research, and discuss the research findings.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted following Creswell's (2013) process for Narrative Inquiry. The process includes:

1. Create and organize data into files

2. Read through the text forming initial codes

3. Crunch and organize the codes into themes

4. Interpret the data using the themes that emerge

5. Represent the data through a visual

6. Develop a narrative about the stories heard.

The researcher used Nvivo to assist in the formation of codes, categories, and themes. After transcribing the interviews, Nvivo received the information. Once the transcriptions were uploaded, the researcher completed both word and text queries. The word query process produced 100 most frequently used words by the participants during the conversational interviews. These words began initial coding. Figure 5 is a WordCloud visual of the 100 most frequently used words found in the interviews. These words gave the researcher an idea what the research participants were talking about. The researcher used these words to begin the coding process.
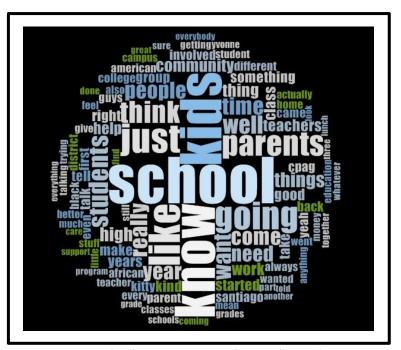
Figure 5: One Hundred Most Frequently Used Words

When making a text query, the researcher took words from the 100 most used words and produced the text query. The text query provided information to the researcher on what the participants were saying about the specific word used in the query.

In the text query shown in Figure 6, the researcher took a deeper look at the word

"community" and the 25 words surrounding it. The researcher also set parameters to

include stems of the word and synonyms of the word. In Figure 6, the text query shows

the frequency each participant stated the word "community." The red line shows what

percentage of the interviewed conversation pertained to community. For example, P13

had 16 references to community and it was 9.88% percent of the conversation.
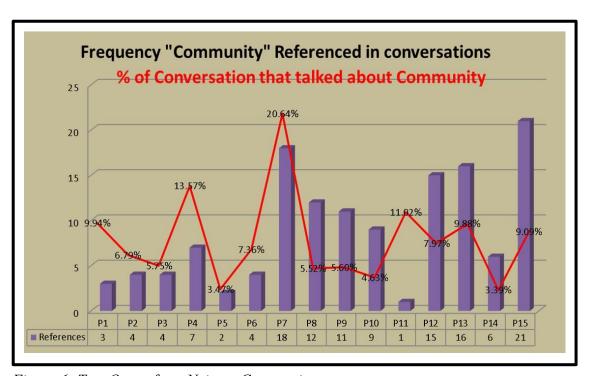
Figure 6: Text Query from Nvivo – Community

Emergent Themes

With the assistance of these queries and through the lens of the social class

conceptual framework, analysis of the interviews revealed initial coding or Nvivo nodes;

identification of 42 initial nodes was made. Initial nodes included ideas such as

accountability, relationships, privilege, stereotype, motivation, and communication.

Initial nodes were grouped into categories or overarching themes. Then, the overarching themes or prominent ideas were related back to the aspect of social class as behavioral, identity, and structural. The prominent ideas related to social class as behavioral were the ethic of care, motivation, and relationships. The prominent ideas related to social class as identity were Black culture, privilege, role models, and stereotypes. The prominent ideas related to social class as structural were communication, community, and school culture. Student engagement related to social class themes. Table 8 exhibits a visual of the coding created in Nvivo 10.

Table 8

Prominent Nodes as Coded in Nvivo

Social Class as Behavioral	Social Class as Identity	Social Class as Structural
Ethic of Care	Black Culture	Communication
Accountability		Communication with Parents
Building Trust	Privilege	
Responsibility	Educated	Community
Value		Community Involvement
Village Mentality	Roll models	Community/School Relations
	Calling	Lack of Involvement
Motivation	Role models	Neighborhoods
Empowerment		Relevance
Encouragement	Stereotypes	social settings
Expectation	Class Matters	Volunteering
Influence	Race	
Meritocracy		School Culture
		Climate
Relationships		Instructional Practice
Student-Teacher Relationships		Relationships
Teacher-Parent Relationship		

Social Class as Behavioral

Social class as behavior is both conscious and unconscious. The interaction between a person and external factors such as school, affects the way in which we perceive information changes. As we learn or as we interact with teachers, classmates, and administration, the habitus of the will affects the way we see the world.

Ethic of Care

The ethic of care permeated all conversations with all participants (see Figure 7). There seemed to be a genuine desire to value each student and take responsibility to assist the students in obtaining academic success. Both the administrators and the teachers spoke about the conceptualization of the school. The district took intentional steps to account for the diverse populations that the school would be serving.
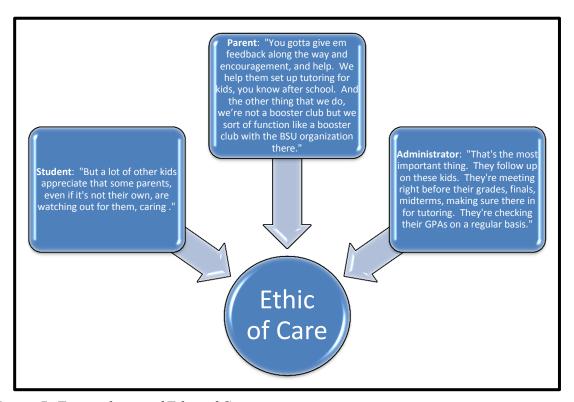
Figure 7: Triangulation of Ethic of Care

Accountability. Being accountable to the community that they would be serving was a clear emphasis in the ethic of care theme. Specifically they spoke about placing interventions to assist Hispanic students entering the school who lived in a low socioeconomic neighborhood. As the school was situated in an upper class neighborhood, they did not want students to feel unwelcomed or unserved. Participant 13, a district administrator, reported that one of the neighborhoods that feeds the high school comes from ". . . that part of our district is very high poverty; over 95% poverty as measured by free and reduced lunch. It's the most impoverished neighborhood that feeds into the high school." Participant 14 felt that accountability was a big piece of what created student successes.

Responsibility. The stakeholders took responsibility for creating a school that could serve all students. Participant 13 went on to report that as the school was being built all stakeholders took into considerations what these students would need to be successful. The questions that they wrestled with were questions about the types of supplementary programing that should be place, about how to schedule interventions for in school hours as after school was not an option for these students because of transportation issues. These students would be taking public transportation to travel to and from school and often the public transportation did not even go close to their locations.

Building trust. Participant 13 continued on to state,

> The leadership of the school, the parents, the teaching staff and the administration knew that these kids at _____ were going to need a lot of TLC in order to be really successful. Coming as English learners, coming from poverty, a high Hispanic neighborhood.

To build trust within that community, the leadership reached out to the intermediate school in the impoverished area and held community meetings to inform parents and prepare students for the transitions. The district was very particular about the staff hired to assure that the quality of person needed to assist students in their educational journey occurred. The original staff created a small close-knit family atmosphere that continues to have that "home-town feel" even after reaching 4,000 students. Participant 8, a teacher hired to work with the students at the high school, described himself as living his "calling." He explained that, when he was in college majoring in physics, he went on a mission's trip to help teach 6th graders math and English. While there, he fell in love with teaching and returned to college to finish his bachelors in physics, and decided to teach.

Value. Although the school had worked hard to give value to students at the school, as the school began to grow, the realization that one group, a small minority population at the school continued to underachieve. The African American students made up 8% of the population and somehow slipped through "the cracks." Participant 14 talked about the plan to care for these African American students as other students on campus received. A parent group made up of five fathers from the African American community approached the school administration with a concern for the African American students. They had a desire to help the African American students become more successful in school.

Village Mentality. Participant 14's son was one of the African American students who were not doing well in the school. He recalls how the school administrators welcomed him and his group when they came seeking solutions. The ethic of care was

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strong in these fathers also. They identified with what the students were going through and were confident that they could help them. The principal of the high school, participant 10, recalled when he took the job he was warned, "As I was coming in I was actually warned about a group of angry Black men who were going to be all over anything that we were not doing right for Black children." He recalled the first meeting that he had with them almost immediately after taking his position as principal.

> And they came and the first thing that they said was we're not angry at anybody. We're not here to blame anybody. We just want to take care of our kids. Along with that, we want to take care of other kids that want to go along on this journey with us. It's not just going to be for Black kids, it's going to be for all kids that want to make use of our services. But the premise for our getting started was to take care of our African American kids.

They initially approached the school on behalf of their own sons who were ineligible to play basketball because of their grades. They have been there for 11 years, long after their sons have graduated and gone on to college.

Motivation

Motivation is a strong factor to consider when looking at student engagement (see Figure 8). When students believe in themselves and their capacity to accomplish a task, they can accomplish that task. The parent advisory group began working to motivate the students to make changes for their educational future.
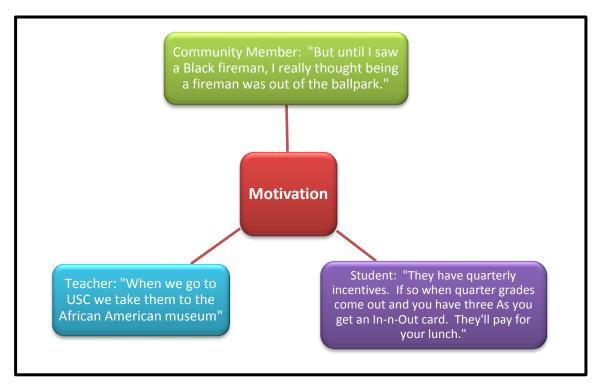
Figure 8: Triangulation of Motivation

Empowerment. These fathers, the parent advisory group, focused on supporting students through grade checks, encouraging conversations, and holding students accountable for their educational successes. The administration worked with this group and gave them access through participant 10, a teacher at the high school, to work with the students. They called the campus "the great experiment." Each of the men took time out of their busy day to volunteer on the high school campus, talking to students about their grades, mentoring and tutoring, and letting them know that they believed in them. Although the initial cause that brought the fathers to the school was the inability of their sons to play on the basketball team due to low scores, they did not allow that to be the only reason. Working to empower students and their parents, this group of fathers have come to be known as the "village elders" as Participant 5 called them. Grade checks took

place each semester and the parent advisory group would talk to each student whose grades were low to encourage them to apply themselves to their studies.

Encouragement. The parent advisory group worked to encourage students to work harder by explaining to them why their education was important. They knew each student individually and used as their mantra, "It takes a village to raise a child." The students responded to the encouraging words in a way that the principal had not expected. He spoke about a time when he went to the teacher's room and this is what he said he found:

> You could go there any day and because he had a lab for two classrooms, there would be 40 to 45 kids every day. They would just be at the tables studying, and I would walk in and I would go, 'You're kidding me.'

During their lunch, they would report to participant 8's classroom to study and interact with their fellow classmates. They provided after school tutoring in math and science, mentoring, and called parents to include them in the process.

Expectations. While providing these opportunities for students to help students better engage in school and to improve their grades, this was only a part of the expectations that the parent advisory group had for the students' success. Each time a student was identified as needing an intervention, they would identify specific needs and build a support system to help. There ultimate expectation was that all graduating students would have the choice to go to college. Participant 10 said that only, "Twenty eight percent that were actually going (to college). We had 35% that were eligible." Now, "73% that are A through G eligible. . . . And the parent advisory group was a big part of that." The graduation rate is now 98% and although not all students go on to

college, it is an option for all students. Not only does the parent advisory group have that expectation, the expectation is campus wide. Participant 10 said it this way,

> When you are able to raise the level of expectation for that student and when they take ownership of it themselves . . . that's what these guys do a great job on with these kids because, really it's what these kids do when you're not looking is who they will become."

Influence. Participant 10 talks about how influenced he was when he first met the fathers. He said, "I got a chance to meet some pretty influential Black men, upstanding good fathers." There is a firefighter/paramedic, a superior court presiding judge, a regional director for a major corporation, a professor, and a regional manager for local public affairs for a major utility company. They were influential men and they influenced the students to set goals for their lives. Since they have been at the high school, the GPA for Black students has moved from 1.7 to 3.2. More students are going to college or a university immediately after school. This year will be the first year that one of the graduates will be actually giving back financially to the parent advisory group. Participant 15 says, "We talked about ummm the jobs opportunities, help them to understand that the community was greater than the few blocks that lived in, and that you know students have to compete now in the world." To be able to compete in the world, the students needed to understand that they had the capacity to do it. Therefore, they would take the students on field trips to colleges and universities to help them better understand the larger world around them. Participant 8 stated the following about the fieldtrips:

> When we do fieldtrips to different colleges, and when we go to USC, we go to the
>
> African American Museum. So we take the kids to the African American
>
> Museum so that they can see and study some of our history.

Meritocracy. All participants seemed to believe that each person on their campus had the capacity to succeed. Adults and students alike attributed success to one's desire to be successful. Participant 14 said,

> So our thing was to make sure that the kids understood that they were intelligent and that intelligence was not by your GPA, not by your IQ level, but according to how hard you were willing to work . . . The more you want . . . if you want to you can do it. You can achieve it. You have to try hard enough.

Participant 15 also agreed saying, "You're social economic status doesn't necessarily dictate your academic achievement." In addition, participant 3, a student in the 11th grade said,

> You may not come from a good background, that doesn't make a lot of money. You still have the opportunity to pursue things that you want. If you put enough work in anything, you'll be successful. The opportunities that are established here too, will help. At least at this school.

Although much research said that socioeconomic status is the primary predictor of academic achievement, these participants have created an atmosphere where motivation and accountability has become the primary indicator of academic success.

Relationships

Relationships with significant adults in the students' lives also connected directly with the ethic of care (see Figure 9). Those relationships had the potential to motivate students to meet goals when students realized that people cared about them. The important relationships found in the study were the relationships between teachers and students, teachers and parents, and students to parents. The parent advisory group worked diligently to get parents involved with the educational process of their child. However, when those relationships did not happen the parent advisory group stepped in to encourage, influence, and motivate the students to set and reach their goals.
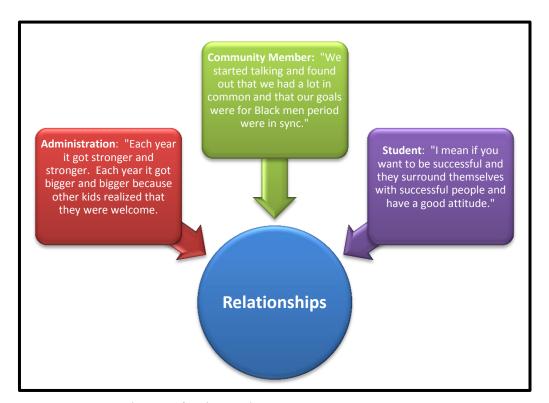
Figure 9: Triangulation of Relationship

Participant 10 said,

Sometimes they'd all come through and hang out after lunch. But most of the tutoring happened after school whatever day they designated each year . . . at the end of the lunch or twice a week . . . Any kids that would come through were helped.

According to Participant 13, "They put a lot of supports in for the students. And with that intentional support came a lot of successes for the students." Students who had meaningful relationships with people who cared about them had a raised level of student engagement in cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement. Table 9 is descriptive of the themes and evidence emerged from the authentic voices of the participant from the behavioral construct of social class.

Table 9

Influences of Behavioral Construct of Social Class on Student Engagement

Examples of the Influence of Behavioral Construct of Social Class on Student Engagement		
Theme	**Evidence**	**Student Engagement**
Ethic of Care – Statements that suggest care for students underlies all actions taken by school and parent advisory group when it comes to dealing with their academic success.	**Accountability – "**I'm proud that when times get tough, students come first. And everybody does a good job of keeping the students front and center." (Participant 13) **Building Trust – "**I'd go there and help with the grade checks and talk with the kids, try to understand why they were not getting good grades, and offer advice, counseling, um, try to get a verbal contract with them to do better, you know, say hey, you know, I know you can do better" (Participant 15) **Responsibility** – "you'll see we're a great school. All we're doing is we're taking care of all of our kids. Not just African American and White, we're taking care of our Asian kids, we're taking care of our kids." (Participant 10) "The responsibility of our kids is ours." (Participant 8) **Value** – "In Judge _____ courtroom, he told him that he needs to be a judge or a lawyer or something because he has that kind of attitude." (Participant 14) **Village Mentality** – "And they committed themselves to being the village elders. Despite the fact that they no longer have a personal investment in the program, which	**Cognitive Engagement** • Students received positive support from their parents, peers, and teachers in the way of tutoring, grade checks, and caring conversations that lead to improved grades, higher GPA, and higher graduation rate. **Affective Engagement** • Students became a part of a learning community, had positive feelings about themselves and school and began setting goals and reaching those goals. Students talked about goals for college, career, and life. **Behavioral Engagement** • More students were graduating and going to college or a university. Students have been accepted into Yale, UCLA, USC, Valley, and UCR

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
	tells the students, they do care about you." (Participant 5)	
Motivation – Students are motivated to succeed in school and beyond. Teachers, parents and community join together to recognize and encourage students. Community members are invited to come to campus during lunch to encourage students. Students get special lunch.	**Empowerment** – "That they feel empowered to go to the school. Because a lot of times it's that empowerment feeling, feeling welcome." (Participant 13) "Like this year we are all taking at least one kid and personally mentor one kid and help them to do better in school." (Participant 14) **Encouragement** – "You gotta give em feedback along the way and encouragement, and help. So and that is what ___ does, you know? It offers encouragement to the students. We help them set up tutoring for kids, you know after school." (Participant 15) **Expectation** – "Our teachers had at the time what we called pacing guides. We're moving now to call them more curriculum guide. Teachers working in teams to plan lessons. When kids were starting to struggle finding ways to reteach them" (Participant 13) **Influence** – "Because sometimes you need someone besides your parents telling you that you are capable." "He graduated two years ago. He wants to donate back to the parent group. And that's the first one that we have ever had where a student actually says he's gonna, he's blessed while he's in school to be able to do that." (Participant 14)	

Table 9 (Cont'd)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
	"But because of this mentorship, these kids blossom. They go to good places. They get their degrees. They know how to make it through college. They have a good support system that they can fall back to when they're there. It takes all those volunteers, members of the community. We have good folks." (Participant 10)	
	Meritocracy – "The more you want…if you want to you can do it. You can achieve it. You have to try hard enough." (Participant 14)	
Relationships – Statements that address the importance of the parent-student and the parent teacher relationships	**Student-Teacher Relationships-** "Almost every teacher does after-school tutoring at least one day a week." (Participant 5)	
	Teacher-Parent Relationship – "So I went to talk to Mr. _____ and much to my son's chagrin ____ and I hit it off." (Participant 14)	
	"But the relationship that parent advisory group has with the teachers and counselors has evolved over time." (Participant 15)	

Social Class as Identity

Identity is an internal construct that relies on one's personal networks. Identity, through a shared experienced with people, can be influenced. The impact that identity has on learning and academic achievement is because most schools support middle class and upper class English-speaking Whites. The themes that emerged under social class as identity were Black culture, privilege, role models, and stereotypes.

Black Culture

Since the parent advisory group, made up of five African American fathers who worked with predominately African American students, it would make sense that aspect of Black culture would be evident in their interviews (see Figure 10). Participant 10 recalled the moment he joined the advisory group team and told there was a group of angry Black men waiting to see him. His reaction was that attitude would not get us anywhere. However, in fact when he finally met them they were not angry Black men at all but they were just Black fathers wanting to help make the school a successful place for their children. They wanted their children to identity with Black people who were being successful out in the world. They wanted to let the students know that there was more out there for them. Participant 14 was adamant that this take place. He recalled a time when he was young and he saw a Black firefighter for the first time. He reflected that he had never thought of a Black person being a firefighter and that is how he became a firefighter. He went on to say, "One of the parent advisory members had said, 'It is that we need people who look like us to talk to us.'" He felt that Black students needed a better understanding of the opportunities that were available and that too often they "don't identity with Blacks in the field." They took the students on field trips to see the African American Museum. They constantly reminded the students of whom they were and that it was something to be proud of. They celebrated the school's first Black valedictorian who was the daughter of one of the father's in the parent group. The parent advisory group worked diligently to create a sense of belonging for all students but specifically for the Black students. Students were part of a club on campus called Baptist

Student Union (BSU). Students who worked with the parent advisory group were required to participate in the BSU.

Participant 5 said,

So they came and they brought in guest speakers for the BSU kids at lunch. In addition, they would feed them, which, no matter what ethnicity you are, food will bring people. Guest speakers would get people rolling, would get people encouraged.

Community Member: "It's recognition on the basis of being proud as an African American community."

Student: "It's a group of men, African American men. Who really just want to encourage the academic achievement and social achievement of the African American community that they live in."

Parent: "But for African American students particularly you ask them what you want to be when you grow up, and it all centers around sports and entertainment."

Black Culture

Figure 10: Triangulation of Black Culture
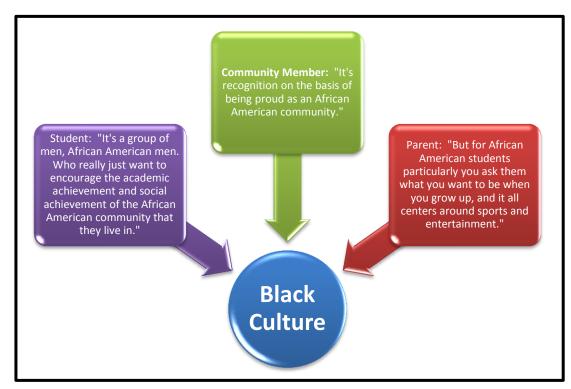
The majority of the students in the BSU were girls; it has become more diversified in the past two years. Participant 14 explained the BSU as follows,

Because we work sign-ups from our forum in order to get the Black kids to sign up because there is no avenue to bring students out and pick one ethnicity, so we had to go through the BSU; and so what we did with BSU in the BSU bylaws it

says they have to accept all cultures. They can't be discriminatory. So we had kids from all ethnicities getting involved.

Being a part of this group created a space for many students and a sense of belonging for them. Nevertheless, it gave them a common and shared experience of the educational process in which student engagement was increased.

Privilege

The theme of privilege stemmed from the fact that the school was located in an upper class neighborhood. All participants spoke of the privilege of living in the area of the school. The school was able to offer a variety of classes from regular education class to AP and Honors classes. Statements made by participants showed privilege in the area of favor, resources, and time (see Figure 11).

Participant 10 talked about the favor that the school has with the district, "We've always had the support of our superintendent." Participant 12 talked about the community in which the school is located, "They would consider the high school more to be upper class." Participant 14 talked about the fact that one of the fathers from the parent advisory group was a teacher at the high school and was able to get permission to pull the grades of the African American students in order to see who was in need of interventions. According to Participant 12, the school administrator directed her to "give them whatever they needed."

Participant 13 spoke about the resources available for the staff at the school and for the students at the high school. Not all schools or districts can provide these types of opportunities for their staff to be creative about student learning. She said,

> We have the professional collaboration time going on at the school. The PLC model going on in our district. We set aside time for that to happen during the workday. People have the time to sit down and have a chance to share ideas.

Then taking that out and getting the involvement of the students, and getting them involved in the activities of the school. The goal would be that every student is connected to something at his or her school.

Student: "This school is one of the better schools, and at times that's a really great thing "

Administration: "Gave them carte blanche access to campus"

Community Member: "There's a lot of high profile people that come..."

Privilege
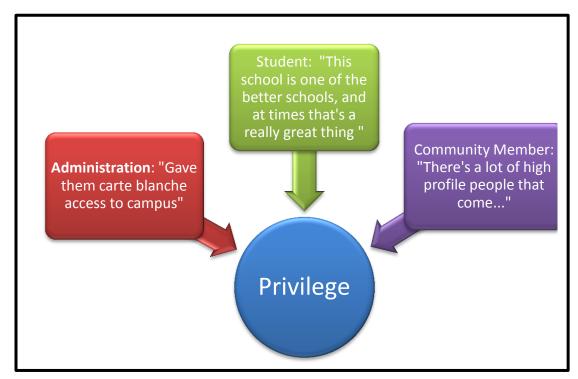
Figure 11: Triangulation of Privilege

Participant 13 also talked about the parent advisory group who were privileged enough to be able to take time off from work to dedicate to the school to see students succeed. She said,

So they had come over to this area where they could free up their time. That's another thing. They could free up their day to be able to come to be able to be available at that time frame, which is hard too. You know a lot of people have the desire to go and help. But can you literally do that? Can you leave your job, go drive somewhere and be there for an hour and then go back to your work. That's two hours out of your time. So they may not be able to.

The theme of privilege was not only an idea but in practical ways affected the students' engagement. Participant 10 said that the parent advisory group received "carte

blanche access" to do their work. The work helped to reduce the achievement gap for the African American students at the school from 24.9% to 4%. This has opened other doors of privilege for students to receive college scholarships from outside organizations. Participant 8 felt that the high school was the "flagship" for the district meaning, "when the district wants to show off its high school it will go to this high school." Students feel proud of their school and all the offerings that it has for them. They like the variety of choices and the opportunity to take courses according to their personal tastes.

Role Model

The theme of role model incorporated both call of and the actions of the role model (see Figure 12). Having a call seemed to permeate the mindset of the members of the parent advisory group. They truly believed in having professional role models in front of the students to motivate them and to peak their curiosity for their future. They also felt the need to have staff with a calling to affect students' lives.

Participant 9 said,

You need a teacher who not just cares about his students but loves his students, and doesn't want to see any of them fail. And is dedicated and is willing and can put in the time to follow up with these kids. I'm talking about phone calls home to mom and dad, I'm talking about taking on the role of a social worker, I'm talking about taking on the role of a go-between, running interference for a lot of those kids because there's nobody in some cases that do, whether it's another teacher or a teacher-counselor, you need someone on the inside who's dedicated.
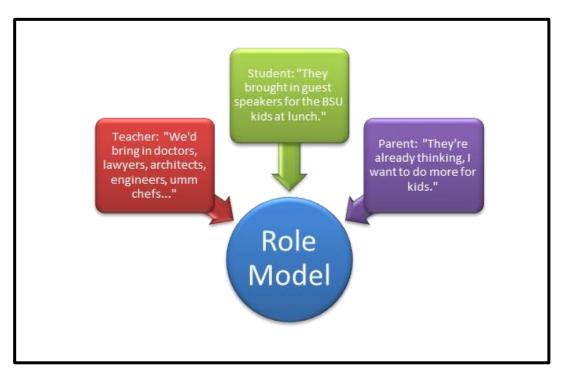
Figure 12: Triangulation of Role Model

All of the members of the parent advisory group would proactively recruit community members who could be role models for students. These role models would come in and speak to the students during their BSU lunch meeting at the request of a member of the advisory group. They would bring in pizza for the students for lunch and open up a classroom for them to be able to listen and be inspired and motivated to work hard at getting the best education that they could. They would bring in speakers who were CIA agents, doctors, lawyers, nurses, skilled workers, architects, engineers, chefs, politician, and parents who were willing to share their success story and encourage the students to pursue their individual dreams. Participant 5 spoke about how the speakers who came to the BSU meeting encouraged her to volunteer in the community at a local elementary school.

The role models played an important role in the student engagement of the students. They offered opportunities for internships, mentorships, and specific knowledge in their area of expertise. Participant 10 remembers the time when the CIA agent spoke. He said, "I remember the CIA guy that came in. He works for the Secret Service. He lives here ████████, African American man, that's pretty significant for our kids." The idea of a student interacting with successful people opens their minds to think differently about their choices; it was an influencing thought among the parent advisory group members.

Stereotype

The theme of stereotype that emerged was actually the breaking down of stereotypes (see Figure 13). This group of African American men came to the school to work with the school and not to point a finger at the school to say that you have done an injustice to the Black students.

Participant 10 remembers,

As I was coming in, I was actually warned about a group of angry Black men who were going to be all over anything that we were not doing right for Black children. . . . I got there. They met with me immediately. And they came and the first thing that they said was we're not angry at anybody. We're not here to blame anybody. We just want to take care of our kids. Along with that, we want to take care of other kids that want to go along on this journey with us. It's not just going to be for Black kids, it's going to be for all kids that want to make use of our services.

That stereotypical idea of angry Black men blaming the "man;" with one conversation was dismissed. The men of the parent advisory group wanted to work with the school and offered their services to other students.
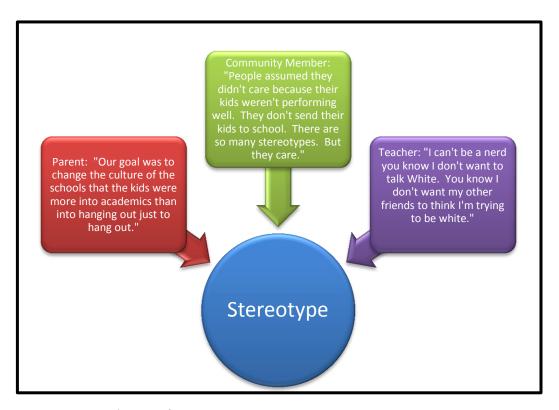
Figure 13: Triangulation of Stereotype

As the men presented themselves as educated, working, and caring men, the stereotype that African American's are not educated dissipated. Participant 10 remembers being impressed with the way that they presented themselves in the initial meeting and the way they have maintained this behavior over the last seven years that he has known them. Participant 10 commented:

> They saw a whole need there. 'We've got to change their attitudes. We've got to change expectations. We're not going to let anyone in the group that's looking to make any money. We're not going to let anyone in the group that's looking to be angry at someone else. We're going to deflect that and we're going to move this thing forward.'

He also found it interesting that by the time he met the parent advisory group, they had been established for three years and the majority of the men did not have kids at

the school anymore. Their kids had graduated and gone on to college; however, these men were still at the high school working with students to see them become successful. They broke the stereotype of Black men only doing something that would benefit themselves. He said, "I couldn't let go of them because it's so powerful. So I got a chance to meet some influential Black men, upstanding, good fathers. They set a good example for me and for my kids too."

They challenged the stereotype that Black kids are not smart and were just good at sports. Participant 14 stated,

> But our kids, a lot of them don't think that they are intelligent . . . They identify themselves as lazy and that was their culture. Their culture was the rap culture and if it didn't come easy, it wasn't meant to be. Our goal was to change the culture of the schools that the kids were more into academics than into hanging out.

They said that they wanted the students to have a better understanding of how to reach their goal. A more grounded understanding in the process would take them to get there. The parent advisory group wanted the students to know that they expected them to go to college and they wanted them to understand that to go to college they had to have good grades. They told the students that you can be "the best athlete in the world but if you don't have the grades you won't go much farther."

Participant 6 described the parent advisory group in the following way: "It's a group of men, African American men, who really just want to encourage the academic achievement and social achievement of the African American community that they live in." This group of men worked to change the perception of Blacks in their community and in the high school where they volunteered. They made statements like, "we said, 'This is not going to be ghetto. We are going to show . . . We want the kids to dress up."

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One of the men in the group had a contact that made African ties and each of them wears the tie at the annual banquet to show their solidarity of mission to see all students, especially African American students, succeed.

The students welcomed the impact so much so that they are now having students who are in college come back and give back. Participant 14 said,

He graduated two years ago. He wants to donate back to _____. And that's the first one that we have ever had where a student actually says he's gonna, he's blessed while he's in school to be able to do that.

He talks about the ability to not only affect students who are doing well by opening up the doors of more options he also talks about students who were not doing well but persisted and made it to the end. He tells the story of one girl who did just that.

We had one girl last year and she came to us. I usually figure out who is going to be the most improved. We give awards not only for those who are doing really well but also for the one who goes from not doing well to doing well. So, the one that does the best get an award also. That's the financial awards. And so she came to us and about 2 fourths before the banquet and said, 'I'm gonna win that award.' And she did because she came in with approximately a 0.7 GPA to a 3.4. She said, 'This is my award.'

They have broken many stereotypes and their desire to be positive role models for the students that they serve. Participant 14 said, "We are trying to affect the little kids and it's kinda nice to see that Black men can be positive examples for our kids and that's one of our mantras." Participant 14 went on to say,

When stereotypes are broken, a sense of pride and confidence prevails in the students. Students, who are confident, are not afraid to take risk and try new things. They achieve more and strive to accomplish their goals. These students have been accepted into colleges and universities such as Lee High, Duke, UCLA, Cal Berkley, Howard, and Yale.

Table 10 contains descriptives of the themes and evidences that emerged from the authentic voices of the participant when looking at the identity construct of social class.

Table 10

Influence of Identity Construct of Social Class on Student Engagement

Examples of the Influence of Identity Construct of Social Class on Student Engagement		
Theme	**Evidence**	**Student Engagement**
Black Culture-	"We take the kids to the African American Museum so that they can see and study some of our history." (Participant 14) "So we started talking and found out that we had a lot in common and that our goals were for Black men period were in sync." (Participant 14) "The Black community a lack of trust in anybody." (Participant 14)	**Cognitive Engagement** • Students received positive support from their parents, peers and teachers in the way of tutoring, grade checks, and caring conversations that led to improved grades, higher GPA, and higher graduation rate. **Affective Engagement** • Students are affirmed and recognized for the part that they play in the community. They have a sense of belonging and set goals and reach them Students talked about goals for college, career and life. **Behavioral Engagement** • More students were graduating high school and going to college or a university. Students have been accepted into Yale, UCLA, USC, Valley, and UCR
Privilege – Statement that speaks of the status by way of occupation of the five fathers in the parent advisory group	**Educated -** "I was intrigued with the fact of what was going on, and like I said there was some shifting and sifting and it ended up with us 6 guys. It's _____ who's a judge, _____ who's a regional director for a major corporation, _____, who's an _____ professor, and myself, I'm a regional manager for local public affairs for a	

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Table 10 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Participant
	major utility company." (Participant 9)	
Role Models – Statements of the Importance of role models in the life of the student	**Calling** – "We wouldn't have BSU without [parent advisory group]" (Participant 6)	
	Role Model – "And then these guys would help to kind of mentor them and spend some more time with them." (Participant 10)	
	"We have chefs, engineers, policemen, secret service . . . you know a wide gambit. And these are all parents who Come to talk to the kids. These parents come in and talk to the kids about what they are doing in school." (Participant 14)	
	"One of them is an architect and he came in took _____'s son to intern with him to be an architect because he believed that he had a gift in that area. And he wanted to grant him an internship." (Participant 14)	
Stereotype – Statements that counter stereotypical ideas that sound Black people and people living in poverty	**Class Matters** – "They would [consider the area near the high school] more to the upper class, our parents. But there's a community called _____in a poor area of [the city]." (Participant 12)	
	"And we are, all of us, positive and it is kinda nice to know that we are trying to effect the little kids and it's kinda nice to see that Black men can be positive examples for our kids and that's one of our mantras." (Participant 14)	
	Race – "The African American and the Hispanic students. They were the lowest performing students on campus." (Participant 11)	

Table 10 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
	"A high number of whites and Hispanic. But we do have African Americans, the Asian groups, and that just grew over the short term here. And a lot of others. But it's a mix." (Participant 12)	

Social Class as Structural

Social Class as structural looks at the external measures of social class. It takes into account indicators of socioeconomic status such as income, education, and occupation.

Communication

The theme of communication included communication between parent and child, teacher and parent, and student with other students (see Figure 14). There was a lot of communication to parents trying to get them more involved in the schooling process. Participant 10 tried to communicate with parents at an event but it did not work. They were not going to give up. He said, "Continue to try to get those parents in. So when the kids are here they're alright. Let's take care of them. We'll continue reaching out to the parents." They tried various options but did not get the results that they had hoped.

Although the teachers and the administration felt that it was hard to communicate with the parents, Participant 6 said the following about how the school keeps the parents informed.

> We have a lot of open house for parents to be able to come in and check on how their student is doing. The school actually calls home whenever the student misses any days. And try, any time there's any kind of trouble, they try to call home. They're very active in everything their students do.

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Participant 13 also spoke about the difficulty in keeping parents informed of all the options available to them from the district. These options give parents choice in the education of their child. However, if they do not know what the options are they cannot take advantage of them. Participant 15 spoke about using the school website or Facebook page to keep parents informed; however, not all parents have internet capacity. The parent advisory group talked about the ways that they communicated with the students more than with parents. Although they would at times call a parent or go to coffee with a parent to share information about how the student's grades were; they mostly spoke with students. Participant 10 said his job was to have data available to give to parents when they asked. He also said, "The banquet is to honor the students for their work, but it's really also to keep the parents informed."
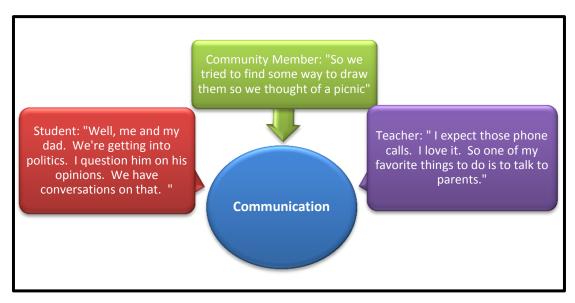

Figure 14: Triangulation of Communication

Students spoke about their conversations at home with their parents. Participant 3 said, "Well, me and my dad. We're getting into politics. I question him on his opinions. We have conversations on that. He's always got stories to tell about the day. I like to listen. I think they're cool."

Participant 6 said,

My parents are very involved in my school life. So I get home it's, 'How was school? How's homework? What are you learning?' They usually don't stress me out about homework. We talk about college. College is on my mind a lot these days.

Community

The theme of community was apparent in the way that the parent advisory group along with the school and the community worked together to motivate and encourage students to succeed academically (see Figure 15). Community members play an important role in motivating students. The members of the parent advisory group are from the community and work within the community and through the community to open pathways for student recognition and success. The community surrounding the school is an upper middle and upper class neighborhood. The participants all live in the community surrounding the school. The school is a closed school and the only way to get in is to live in the feeding neighborhoods or have immediate family who works at the school.

Participant 11 said this about the community:

The community here in [this city] supports us tremendously. In [this city], we're more of a higher socioeconomic community. You have a lot of business owners here. The majority of the community, they're very well educated. We get a lot of support from the community and the businesses in the community. For example, with [one of our clubs], we get a financial donation from the Rotary Club every quarter. And they support us very well. A lot of families in the community support us very well.

Community members receive an invitation to help in promoting good academic behavior. The parent advisory group wanted to show students and allow them to hear the options that were out there for them to choose from for their careers. They called the decision
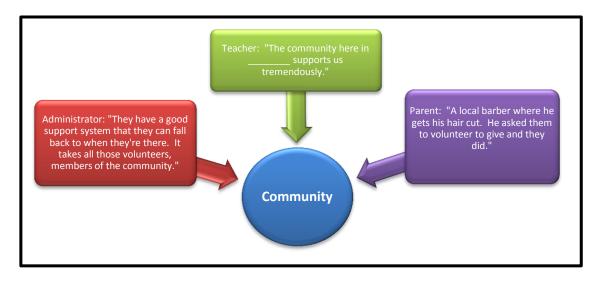
Figure 15: Triangulation of Community

making progress organic. They felt that all decisions grew out of needs identified through either conversations or requests for help. One example given was due to the need to provide lunch on campus for the students when visiting speakers. Providing lunch for the students gave them the needed time to eat and hear the speaker. This same reasoning was behind their decision to become a 501c3 organization. They felt that with the 501c3 status they could benefit more from community donations. Participant 8 gave the reasons for becoming a 501c3:

> Well, if we're going to have to buy lunch, we're going to need help buying lunch. We have to incorporate. We need to become a 501c3. So things kind of evolved. They were organic, so people said. They just kind of grew out of that need to feed them at lunch we became a 501c3. So we started to get donations.

Students would receive donated lunch cards for In-N-Out each semester when

they pass a grade check. They were able to go on fieldtrips through donations from

various community groups. Donations from Sparkletts provided water for all the BSU

meetings and community speaker events on a monthly basis. The use of the 501c3 status

gave them more opportunity to meet the needs that arose as they worked with students.

Another program that recognized good academic behavior was the Fades for Grades

program where a local barber shop offers to all boys who made a 3.0 or higher a free

"Fade" or haircut. The girls, who received a 3.0 or higher, were able to go and get a free

manicure at a local nail shop. Sometimes community members would come to talk about

how life had changed in America and help give students a perspective of the past and

issues that surrounded race and class. The parent advisory group believed that

community is more than just the neighborhood that you live in. It brings a sense of

belonging to the people at large. Participant 8 said,

> I have guest speakers who run into some of our kids and they're excited. They
> come up to me and talk to me, and all that. So now, in the community you're
> expected to do well. Here in ▮▮▮▮▮▮ it's not like Compton or LA where Black
> folk congregated like we had to long ago. We're so spread out there's no sense of
> community physically. And so for me there's excitement in community members
> drawing together, to work together, to do things to help our kids without having
> the physical constraints of being in this area of town.

One opportunity provided to students to gain perspective on campus was the

Ethnic Advisory Council. This class gave students the opportunity to interact with the

various cultures located on campus. Participant 6 said this about the Ethnic Advisory

Council.

> It's a class where kids get to focus on cultures, different cultures in a positive way.
> Not like community does where they talk about how to fix problems or how to
> socially interact. It's promoting the beauty of differences, because we do have so
> many different people on the campus. It's in no way monocultural here. We're

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celebrating diversity. We believe everyone deserves to be appreciated for their diversity, and get to come and see themselves on stage and be celebrated.

Participant 8 said,

Last year we had the Japanese--it's called the "kito," or something like that. It's where we need to come together in the community and say, let's celebrate. Let's not, during Black History Month say, we're not going to do Black History Month because it makes somebody else feel bad.

The word "community" for the parent advisory group also means taking responsibility for each student's success. Participant 8 said,

The responsibility of our kids is ours. And we will put this together and we will do it . . . More importantly, these kids are our responsibility and we're unapologetic about that. And we need to. And so, that's the whole idea behind it. It empowers the parents and the community to say it's our responsibility.

This theme plays a part in helping students to understand the value of a community and personalize what community really is. The students gained a sense of belonging and found motivation to chase after their dreams by the inspiration received from the community's investment into their lives. Another example of how community has shaped the lives of the students is in the area of affirmation. When the parent advisory group began having its annual banquet, one of the members held it at their home. Theses banquets affirmed students for their hard work. Now community churches have stepped up and offered their facilities for the banquet. These churches are affirming students by providing a place for them to be recognized.

School Culture

All participants commented on the theme of school culture (see Figure 16). They spoke about the atmosphere being inclusive and not exclusive. They talked about the collaboration that went on between staff and students and between parents and staff. The student participants talked about the classes, clubs, activities, and events that were

available for them to participate in according to their interests. Participant 9 said that he

was attracted to the school because of the sign in front of the school. He said that he

could tell from that sign that this was the place for his kids. He said, "I was impressed

with the sign that says 'home of the scholars, champions, and athletes' or something to

that effect. But I was impressed with the scholar being first." Having options for the

students made them feel supported and let them know that there was a group of people, a

community where they belonged. The community consisted of administration, staff,

fellow students, parents, and community members. The adults worked to create a campus

that supported the various types of students from the large population of EL students to

the small population of African American students. The parent advisory group had
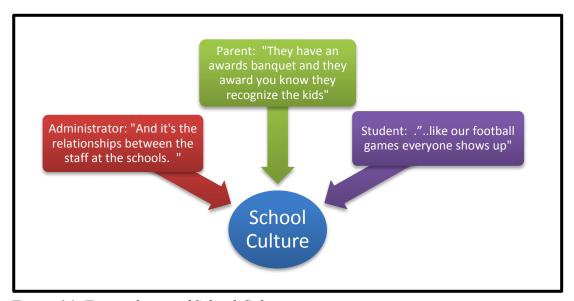
become an integral part of that community.

Figure 16: Triangulation of School Culture

The administration, staff, students, and parents have created an engaging

community atmosphere in which students can focus and be motivated to reach their goals.

The parent advisory group has created within their corner of the campus a recognition

ceremony for students who are progressing towards their goals. Participant 15 had this to

say about the influence that the parent advisory group has had on the campus in general.

> What we've put in place has changed the school. Right. Um, kids used to think
> it'd be really cool to hang out in the quad and just do nothing . . . Not get involved
> or anything like that. So, BSU was formed, it was a place for African-American
> kids to go during lunch break and you know, kinda come together socially or talk
> about stuff that maybe they had in common, the challenges they had in common.
> Then it became more structured and purposeful, and it started to attract kids who
> were high achievers, and then those kids went on to do other things in the school
> and in the community.

All students talked about the types of activities available for them and their

participation in them. Participant 2 said,

> This school is one of the better schools. There are parts of it that are welcoming.
> It's just that . . . Each student has to find their own thing, whether it's band,
> whether it's theater, or another club, or JROTC. Everyone has their different way
> of welcoming.

Participant 2, participant 3, and participant 6 all talked about football. They said

even though the team was not that good, everyone would show up just to support them.

They all spoke of a young man who had gotten seriously hurt during a game and the

whole campus rallied behind him to let him know we cared for him. Participant 3 said,

"It's such a tragedy it hit home for us at school that we just decided to rally around him to

make sure he recovers and keeps a positive attitude during his recovery." Participant 2

said,

> A student from the High School football team and during one of the games, I
> believe that it was televised, he got severely injured. Something happened to his
> neck. He had to go to the hospital. He's had to have many, many surgeries. And
> they think that he may not be able to walk again. So for the past few months

we've had . . . you will be able to see t-shirts, and when it was getting close to his birthday, all the students . . . we all went out to the bleachers. Basically, all the kids we just wanted to say, hey, we're still here. We're thinking about you.

Participant 4 said this about the classes the high school offered. "There' s honors, AP, Online. They're all regular classes as far as difficulty. But I do believe it's sort of less work." Participant 5 went on to say,

It's really personalized. It depends upon what you want to do. If you want to do that four year degree. It depends on the kind of tier of college that you want to go to. You can take any kind of classes that you want. I think we have like 14 AP classes. We have plenty of AP classes. We have anything from remedial to AP classes. It's really whatever you can handle; whatever you really want to pursue . . . it offers niches for you to find. A school being big makes it personal for me because you find where you belong instead of having one small school where everyone knowing everybody's business.

The students also talked about the various activities they could participate in on the campus. They all said that it made them feel like they belonged because there were so many offerings they were interested in that everyone could find something.

The teachers also spoke about the school culture emphasizing the importance of academics. Participant 11 said,

Our school is a very dynamic school. We have almost four thousand students in the school. Very progressive. We have the highest graduation rate in the County, 98% graduation rate. And our students do very well with the A through G requirements and going to college. We're under way in common core. And we really do very well in that area already with kids that are college and career ready.

Participant 8 said,

The three most important things for me and for this group will be academics, then academics, and then academics. After that, you guys can plan a party if you want, you can plan hangouts together if you want. You can do all those great things but academics, academics, academics.

The results of all their efforts show that there is virtually no achievement gap between the African American subgroup and their White counterparts. The achievement

gap has decreased from 23% to 4% over the last 10 years. Table 11 is descriptive of the themes and evidence that emerged from the authentic voices of the participant from the structural construct of social class.

Table 11

Influence of Structural Construct of Social Class on Student Engagement

Examples of the Influence of Structural Construct of Social Class on Student Engagement		
Theme	**Evidence**	**Student Engagement**
Communication – Statements stressing the importance of communicating with parents and creating expectations and goals	**Communication with Parents –** "Continue to try to get those parents in but let's go that route. So when the kids are here they're alright. Let's take care of them. We'll continue reaching out to the parents." (Participant 10) "High school is not that diverse of a campus, but when it comes to clubs and academics you have a wide range of areas that you can choose from." (Participant 6) "We have a lot of open house for parents to be able to come in and check on how their student is doing. " (Participant 6)	**Cognitive Engagement –** • Students received positive support from their parents, peers, teachers and the community in the way of field trips, peer interactions in BSU which through conversations about schooling and education in general set goals and expectations for college motivated students to engage in the learning process **Affective Engagement** • Students became a part of a learning community, had positive feelings about themselves and school and began setting goals and reaching those goals. Students talked about goals for college, career, and life. **Behavioral Engagement** • Guest speakers peaked their curiosity and challenged them to

Table 11 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
		continue to be engaged in school. Students are also connected to real life significance. More students were graduating and going to college or university. Students have been accepted into Yale, UCLA, USC, Valley, and UCR
Community – Statements that offer the importance of school and community relationship as it pertains to students' motivation and engagement in the educational process.	**Community Involvement –** "And then it's the community. Having a strong relationship between the district and the cities, chamber of commerce, law enforcement, civic organizations. We work hard at doing that. We don't take that for granted. " (Participant 13) "My guest speakers, professionals who come to be my guest speakers. I have the insurance company who donated Subway gift cards with a free meal on them. So they said, "Here you go." Jersey Mike's give us coupons. Subway, Jersey Mike's gives us In-n-Out coupons. They give us things that we can use to say to the kids "well done/" "So we have had a few parents who have stepped up and take interns." (Participant 14) **Community/School –** 'This is a nice suburb. This is not an urban community." (Participant 7) **Neighborhoods –** "We thought that it would be a good idea to get more parents involved. So we wanted to put on a workshop to show the community, the parents at large, what we were doing, and to invite them to join us and to help us." (Participant 15)	

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Table 11 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
	Relevance – "Due to_____ and his BSU and parent advisory group, him getting the approval from the district to pull every students' records and pairing them with an adult mentor, and checking on those students records regularly." (Participant 11) **Social Settings** – "They would consider ▮▮▮▮▮▮ to be more to the upper class." (Participant 12) **Volunteering** – " "Everything is purely volunteer" (Participant 14) "They came in and saw it and they liked what we were doing and just latched on." (Participant 14)	
School Culture – Statement from students that the school about the classes that are offered at the school and the type of instruction that they have many AP classes and that it is just an expectation of the school that everyone graduates.	**Climate** – "But our whole campus is a college-going culture." (Participant 10) **Instructional Practice** – "Our teachers had at the time what we called pacing guides. We're moving now to call them more curriculum guide. Teachers working in teams to plan lessons. When kids were starting to struggle finding ways to reteach them." (Participant 13) "…very high graduation rate. Again, we have layers of intervention within the school day to help the kids when they start to struggle." (Participant 13) "There's a lot of in-class projects, presentations we do. Yeah I guess there are a lot of projects." (Participant 4) "Student leaders were good on following up and hanging out with them during the day and checking up on them in classes and things like that." (Participant 10) **Relationships** – "We give awards not only for those who	

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Table 11 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
	are doing really well but also for the one who goes from not doing well to doing well. So the one that does the best get an award also. That's the financial awards. And so she came to us and about 2 fourths before the banquet and said, "I'm gonna win that award." Because she came in with approximately a 0.7 to a 3.4." (Participant 14)	

Summary

By listening to the authentic voices of the 15 participants in this study, it was evident that for the students at this particular high school social class plays an important factor in student engagement. The parent advisory group used all three constructs of social class to create a caring and motivating culture. They provided opportunities that enabled students to embrace their identities, change their way of thinking, and engage with others in a positive way. They provided a safe environment (the village) where students had positive interactions with community members. The themes that were most prevalent were:

- Ethic of Care

- Motivation

- Relationships

- Communication

- Community

- Roll models

- Black Culture

- School Culture

- Privilege

- Stereotypes

The theme of *Ethic of Care* was the most talked about theme among the participants. It is evident that a caring culture has been created that allows students the opportunity to grow both personally and academically.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion, and Implications

Summary of the Study

Considering aspects of social class, the findings in this study indicated student engagement can increase and students can be successful. This study took a closer look at the influence of social class on student engagement for a population of upper class African American students in Southern California.

The concept of social class for this study is a multifaceted relational construct. Conceptualization of social class was through the constructs of identity, behavior, and structure. The construct of identity looked at the common shared experiences of groups of people. The construct of behavior looked at the interaction between:

- cultural habitus of people

- the institutional habitus of schools, and

- how students made meaning, acted, and perceived the world around them

The construct of structure looked at class in the form of fixed categories in which individuals move up or down a continuum. Structures such as income, occupation, and education were used to measure social status (Wyatt-Nichol et al., 2011).

The importance of social class is that social class affects everyone differently. Some of the attributes of social class are physically, cognitively, and visibly. If we just look at the structural context of social class, we are able to see disparity in the clothes that one wears, in the education one has, and in the neighborhood where one lives. We judge and make assumptions by these outward signs of social class. The structural context of social class is easier to recognize than identity and behavioral contexts. Shared

experiences with other people influences identity–the internal construct of social class. When we look at the construct of identity as social class, we look at the networks and relationships formed with others. The behavioral construct is both conscious and unconscious interaction between the internal and external factors with institutional habitus, like schools. It affects the way in which we perceive information changes. The way we see the world changes as we learn or as we interact with teachers, classmates, and administration.

Social class was important in this study because research showed that African American students learn best when schooling is culturally relevant to their identity development. African American students pursue relationships built on "interest, trust, and shared experiences" (Hale, 1986; Nieto, 1996; Shujaa, 1994). These shared experiences and relationships create the identity of African American individuals.

In this current study, the ethic of care was foundational for the relationships and successes of the African American students. Creating motivating moments that inspire children to pursue goals of higher education by way of role models, fieldtrips, and mentorships were the norm. They often spoke of a village mentality. The village is where everyone has a space shared by other villagers with whom they have relationships. These relationships influenced the students in a positive manner.

Problem

Minority students, specifically African American students, are disengaged in school. This narrative inquiry specifically tried to capture "lived stories" through conversations with the 15 study participants on how a parent advisory group influenced student achievement for a group of minority students in a public high school in Southern

California. Furthermore, this study focused specifically on the engagement of upper and upper-middle class African American and other minority students through their relationship with the parent advisory group.

Research Questions

This research focused on the practices of a parent advisory group that influenced student engagement and academic success for African American students. The following research question guided the study:

1. To what extent does social class influence student engagement?

2. What common themes related to the influence of social class on student engagement emerge when observing and listening to the voices of teachers, administrators, parents, and students?

3. Based on the study's findings, what recommendations can be made about the role of social class on student engagement?

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Summary of Methods

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A qualitative research approach used the narrative inquiry method in order to answer the research questions. The researcher utilized semi-structured, open-ended conversational interviews to gain access to the "lived" stories of the participants. The researcher chose to use narrative inquiry to understand better the influence of social class on student engagement. The participants in the study consisted of six students, three administrators, two parents, two teachers, and two community members who were associated with a high school in Southern California. The steps of the research included:

1. Collect information

   a. Conduct semi-structured conversational interviews

   b. Take field notes

   c. Collect documents

   d. Transcribe interviews

2. Analyze information (triangulation between researchers)

   a. Use of Nvivo 10 to generate initial nodes and coding

   b. Use constant comparison to derive open coding

   c. Reduce to axial or selective codes

   d. Identify themes

3. Report findings

Triangulation occurred on 80% of the interviews to reach consensus; the researchers independently coded into the identified themes the final three interviews.

Findings and Discussion

Research data gathered during the study included conversational interviews with students, parents, administrators, and community members, field notes, and documentation found in paper form and in digital form. A summary discussion of how the findings for this study addressed the research questions follow:

1. *To what extent does social class influence student engagement?*

Social class influenced student engagement in the following ways.

A. When looking at social class as identity, student engagement is stronger when students have a strong positive sense of their identity. When they have role models that validate them and dispel stereotypes, students find a freedom to take

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more risk and set goals for academic success. Students in this study showed

increased student engagement as evidenced by:

1) Improved grades

2) More effort in academic tasks

3) Narrowing of the achievement gap

4) Number of students continuing on to college increased

5) Students felt more connected to school

6) Students could approach their teachers for discussion

B. Looking at social class as behavior, they felt being cared for and student

engagement increased. When parent, teacher, peers, and community gave support

through caring relationships, students responded positively. Students in this study

showed increased student engagement as evidenced by:

1) Improved grades

2) More effort in academic tasks

3) Narrowing of the achievement gap

4) Number of students continuing on to college increased

5) Students felt more connected to school

6) Students could approach their teachers for discussion

7) Students built more caring relation

C. When looking at social class as structural, student engagement increased as

students developed a sense of community. When students communicated more

with their parents, peers, and teachers, it opened up other ways of creating and

setting life goals. Students in this study showed increased student engagement as evidence by:

1) Improved grades

2) More effort in academic tasks

3) Narrowing of the achievement gap

4) Number of students continuing on to college increased

5) Students felt more connected to school

6) Students could approach their teachers for discussion

7) Students began volunteering in the community at local elementary schools.

2. *What common themes related to the influence of social class on student engagement emerge when observing and listening to the voices of teachers, administrators, parents, and students?*

Many of the participants addressed each of the themes found in the study.

Nvivo 10 and constant comparison generated the themes (see Table 11). .

Table 12

Emergent Themes

SOCIAL CLASS	THEMES	AXIAL CODING
Social Class Behavioral	Ethic of Care	Accountability, Building Trust, Responsibility, Value, Village Mentality
	Motivation	Empowerment, Encouragement, Expectation, Influence, Meritocracy
	Relationship	Student – Teacher Relationships Teacher – Parent Relationship
Social Class Identity	Black Culture	
	Privilege	Educated

Table 12 (Cont'd.)

Theme	Evidence	Student Engagement
	Roll model	Calling, Role Models
	Stereotypes	Class, Matters, Race Social Structure
	Communication	Communication with Parents
Social Class Structural	Community	Community Involvement, Community School Relationship, Lack of Involvement, Neighborhoods Relevance, Social Settings, Volunteering
	School Culture	Climate Instructional Practice

3. *Based on the study's findings, what recommendations can be made about the role of social class on student engagement?*

Within schools, it may be difficult to see the influence of social class on *student engagement* without taking a closer look at the school data for individual students; however, between schools it becomes evident. When the district conceptualized the school in this study, they made accommodations for a large number of students attending from an impoverished neighborhood within the school boundaries. However, one traditionally struggling subgroup did not have planned accommodations. The African American students who were struggling at this school were upper and upper-middle class students. The assumption that socio-economic status is the only indicator of class and that all upper and upper-middle class students do well in school may have impeded the implementation of safeguards for this group by the district. For these students, class was more than just the structural construct of socio-economic status as determined by the income, occupation, or education of the parents. The need for these students to better engage in school was evident in the low graduation rate, the low average GPA, and the

achievement gap at 29%. The social class themes that arose from the research suggested the need to broaden our understanding of the concept of social class to include internal identity constructs as well as interactional behavioral constructs and not limit to only the structural constructs identifying income, education, and occupation. The significance of broadening the definition can assist schools in the implementation of interventions to address all student needs. The researcher discovered that when a district, school, teachers, parents, and students made a decision to give and receive care transformation occurred.

<div align="center">**Limitations**</div>

Efforts to prevent problems were made at all stages of this research. There were, however, some limitations present in this research. One limitation was the number of participants. Although the sample was a representative sampling, the size of the sample was small thus limiting the number of voices actually heard. A second limitation was the research was at one high school in one district. Because of the number of participants in this study, generalizations about African American students would be inappropriate. A third limitation to the study was timing and scheduling of interviews. Student and parent interviews were scheduled; however, on the day of the interviews there was a very bad rainstorm. In addition to congested freeways, the rain caused parents to pick-up the students early from school and thus again limited the amount of interviews that were available to conduct on that day and rescheduling was difficult as none of the researchers lived in the area of the participants . The fourth limitation was the availability of quiet spaces to conduct the interviews. Painting at the local library and a barking dog at the home that we used interfered with the quality of a couple of the recordings. The final

limitation was that during one interview, the program used had a time limit and the interview lasted longer than the program and the researcher had to restart the recording to get the final half of the interview.

<div align="center">**Conclusions and Implications**</div>

Conclusions

This study's influences of social class on student engagement led to the conclusion that across the various constructs of social class, the ethic of care was highly valued by all participants. Although the researcher placed the theme, ethic of care, under the behavioral construct of social class, it belongs in all constructs of social class. Once these students felt cared for and included into the school community, their academic success was evident in every area of their school experience. The way the students understood the role of education in their lives changed as role models demonstrated the different pathways that were available to the students. Their graduation rates increased as did the number of students continuing on to college. When a district, school, teachers, students, parents, and a community decided to give and receive care transformation took place. The students from the high school in this study transformed. Their identity transformed. They felt like they belonged to the community. The identity of students changed as they joined BSU and spent time with mentor and role models. Their behavior transformed. Their study habits changed and the way they saw their future changed. They began to care more about their grades and actually raised their GPA, which enabled them to get into high-ranking colleges and universities like Duke, UCLA, and USC. Even though their parents were upper and upper-middle class families, now the students had positioned themselves for social mobility. They disrupted stereotypes of African

American and created new paradigm where the African American student became the example to follow.

Their perception, ways of making meaning, and their way of viewing the world changed also as evidenced by the classes they took and the conversations they had with mentors, role models, teachers, and parents. One student spoke about a class she was taking and how it was the most interesting, she had ever taken. It was about real life situations and creating dramas, skits, or dances that conveyed the message to others that we (humans) are more than just a number or letter. She spoke of how it made her look at others differently and how it affected her to see the audiences' faces when they received the message. Another student talked about her non-school hours tutoring and teaching dance at the elementary school. She had received a full-ride scholarship to USC. This transformation speaks of how these students made choices that without the ethic of care so evident in their lives they may not have made.

Finally, in the structural construct of social class, the ethic of care created a loving and caring "village." One student spoke of a young man who had been hurt in a football game and was still in the hospital. He spoke of how they (students from campus) came together to create a living birthday card to let him know that they still remembered him. Another student spoke about a campus united. She spoke about the homecoming king and queen being students from the special education classes with learning disabilities. She talked about a diversity class where they learned how to appreciate the diversity in people and how they planned events to celebrate each group of people on campus to let them know we care for them. She spoke about a campus where all students could choose for themselves their paths, whether college or a trade.

The ethic of care transformed lives and reduced the achievement gap between the White students and the African American students form 29% to 4%. All schools need this is the type of transformation. The parent advisory group believed in this ethic of care, taking ownership of the students who needed the extra support and instilling that ethic into them. They appealed to their school to care for the students and taught the students to care for themselves and others.

Implications

Ideas of assurance, freedom, hope, engagement, chance, social justice, empowerment, bravery, and rebellion are at the heart of transformation. This study revealed some qualities of transformative leadership in the parents, teachers, and administration at the school of interest. According to Carolyn Shields (2013), "Transformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy; it critiques inequitable practices and offers the promise of greater achievement and a better life" (p. 559). The findings in this study described a transformed school. The theme of care rose to the top as having integral importance when considering the influence of social class on student engagement. The implementation of an ethic of care was life changing for these students. The ethic of care as described by Nodding (1992) said that children are the central point of education and need to be cared for, encouraged, and nurtured as a top priority. Newmann et al. (1992) found that when students engage as "whole" individuals, a general ethic of care for students is at work. They said, "This cultural norm acknowledged the links between students' emotional well-being and their readiness to learn, and emphasized respect and concern for students' lives as a whole" (p. 148). Sonia Nieto (2012) went on to say that when teachers use an ethic of care in the classroom, not

only classrooms but schools can be transformed. Transformative leadership is one way to begin the process of implementing an ethic of care. Freire (1970) asserted that through personal dialogic relationships education can transform life. The following list of tenets from Shields (2013) provided an outline in which districts, schools, and parents can use to promote change in their schools:

- Balancing critique and promise

- Effecting deep and equitable change in social conditions

- Deconstruction and reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity; acknowledgement of power and privilege; dialectic between individual and social

- Focusing on liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, justice

- Individual, organizational and societal transformation

- Positional, hegemonic, tool for oppression as well as for action

- Lives with tension and challenge; requires moral courage, activism

- Critical theories (race, gender); cultural and social reproduction; leadership for social justice (p. 21)

Recommendations

With this in mind, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Implementation of a Guest Speaker Program focused to encourage students in setting goals for their future by community members visiting campuses.

2. Implementation of various recognition programs focused on academic achievement where parents have direct involvement.

3. Provide School-Wide Professional Development with critical conversations about social class, race, and the achievement gap.

4. School and district should create awareness in all staff of a new way of looking at social class that is broader than just socioeconomic status.

5. District begins to look at social class from a broader perspective and use the free and reduced lunch program as a starting point rather than the determining point.

6. Conduct more research in an impoverished area to see if social class influences student engagement in similar ways.

7. Districts and schools should consider ways to implement the ethic of care through transformative leadership.

8. Districts should provide professional development for teachers and administrators on the ethic of care.

9. The parent advisory group should work with the district to implement similar programs in other district schools.

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Appendix A: Consent Form (Community Members)

Appendix A

Consent Form: Community Members

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ████████ Parent Advisory Group (████████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, at francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

Kitty Fortner   Marcus Hanson   Kwanjai (Pearl) Vongprateep

kitty.fortner@redlands.edu   marcus_hanson@redlands.edu   kwanjai_vongprateep@redlands.edu

714.307.8358   714.308.9605   516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Consent Form: School Administration

Appendix B

Consent Form: School Administration

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ███████ Parent Advisory Group (███████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, at francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358	714.308.9605	516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Appendix C: Consent Form: PAG Parents

Appendix C

Consent Form: PAG Parents

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ██████ Parent Advisory Group (██████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva at, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358	714.308.9605	516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Consent Form: Non-PAG Parents

Appendix D

Consent Form: Non-PAG Parents

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ██████ Parent Advisory Group (█████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva at, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358	714.308.9605	516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Consent Form: District Administration

Appendix E

Consent Form: District Administration

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ███████ Parent Advisory Group (███████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva at, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358   714.308.9605   516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F: Consent Form: Students (Over 18 Years of Age)

Appendix F

Consent Form: Students (Over 18 Years of Age)

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ██████ Parent Advisory Group (████████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva at, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358	714.308.9605	516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix G: Consent Form: Teacher

Appendix G

Consent Form: Teacher

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ███████ Parent Advisory Group (███████) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

In this invitation, I understand that I am giving the research team the opportunity to interview me. I further understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may choose not to participate without penalty and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva at, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358	714.308.9605	516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research project.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H: Consent Form: Students (Under 18 Years of Age)

Appendix H

Consent Form: Students (Under 18 Years of Age)

Dear Participant:

I have been invited to participate in the study of social class, cultural and social capital, funds of knowledge, language, and student engagement being conducted by doctoral students from the University of Redlands. Specifically, the study will focus on the influence of ▓▓▓▓ Parent Advisory Group (▓▓▓▓) on student engagement. The objectives of their study are: 1) to understand the influence of social class, cultural capital, language, and funds of knowledge in school and schooling practices, 2) to identify the emerging themes related to social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in selective educational settings by observing schools and listening to the authentic voices of its constituencies, and 3) to make recommendations about student engagement based upon the findings on the influence of social class, cultural and social capital, language, and funds of knowledge in schooling.

I further understand that my (son or daughter) _____ has been invited to participate and will be interviewed. I hereby give my permission for the above named child to participate in the study. I understand that the information gained will not affect my child's standing in school in any way, that my child may choose to participate or not to participate without penalty, and that my child is free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact Dr. Francisco Silva at, Chair of the IRB University of Redlands, francisco_silva@redlands.edu.

Thanks you for your participation

Research Team

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714.307.8358	714.308.9605	516.884.0609

I have read and understand this consent form. By signing this form, I (student) agree to participate in this research project. By signing this form, I (parent) agree for my child to participate in this research project.

_____   _____
Print Student Name   Student Signature

_____   _____
Print Parent Name   Parent Signature

_____   _____
Date   Date

Appendix I: Instrumentation Usage by Various Researchers

Appendix I

Instrumentation Usage by Various Researchers

Year	Researcher	Area of Focus
2006	Nirmla Flores, Ed.D.	Funds of Knowledge of Parents of Latino Students
2009	Angela Macias, Ed.D.	Funds of Knowledge of Working-Class Latino Students
2007	April Clay, Ed.D.	Examining Black Graduate Students' Experience in Higher Education through a Critical Race lens
2007	Ibrahim Ayanna Balogun, Ed.D.	Influence of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Instruction in Writing with African American
2014	Marcus Hanson, Ed.D.	Social Capital and Student Engagement: African American Students
2014	K. Pearl Vongprateep, Ed.D.	Social and Cultural Capital of the Parents of African American Students

Appendix J: Kitty Fortner – Curriculum Vitae

Kitty Fortner – Curriculum Vitae

Kitty M. Fortner

2781 W. MacArthur Blvd. #B199
Santa Ana, CA 92704
KMF814@GMAIL.COM   or   **KMF814@MAC.COM**

Objective

To affect the lives of children enabling them to achieve their dreams and reach their life's potential both academically and socially

Accreditations

Tier 2 Administrative Credential 10/2008 (Current)
California Clear Multi-subject Teaching Credential 10/2000 (Current)

Education

2011 – 2014   University of Redlands   Redlands, California
- **Doctorate, Leadership for Educational Justice**
  Dissertation: Social Class Influences: Student Engagement of Upper
  Middle Class African American Students

2001– 2003   California State University   Fullerton, California
- **Masters of Science, Educational Leadership**
  Thesis: Parent Involvement and Reading Success
- **Tier I Administrative Cred.**

1992 – 1995   Southern California College   Costa Mesa, California
- **Bachelor of Arts, Liberal Studies, Bachelor of Arts, Cross Cultural Studies**

1990 - 1992   West Coast Christian College   Fresno, California
- **Associates of Arts, Liberal Studies**