

UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS

The Influence of Social Capital Through Social Relations: Student Engagement  
in a Middle Upper Class High School

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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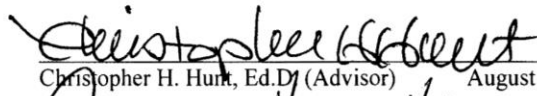


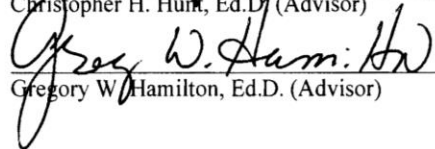
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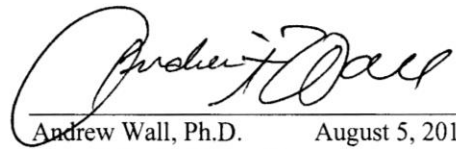
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## ABSTRACT

The Influence of Social Capital Through Social Relations: Student Engagement

in a Middle Upper Class High School

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This dissertation examines the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement. Specifically, it examines how the resources of social capital through the social relations developed with a group of high school students may have influenced their engagement in school. A narrative inquiry method was used to elicit the voices of students, teachers, administrators, community members, and parents belonging to an advisory group. Open interviews were conducted with participants so they could freely express their insights concerning the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement. Data from the “authentic voices” of the participants were gathered and analyzed to discover commonality in the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Common themes were found concerning the influence of building positive social relations through social capital resources by looking at social interactions in group memberships, networks and social connections, and personal relationships. The investment of social capital resources through social relations reflected positive student engagement, according to responses of the participants interviewed. Bourdieu claimed, “The economic, social and symbolic ‘profit’ that follows from belonging to the

associations establishes a concrete base for the growth of solidarity,” according to Siisänen (2003, p. 294).

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, my mother, and my brother. It is dedicated in loving memory of my father, Orlando, who provided our family with the dreams and opportunities to experience an exciting childhood of travel and adventure. I would like to thank my mother, Marvelle, for always “being there” for me and my brother. You have always put your families’ needs before your own; we could always count on you for full support. Larry, thanks for always being such a good and loving brother. I feel lucky to have shared a past with such a wonderful family. This dedication is a tribute to all the great times I’ve had thanks to each of you.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Preface

The research findings reported in the following study represent one piece in a larger three-part thematic research project. The three members of the research team studied the parent group and its impact on student engagement in order to discover emerging themes in the areas of social class, and social and cultural capital, as they relate to social relations and parent involvement. Participant consent and interviews were all conducted together. Interviews were co-transcribed and analyzed, with each researcher focusing on a specific conceptual area and its influence on student engagement. This study focused on Dr. Marcus Hanson's study, entitled "The Influence of Social Capital Through Social Relations: Student Engagement in an Upper Middle Class High School," Dr. Kitty Fortner's study, entitled "Social Class Influences: Student Engagement of Upper Middle Class African American Students ," and 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." The complements to this study can be found in the Armacost Library at the University of Redlands or through ProQuest.

## Chapter One Introduction

Social interactions provide a means of developing useful present and future social resources necessary for meaningful positive systems of influence and support. A lack of meaningful social ties (relations) between individuals and groups in the school setting may have a negative influence on student academic and behavioral engagement. This is a qualitative study in which the “authentic voices” of the participants express their experiences and perceptions of the influences social capital through social relations have on student engagement. Patterns and common themes of the participants’ viewpoints were recorded and analyzed. The results of the analysis are used to make recommendations regarding the influence that social relations have on improved student engagement.

Forming positive relationships among students and staff tends to improve the learning environment. Some schools have shown higher student success rates due to improved learning through better student and staff relationships, according to McNulty and Quaglia (2014). Positive relationships are created through meaningful relationships that motivate and engage students in the learning process. Meier (1993) related a story of three dropouts who, when asked, said they did not know any college graduates. She continued by adding that although all of these students’ teachers were college graduates, it is true that these students did not “know” them through any type of meaningful relationship.

A lack of meaningful social relationships between individuals and groups in the school setting may lead to disengagement from academic activities and less participation in school activities. According to Meier (1993), children will not learn “about the power

of wonderful ideas if they have not been immersed in a community that cares about wonderful ideas, that believes in them, that explores them, and that puts them into practice” (p. 655). Building relationships between and among other students, teachers, administrative staff members, active community members, and parents lays a foundation for a learning community that students feel part of and in which they want to be more engaged. In this study the “authentic voices” of these participants were sought to examine the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement. Social capital is a resource based on group memberships, relationships, and networks of influence and support.



*Figure 1.* Social capital.

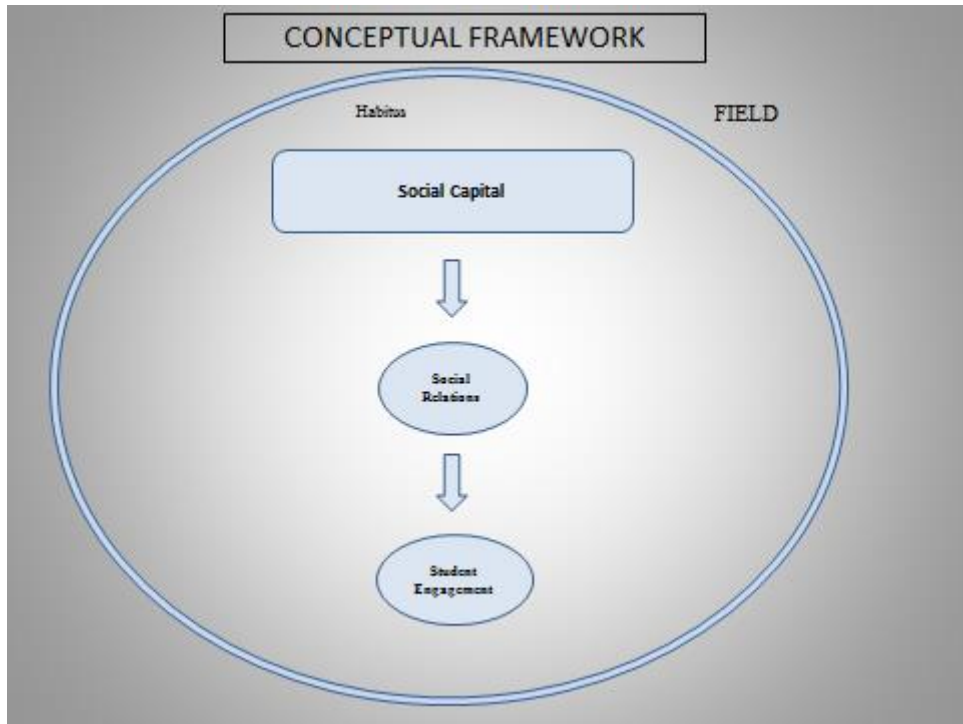
The above figure stresses the importance of creating social capital at all levels of social networks, or social relations. On this subject, Pierre Bourdieu

plays on the economic definitions of capital, or simply: assets, wherein different assets can gain you varied access (and thus power) in a given situation or circumstance. Social capital, therefore, calls attention to the (varying) value embedded in the social networks with which we are associated. (Tag Archive: social capital, August 13, 2013, p. 1)



In other words, creating more social connections, relations, networks, and so forth increases the asset of social capital. Bourdieu's perspective, per Siisianinen (2003), is that the "formation of a voluntary association can be seen as collective and individual strategies of investment aimed at the creation of permanent networks of relations that will make possible the accumulation of social capital" (p. 194).

The conceptual framework shown in the following figure is a guide used to demonstrate the influences of social capital through social relations on student engagement. Social capital is a wide-ranging concept of social resources that can be developed and used by individuals, groups, or even countries for their present or future benefit. It is the accumulation of present or future resources based on personal and group memberships, relationships, and networks of influence and support. Social relations increase opportunities for meaningful social ties that can be used to capitalize on the influence and support gained through social capital resource development. The influence and support capital creates through these social relations are "in the bank" and available for use to achieve better student engagement.



*Figure 2.* Conceptual framework.

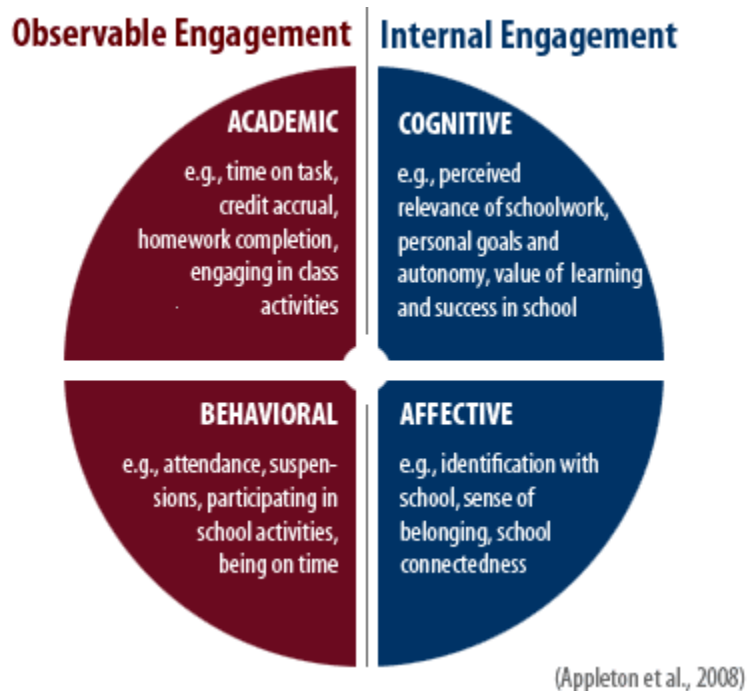
Social capital is an overarching theoretical concept that comprises both student engagement and social relations. Each student enters school with his or her own level of built social capital. Their level of social capital will influence their initial adeptness for student engagement and social relations building. The social capital from relationship and network building is a resource that can be used in present or future interactive engagement among students, or between student(s) and teacher(s). According to Daniel, Schwier, and McCalla (2003), Narayan and Pritchett claimed, “Communities with high social capital have frequent interactions, which in turn cultivates norms of reciprocity through which learners become more willing to help one another, and which improve coordination and dissemination of information and knowledge sharing” (p. 2). For my part, I have seen the positive influence of engaging students in interactive discussions,

and from encouraging networking, which has led to beneficial and sometimes long-lasting relationships through my work as a teacher.

Chapman (2003) has noted that with the emphasis on achievement, ways of gaining knowledge in the learning environment have become of great concern. He asserted that several studies indicate that affective behaviors can play a significant role in increasing learning, especially through student engagement. Affective behaviors are aimed at producing desired outcomes such as building social capital by participating in networks or relationships on campus that are academically oriented. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), student engagement “is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement, and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure” (p. 87).

The Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota's program defines engagement "as commitment to and investment in learning, as well as identification with and belonging at school" (Check & Connect Student Engagement Intervention, 2013, p.1). Hartup (2009) has asserted that as groups interact socially on a regular basis, they share cultural values, form a sense of belonging, and find that “a structure exists that supports the norms that brought the members together in the first place” (p. 13). The Check & Connect theory of engagement separates four subtypes of engagement into "observable engagement" and "internal engagement." Observable engagement in this model includes academic and behavioral subtypes; internal engagement includes cognitive and affective subtypes. The subtypes are interrelated. For example, the affective engagement that brings about a student's feeling of being

connected to his or her school may promote better attendance on the part of the student (behavioral engagement). Also, mentoring that teaches self-reliance and accountability (cognitive engagement) may lead to more academic engagement, such as increased engagement in class activities (Check & Connect Student Engagement Intervention, 2013).



*Figure 3.* Student engagement.

*Note.* This figure was developed in the May 7, 2013 Check & Connect Student Engagement Intervention research paper, but is based on Appleton, Christenson, and Furlong (2008, p. 370).

Engagement is most often described as being a two- or three-component model. The two-component structure consists of behavioral and affective parts to the model. A three-component model also includes a cognitive aspect of engagement. The Check & Connect model includes a fourth component to the model that recognizes such academic variables as study-time, earned-credits, homework completion, and involvement in class activities.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem is that many students lack the social resources necessary to capitalize on benefits typically attributed to student engagement in school. An investment expects a return on capital. Social capital also expects a return on a social investment. Increasing social relations increases the likelihood that a network of interactions and support systems will be available for present or future use. A lack of meaningful social ties (relations) can have a negative influence on student engagement.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to gather and examine the insights of administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members concerning the influence of social capital through social relations on the engagement of students in one comprehensive high school in Southern California. The researcher sought to understand the perspectives of the participants through their own voices in order to more fully understand how student engagement was impacted by the role of building social influence and support through increased social ties between individuals and groups.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does social capital through social relations influence student engagement?

Research question number one explores the literature based on Bourdieu's theory of social capital, as well as that of other historical and recent contributors to social capital research. Social capital is an overarching theory that has implications as a resource in which meaningful, lasting networks and relationships are accumulated for current and future beneficial capital. It is a form of capital for social purposes on macro, meso, and

micro levels. Governments that operate on the world stage are examples of the social capital on the macro level. Governments typically accumulate positive social capital with some nations, while being in negative social capital situations with other nations. Meso is a middle level, represented by, say, corporations or cities. This study concerns a particular high school (micro level). Social and extracurricular activities tend to naturally lead to formation of networks, associations, memberships, and personal relationships. This study considers whether students at the high school increased their social capital through social interactions, and if this in turn influenced their student engagement.

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

Research question number two involves listening to the participants in the study to realize common themes that emerge from their stories based on their perceptions and realized experiences of building social capital resources through social interactions. The data collected through the voices of the participants led to the common themes that provide evidence to answer the research questions.

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

Research question number three considers findings in the literature and from the data generated by listening to the authentic voices of the participants. Based on the literature and the authentic voices of the participants, recommendations are made regarding practices of building social relations that lead to student engagement. The information

from the findings and recommendations should be useful in policy and practice decision-making, specifically for the high school of interest in the study. In general, the findings and recommendations may be of use to other interested schools and school districts.

### **Significance of the Study**

The research indicated that more student engagement leads to improvements in academic and behavioral outcomes. Improvements in the outcomes in these two areas could significantly affect behavioral disengagement and low academic performance. Improving outcomes in these two areas could help close the achievement gap, increase graduation rates, and provide learning opportunities to assist students in meeting their college and/or career goals. Dillon and Green (2003) have argued that finding a way to improve graduation rates would provide students with greater opportunity to achieve their educational goals. These goals may be for self-improvement, financial gain, or social advancement. Whatever reasons an individual may have for his academic goals, society ultimately gains economically, socially, and politically from having a better-educated populous.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Positive relationship:* Meaningful relationships that motivate and engage students to commit and invest in the learning process.

*Social capital:* “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51). Social capital is defined as the accumulation of present or future resources based on personal and group memberships, relationships, and networks of influence and support.

*Social relations:* Social interactions between two or more persons, which then increases the opportunities for meaningful social ties between individuals and groups. According to R. A. Hinde and J. Stevenson-Hinde, relationships are “aggregations of interactions that live over time and form the basis for reciprocal interpersonal expectations” (Qtd. in Hartup, 2009, p. 8).

*Student engagement:* “Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement, and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure” (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 87). The Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota defines engagement "as commitment to and investment in learning, as well as identification with and belonging at school" (Check & Connect Student Engagement Intervention, p. 1)

*Voice:* “is a language performance – always social, mediated by experience, and culturally embedded” (Sperling & Appleman, 2011, p. 71).

### **Organization of the Remaining Chapters**

The first chapter introduced the study and included the statement of the problem and the research questions. There are four remaining chapters in this study. Chapter Two is a review of the literature pertaining to a better understanding of the phenomenon of the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement. Chapter Three delineates the research design and methodology used in the study. Chapter Four describes the instrument used to gather data, the procedures followed in the study, and how sample selection for the study was determined. In Chapter Four, data analysis and findings are discussed and presented. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study



are in Chapter Five. References cited in the study, and appendices follow the five chapters.

### **Summary**

Chapter One is concerned with introducing the reader to the general area and purpose of the study, and the problem being studied. The issue, or problem, of the study concerns the best use of the resources of social capital through social relations—building in order to gain the best outcome possible through student engagement. The purpose of the study was to hear the authentic voices of administrators, teachers, community advisors, parents, and students in order to answer the research questions. The significance of the study is that an increase in social relations leading to more support and influence for students could result in improved behavioral and academic student engagement.

## Chapter Two **Literature Review**

This is an extensive review of the literature concerning the influence of social capital resources accumulated through social relations that developed in groups, networks, and personal relationships, and the affect they have on student engagement. This review will explore historical and recent literature on the main topics of social relations, social capital, and student engagement. This review will then search for current and related literature about the connections of social capital to student engagement and social relations.

### **The Role of Social Relations**

Building strong relationships in the elementary and high school can have a transformative effect on a community, according to Meier (1993). According to Pianta, Hamre, and Allen (2013), student-teacher relationships and interactions can be used to measure development change of engagement in the classroom. Indeed, the relationships between teacher and student “reflect a classroom’s capacity to promote development and it is precisely in this way that relationship and interactions are the key to understanding engagement” (Pianta et al., 2012, p. 366). Two studies cited by Koch (2009) revealed that it is clear in the research “that students need a ‘human touch,’ and students themselves tell us they do not want more technology, they want human contact” (p. 25). She reported that it is important to keep in mind that these relationships between and among individuals are about the issues and things that matter in their lives. McNulty and Quaglia (2014) have claimed, “Schools across the country are realizing that rigor and relevance develop most naturally when they are cultivated on firm grounding in relationships” (p. 4). Pianta et al. (2012) asserted that learning in the classroom could be made more

relevant by engaging students in relational material that ties the curriculum to real-world lessons and applications.

While relationships and the human touch may be keys to understanding engagement, it should be kept in mind that the present generation of students is proficient in the use of modern communications technology that can sometimes be at odds with the traditional lecture and “overhead transparency” model of presentation. This generation grew up with instant audio and visual access to information from around the world in their everyday lives outside of the classroom. This same technology is relevant to their lives as students inside the classroom. According to Koch (2009), technology is a good medium through which to engage students in discussion and reflection. Koch added that multiple ways of social interaction are possible through online technology, and the benefits appear endless. Koch (2009) reported that Sherman and Kurshan contend, “One can also facilitate depth of understanding by integrating technologies into the fabric of teaching as intellectual tools that students use to study, learn, and communicate with others in their classes as well as others in different locations” (p. 9).

French writer Alexis de Tocqueville commented favorably on the quality of human relationships in the United States after his travels here in the 1830s. He said a social-glue was evident in the bond provided by the interactions in voluntary associations in the US. De Tocqueville pointed out that in Europe bonds based on status and obligation led to more formal and hierarchical relationships. Sociologist Emile Durkheim, in the 1930s, remarked on the mechanical nature of the unthinking and habitual nature of the feudal system in which the structures and obligations of lord and peasant, and of cleric and artisan were fixed. In contrast, the urban capitalist system in the US consisted

of strangers with the possibility of many connections based on the interactions in which they were involved (Field, 2008).

Of course, cultural and economic barriers to social interactions exist. Karl Marx's theory of historical materialism focused on the social class relationships of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. The sociological underpinnings of this philosophy took a dim view of societies' relationships as economic based, with workers useful only for their labor and reproduction of future workers in order for the property owners to maintain their dominance and power (Field, 2008). The classical theory of social capital envisions social relations in terms of workers being exploited by the owners of capital assets, according to Lin (1999). Modern social capital theory, envisions social relations in terms of investment of social capital resources in networks on an individual basis, or investment of social capital resources to obtain mutual recognition and acknowledgement on an individual or group basis, according to Bourdieu (1991). Lin, Fu, and Hsung (2001) differentiated capital theory in two groups: the classical theory of capital represents Marx's theory of capital as a reproductive oppressive mechanism on workers by the owners of production; Lin et al. (2001) represented a general group of capital as the "neocapital theory group," which includes social capital, cultural capital, and others that are viewed as capital with characteristics of "investment and return of capital at the individual level" (p. 61).

Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam may differ some on the concepts of social relations and social capital resources. However, according to Field (2008), "Despite these differences, all three consider that social capital consists of personal connections and interpersonal interaction together with the shared sets of values that are associated with these contacts" (pp. 15–16).

According to Field (2008), social capital is tied to economics in terms of human capital, with the idea of the value of human labor to firms and industry. James Coleman, the World Bank, and Organization for Economic Cooperation have concurred that social capital and human capital generally complement each other in mutually beneficial ways. Putnam (2000) asserted, “Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of the individual, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19). Field (2008) depicted relationships as the central theme of social capital. By building social relations through networks, group memberships, and personal relationships, social capital resources can be expanded and accumulated. Field (2008) asserted that most people get jobs because of whom they know through social interactions, which is attributable to social capital more than to human capital.

According to Field (2008), Coleman has pointed out that social capital and human capital can complement each other. By developing one’s human capital through education, social interactions will also build one’s social capital. Putnam (2000) has referred to “bonding” and “bridging” social capital in which closer bonds or diversified relationships may be formed, possibly when creating human capital. Bonding involves creating intra-community ties in familiar and forming communal relationships. Bridging involves extra-community networks, in which linkages are developed at various levels of civil engagement. The distinction here being that the human capital created (i.e., online college degree) is a social capital resource only as long as it is recognized. In other words, it may be recognized in one society or social circle, but not in another. In that sense, it is symbolic (capital), according to Siisianinin (2003).

Bourdieu (1977) claimed that symbolic capital is a disguised form of economic capital due to the fact that it originates as a material form of capital. However, economic calculation has been extended to even include social gestures worthy of being sought after—such as smiles, handshakes, compliments, attention, honors, and so forth.

Bourdieu (1977) stated that symbolic capital depends on “its standing in the eyes of other groups” (p. 181). In the case discussed, Bourdieu is referring to a ceremony in which the family’s symbolic capital will be increased through marriage, which will then ostensibly increase the family’s fortune in some way. Bourdieu (1991) termed symbolic capital a recognized power. In one moment in time, an object may have an objective value at a particular place, and have a subjective value in another place. Both are symbolic capital until converted to another form of capital, however. Bourdieu (1991) claimed that attention given to symbolic capital is based on the amount of recognition given to it by the group.

Others see social capital as an alternative to human capital. They see social capital emphasizing the collective, whereas human capital is seen in terms of individuals interested in pursuing their own self-interests. Field (2008) claimed that Bourdieu agrees with Marx that there may be unequal access to resources with an imbalance in power. Laursen and Pursell (2008) contended that perceived inequality in cost and rewards leads to conflict. On the other hand, Piaget claimed, “An equal distribution of power forces children to embrace reciprocation,” (as quoted in Laursen & Pursell, 2008, p. 275). Collaboration and cooperation are engendered in reciprocal relationships. According to Laursen and Pursell (2008), Youniss claimed that reciprocal relations are the basis of “mutual respect and affection, which leads to practices that promote equality and mutual

benefits” (p. 275). Economists Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis asserted that the major role of the education system is not based on merit (Anyon, 2011). Rather, according to Anyon (2011), “Schools tended to reproduce the unequal labor positions that the economic system had created” (p. 20). In Anyon (2011), Bowles and Gintis claimed that whereas the education “system of schooling certainly functions primarily to legitimate and reproduce inequality, it sometimes produces critics, rebels, and radicals” (p. 21).

Among the many decisions families make based on economics and self-interest is the selection of neighborhood in which their children will be raised and attend school (Ross & Howe, 2007). Depending on circumstances, of course, some parent(s) may have very limited decision-making opportunities. Other parent(s) may sacrifice, or not, a higher possible present lifestyle to live in a neighborhood with better schools. Based on the theory of reproduction in education, this type of decision may impact inequality in education for a particular student. Of course, schools alone don’t cast individual students in a particular role. Failures can result at the most expensive schools with excellent results at the poorest schools. Parent influence and management strategies include direction and involvement in building social interactions, participation in activities, mentoring, and monitoring (Ross & Howe, 2007).

Parental involvement in schooling has been associated with a number of positive student outcomes including improved test scores and grades, higher attendance and graduation rates, and positive feelings about schooling (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012). It is the contention of Rexchly and Christenson, according to Bempechat & Sernoff (2012) that parental involvement has “evolved from a focus on activities that schools can design

to engage parents to a more recent realization that relationships are the foundation upon which successful partnerships are built” (p. 323). According to Hall and Taylor (2006):

One of the strengths of economics since Adam Smith has been its inclination to construe the economy as a set of relations structured by market, hierarchies and institutions. As a result, when governments make economic policy, they usually consider not only whether policy will secure a specific set of goals but also how it affect the overall structure of market relations.” (p. 7)

Hall and Taylor (2006) have contended that societies should similarly be seen as “a structured set of social relations” (p. 7). Social relations are generally recognized by two different traditions. Max Weber viewed social relations in terms of the domination of individuals based on social class and status. Emile Durkheim conceived of societies as in interconnection of others from which the social resources of support and personal well-being are derived. “Durkheim observed that, even for the most individualistic of acts, the behavior of individuals could not be understood in isolation from the characteristics of the community and the relationships in which they were embedded,” according to (Halpern, 2012, p. 5).

In this study, social relations is defined in terms of social connectedness, or social interaction, in which it is a social resource used by people to benefit their lives. For example, when support or care is needed, people are generally able to draw on the meaningful relationships or social networks which have developed in the past. For the purposes of this study, social interactions between two or more persons increase the opportunities for meaningful social ties between individuals and groups. According to McNulty and Quaglia (2014):

While we have heard for some time the call for rigor and relevance, now education leaders are adding third R for relationships. Schools across the country are realizing that rigor and relevance develop most naturally when they are cultivated on firm grounding in relationships. (p. 4)



Forming positive relationships among students and staff improves the learning environment. McNulty and Quaglia (2014) said that students respond to high expectations when believing that the encouragement and care demonstrated by the staff is genuine. Some of these schools showed higher student success rates due to improved learning through better student and staff relationships (McNulty & Quaglia, 2014). Karp (2011) claimed that creating social relationships and enhancing commitment have been associated with programs demonstrating improved student outcomes.

### **The Concept of Habitus**

According to Germedia (2010):

The ideology of Pierre Bourdieu can be summarized into three factors: habitus, field, and capital. Among these, capital is said to be the primary factor. It is capital that dictates ones' participation in a field, depending on the form and amount of capital one has. However, the manner in which one makes use of his/her capital is based on one's habitus. (p. 1)

Habitus is part of everyday life due to the socialized norms that guide behavior and tendencies. Habitus can be defined as a system of dispositions (lasting, acquired schemes of perception, thought, and action). It guides an individual in his or her actions and responses in everyday life (Bourdieu, 1991). Brubaker (1993) has said that habitus is the past that is evident in the present. Although subsequent events impact habitus, it is "dominated by the earliest experience" (p. 226). One's habitus is initially structured in the family environment, then modified in a school environment, and so on (Brubaker, 1993). Bourdieu stated, "It reflects the different positions people have in society, for example, whether they are brought up in a middle-class environment or in a working-class suburb. It is part of how society produces itself" (Qtd. in Siisianinen, 2003, p. 9).

### **The Concept of Field**

The concept of field is a system of social positions that concentrates the social relations, and the accumulation of capital and production of habitus on the larger social field. Calhoun, LiPuma, and Postone (1993) have claimed that Bourdieu uses the term “field” as a stage to present the idea of relational positioning: “The person’s habitus and his or her place in a field of positions is defined by the distribution of the appropriate form of capital” (p. 5).

### **The Concept of Capital**

Bourdieu (1986) stated, "It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory" (p. 46). According to Calhoun et al. (1993), Bourdieu’s idea of capital is that it has power because it has the ability to control peoples’ futures. Lin (2011) has defined capital “as investment of resources with expected returns in the marketplace” (p. 3). Economic capital is defined mainly in terms of material forms of exchange by investing and seeking maximized self-interested monetary profits. Economic capital is the most efficient form of capital in that it is transferrable and/or convertible to another form (Calhoun et al., 1993). They further contended that economic capital is also easily converted to symbolic capital, such as social and cultural capital. "Interest, in the restricted sense it is given in economic theory cannot be produced without producing its negative counterpart, disinterestedness," according to Bourdieu (1986, p. 46). There can also be human capital, political capital, and symbolic capital, among others.

## **The Role of Social Capital**

Bourdieu (1986) has claimed, "It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory" (p. 46). Capital is expressed in many forms. Economic capital is defined mainly in terms of material forms of exchange by investing and seeking maximized self-interested monetary profits. Social capital can be thought of as an investment in social resources that can be used immediately or "banked" until needed in the future. It is important for students to establish personal and group relations that form a connected network, which can be relied upon for information, moral support, and assistance when needed. "Social capital can be related to the economic concepts of investment, yield exchange, and accumulation," per Angelusz and Tardos (2001, p. 300). The yield on investment in social resources can be accumulated or exchanged immediately for some social benefit.

According to Hall and Taylor (2006), Emile Durkheim viewed societies as an interconnection of personal relations with a collective consciousness. This view emphasizes the importance of social connections with others because they provide people with "logistical support, emotional sustenance, and a sense of self" (Hall & Taylor, 2006, p. 8). "Better connected people enjoy higher returns," according to Burt (2001 p. 32). The special capital metaphor Burt describes is one in which the more one is connected to others, the greater the return of support, information, and trusting relations. The result is a higher return on the social capital assets available through the increased social relation connections made (Burt, 2001).

Social Capital is a resource based on group membership, relationships, and networks of influence and support. Lin (2011) has stressed the importance of social connections and investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace. Lin (2011, p. 41) argued that it is not only “what you know, but who you know” that makes a difference in achieving goals and objects in life. Social capital is also effective in school and family dynamics. Anyon et al. (2009), citing Laureau and Noguera, wrote “Research supports the notion that parents’ social capital – specifically leading to collaborations between teachers and families – plays a role in producing high achievement of children” (p. 140).

Lin (2011) asserted that capital is a resource involving two processes. Capital, in the first process, shapes a resource by adding value to produce an investment. In the second process, the resource is used to profit from the added value in the investment to achieve a goal. The parental advisory group used its capital as influential, caring members of the community to influence mentored students by developing social relations among students, teachers, administrators, and community members. The students, school district, and society profited from the added value of the care and support demonstrated through the social interactions initiated by the parent advisory group. Lin (2011) presented a theory of social capital in social relations by which “capital is captured in social relations and that its capture evokes structured constraints and opportunities as well as actions and choices on the part of the actors” (p. 3). Social capital is built through an aggregate of networking that creates trusting relationships, developing motivational, goal-oriented behavior that leads to successful achievement. Each component of the

aggregate strengthens the student's ability to further develop the other components, which results in greater social capital creation.

“Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 51). There are two components to social capital, according to Siisianinen (2003). The first resource is connected to social relationships from memberships and involvement in groups and networks, which can be used to improve one's social position. Bourdieu said that the second characteristic of social capital relies on mutual recognition in order to become effective. Siisianinen (2003) cited Bourdieu:

The economic, social and symbolic “profit” that follows from belonging to the association establishes a concrete base for the growth of solidarity. From this perspective, the formation of a voluntary association can (also) be seen as a collective of individual strategies of investment aimed at the creation of permanent networks of relations that will make possible the accumulation of social capital. (p. 11)

Field (2008) has said that the central thesis of social capital is that “relationships matter” (p. 1). Field asserted that the value of social capital as a resource is the ability it provides to accomplish something, or at least more things, than would be able to be accomplished without the accumulated social connections through a series of networks. Fields continues by explaining that this stock of social capital is not only useful immediately, but also can have benefits even in other future settings. He says that your social capital wealth can be measured by the number of people you know, and by how much you have in common with them, “which means that they need to feel they have something in common with each other. If they do share values, they are much more likely to cooperate to achieve mutual goals” (Field, 2008, p. 3).

Historically, three contemporary authors laid their theoretical foundations for the concept of social capital. Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam introduced their theories in 1986, 1988, and 1993, respectively. Their influences are evident with all three frequently cited in the literature on social capital. According to Bourdieu (1986), “Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition” (p. 51). According to Hartup (2009), Clark and Mills stated that pursuit of specific equity-outcomes determines the type of relationship. Symmetry is largely determinative of the equity-balance sought in relationships with family and close friends. (Hartup, 2009). For example, “communal relationships” involve close relationships, which seek to recognize and satisfy mutual needs, and assume a natural “give and take” enduring relationship that does not require close monitoring. In “exchange relationships,” comparable benefits of those given out are expected in return (Hartup, 2009).

Coleman viewed social capital as a nontransferrable resource gained from social relationships that serve particular individuals in particular activities, according to Lin (1999). Robert D. Putnam’s concept of social capital dealt “with collective values and societal integration,” according to Siisianinen (2003, p. 9). Putnam’s studies were often at the community and regional levels. His social capital focus was on how members’ inter-community connections related to their civic engagement (Timms, Ferlander, & Timms, 2001). Halpern (2012) considered social capital in a broad context, preferring the idea of “social fabric,” on a mega-society basis. Halpern (2012) defined social capital as inclusive of even the habits of life, such as societally accepted differences of walking on

the left side, or right side, of the hallway, which he says is much too broadly defined by most social capitalists. For Halpern, social capital is the social fabric that includes the interactions and social customs that bind people in their everyday networks and relationships in the community. L. J. Hanifan is reported to be the first to use the terms social capital.. According to Halpern (2012), Hanifan's 1916 definition of social capital is similar to accepted definitions used today. Further, Hanifan used the term to stress the importance of the community to businessmen by communicating in familiar economic vernacular. Francis Fukuyama has claimed that the US and Japan share a common social characteristic of trusting strangers, which has resulted in both countries having strong economic performances (Halpern, 2012).

There are two components to social capital, according to Siisianinen (2003). The first resource is connected to social relationships from memberships and involvements in groups and networks that can be used to improve one's social position. Siisianinen (2003) said that Bourdieu views social capital as a "collective phenomenon, even though it is viewed from the perspective of actors who are exploiting its potentialities" (p. 11). Bourdieu said that the second characteristic of social capital relies on mutual recognition in order to become effective. Social capital is effectively transformed into symbolic capital when "objective" differences between groups or classes are mutually recognized (Siisianinen, 2003). Bourdieu added that symbolic capital may recognize legitimate social positions in one society, and may not be recognized as such in another. "In that respect symbolic capital cannot be institutionalized, objectified or incorporated in the habitus. It exists and grows only in inter-subjective reflection and can be recognized only there" (Siisianinen, 2003, p. 12).

According to Field (2008), Putnam's main theme is that Americans have been steadily withdrawing from civic life since the mid-1960s, which he blames primarily on television. Putnam blames the automobile, less free time, and the aging and loss of a generation that collectively confronted monumental challenges, such as the Great Depression and WWII. Putnam defined social capital as "features of social organisation, [sic] such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (Qtd. in Field, 2008, p. 4).

Bourdieu (1986) asserted, "Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 51). Social capital consists of resources based on group membership, relationships, and networks of influence and support. Lin (2011) claimed that Bourdieu sees capital as consisting of connections of social obligations. For Bourdieu, according to Lin (2011), social capital as well as all forms of capital, are disguises for economic capital. Bourdieu's studies concentrated on an individual level in which social capital is accumulated based on accolades and recognition at a personal level. Bourdieu's idea of social capital "is made from the point of view of actors engaged in struggle in pursuit of their interests," according to Siisianinen (2003, p. 9). Titles and professional designations, club and group memberships, family names, friendships and associates, and other beneficial person relationships are examples of social capital at this level.

As shown above, social capital can be thought of in a number of ways. It can be thought of and analyzed in terms of structural and content dimensions. According to Daniel et al. (2003), the structural dimension of social capital ties and connects the



network or organization The content dimension of social capital refers to the “norms, trust, shared understanding, and those variables that hold people together” (Daniel, et al., 2013, p. 3). Social capital can be thought of as not a single structure, but in terms of different dimensions and combinations of various variables. According to Lin (2011):

Bourdieu, Coleman, Lin, Flap, Burt, Erickson, Portes and others all share the understanding that social capital consists of resources embedded in social relations and social structure, which can be mobilized when an actor wishes to increase the likelihood of success in a purposive action. (p. 24)

Halpern (2012) claimed, “The evidence suggests that social capital at the micro-, meso-, and macro- levels have a significant impact on educational outcomes” (p. 166). Halpern (2012) said that quality, not quantity, leads to higher education achievement at the micro-level (child-parent contact level). Halpern (2012) further said that school and community play an important role in student achievement at the meso-level, which includes parent-parent relationships and parent-school relationships, and even teacher-teacher relationships. At the macro-level, social relationships at the state and national levels impact educational outcomes. But, according to Halpern, learning is not just learned in the formal school setting, but also takes place in on-the-job experiential learning. Social capital can affect educational aspirations, which in turn appear to have an impact on educational attainment (Halpern, 2012). “It is not just that social capital may foster educational attainment, but also that education may play a central role in the creation of social capital (Halpern, 2012, p. 163).

In “Definition of Social Capital,” Claridge (2004a) wrote, “the definition of social capital needs to be relative to the discipline, study, or context.” Daniel et al. (2003, p. 3), defined “social capital in virtual learning communities, as: common social resource that facilitates information exchange, knowledge sharing, and knowledge construction

through continuous interaction, built on trust and maintained through shared understanding.” There have been many studies of social capital over the years built on past research of the same. The updated definition by Daniel et al. (2003) for virtual learning communities is reflective of a modern era in which individual students are subjected to increasingly new uses of computer-mediated technology in learning. However, the theoretical foundation laid by Bourdieu for individual students still applies. Bourdieu, like Daniel et al. (2003), defined social capital as a social resource that can be developed and used to build mutually beneficial relationships of sharing and recognition. Integral to social capital creation in learning are student engagement and relationship building.

### **The Role of Student Engagement**

Sull (2013) said that student engagement is the most important component in developing an exciting and productive class. Participation and satisfaction depend on teaching tools to keep students enthusiastically involved in the course. Sull (2013) has used a number of these teaching tools over the past 19 years to keep students engaged in the learning process. He claims it begins with the first announcement, in which students form a first impression of the instructor’s enthusiasm and attitude. It sets a climate for the course. Will the course be perceived as open and inviting, or will it feel restricted and intimidating? Instructor engagement likely precedes student engagement, according to Sull (2013). According to Sull (2013), more involvement in making the course relative to their major or professional life makes them feel that they have a personal stake in the course.

The student's psychological and behavioral investment through their social involvement (building social capital) enhances the student's likelihood of becoming more engaged and committed to the coursework. Finn and Zimmer (2012) cited a remark by H. M. Marks, who claims that student engagement consists of the attitudes and behaviors that drive the student to actively pursue and invest in learning and schoolwork. Recent models of engagement typically have three, four, or more components (or dimensions). Finn and Zimmer (2012) claimed that models with four dimensions appear repeatedly, of which three correspond to the behavior dimension and one to the affective dimension.

The Check and Connect Model following consists of four dimensions. The behavior dimension, or component, includes academic engagement (leaning behaviors), social (or behavioral) engagement (social behaviors), and cognitive engagement (complex learning behaviors). The affective dimension includes the emotional response to the feeling of identifying with the school, which provides incentive for the student to become behaviorally involved and persistently engaged in learning (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). “Disengaged students are those who do not participate actively in class and school activities, do not become cognitively involved in learning, do not fully develop or maintain a sense of school belonging, and/or exhibit inappropriate or counterproductive behavior” (Finn and Zimmer, 2012, p. 99). Juvonen, Esperanza, and Knifsend (2013) have contended that school belonging and engagement may act in concert. They asserted that “the more engaged students are the stronger their sense of belonging; and the more strongly they feel they belong, the more actively they engage academically” (Juvonen et al, 2012, p. 389).

The Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota's (Check & Connect Student Engagement Intervention, 2013, p. 1) program defines engagement "as commitment to and investment in learning, as well as identification with and belonging at school." The Check & Connect theory of engagement separates four subtypes of engagement into "observable engagement" and "internal engagement." Observable engagement in this model includes academic and behavioral subtypes. Internal engagement in the model includes cognitive and affective subtypes. The subtypes are interrelated, such that

a student's feelings of belonging (affective engagement) may promote greater effort and participation on the student's part (behavioral engagement); teaching practices that promote strategy use or self-regulation (cognitive engagement) may also facilitate greater time on task or homework completion with high success rates (academic engagement) (Check & Connect Student Engagement Intervention, 2013, p. 1 ). (See Figure 3)

Fredricks et al. (2004) asserted that current dictionary and research definitions of engagement point out some of the missing aspects that lead to a lack of enthusiasm, alienation, and withdrawal by some students. The word "commitment" is most often used in *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11<sup>th</sup> ed.)* to describe engagement. Being actively committed, involved, or a participant is how the *American Heritage College Dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)* defines "engagement." This behavioral engagement component is based on participation. Some researchers use the term social engagement in place of behavioral engagement. The *New Oxford American Dictionary (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* says "to engage" is "to attract" or "to involve." These emotional engagement terms create incentive to work and a commitment to an institution, per Fredricks et al. (2004, Spring). Cognitive engagement is a deeper commitment to work on complex and difficult activities as a means to profit from the academic experience.

The International Center for Leadership in Education uses the word “domain” instead of “engagement” to describe the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of student engagement. Their description and definition is very similar to that of the Check & Connect Student Engagement illustration above. Each represents complementary views of student engagement. The International Center for Leadership in Education separates student engagement into three domains: the cognitive domain, consisting of beliefs and values; the emotional domain, consisting of motivation and feelings; and, the behavior domain, consisting of habits and skills.

The International Center for Leadership in Education developed a learning and teaching approach to cultivating an engagement-based culture. The approach encompasses six objectives leading to professional staff development. The foundation of the approach begins in the emotional domain by cultivating student/teacher relationships to motivate students. Levels two and three work to change the behaviors of teachers whereby they develop new habits and strategies that will enhance their student engagement skills. The fourth element is in the cognitive domain whereby teachers confront their responsibility to create an enjoying environment for students. According to Jones (2008), “It is primarily the teacher’s responsibility to engage students as opposed to the teacher expecting students to come to class naturally and automatically engaged” (p. 1). Level five creates a culture of student engagement, which provides a rigorous and relevant education program. And, again, the sixth objective involves continuous improvement through ongoing staff development to maintain an effective culture of engagement. According to Kuh (2009, p. 5):

The engagement premise is straightforward and easily understood: the more students study a subject, the more they know about it, and the more students

practice and get feedback from faculty and staff members on their writing and collaborative problems solving, the deeper they come to understand what they are learning and the more adept they become at managing complexity, tolerating ambiguity, and working with people from different background or with different views.

According to Fredricks et al. (2004) student engagement “is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement, and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure” (p. 87).

Developing relationships and networks in the on-campus classroom setting is typical when students are interacting in close contact. Sull (2013) said that student engagement is the most important component in developing an exciting and productive class. Participation and satisfaction depend on teaching tools to keep students enthusiastically involved in the course. Chapman (2003) noted that with the emphasis on achievement, ways of gaining knowledge in the learning environment have become of great concern. She said several studies indicate that affective behaviors can play a significant role in increasing learning, especially through student engagement. Affective behaviors can be directed to produce positive emotions such as curiosity and enthusiasm in academic interests. Students engaged in learning activities are intensely involved emotionally and behaviorally, according to Chapman (2003). She said they challenge themselves to do their best, and become intensely committed learners (Chapman, 2003).

The student's psychological and behavioral investment through his or her social relationships (building social capital) enhances the student's likelihood to become more engaged and committed to the coursework. There is an association between supporting and caring friendship and academic engagement. According to Juvonen et al. (2012), the

association likely operates both ways: stable and supportive friends encourage engagement; academically engaged students seek students with good grades with whom they can study. The above guidelines can be useful means for instructors and administrators to develop a climate that encourages student engagement.

### **Connections of Social Capital to Student Engagement and Social Relations**

Social capital covers a wide range of social resources with a continually changing balance. It is a resource that can be earned, spent, saved, or wasted. Social capital can be positive or negative, opening or closing doors to opportunities to achieve a goal (for example, academic success or knowledge acquisition in the learning community or field of education). As students become involved in more student engagement activities, they develop more social capital. In a 2003 article, Slavin, Hurley, and Chamberlain contended that cooperative learning activities increase student and group relations, positive student motivation, increased social activity, and an improved attitude toward school, according to Wentzel (2009). The cumulative effect of positive relationships in school settings is a stronger sense of community and school belongingness by the student (Wentzel, 2009). On the other hand, as students become more involved in more social capital functions, they are becoming more engaged in the learning community through relationship and network building. Quoting Hunter, Morrow, and Szreter from “Disadvantages, Downsides of Social Capital, Claridge (2004b), has written, “Every feature of social structure can be social capital in the sense that it produces desired outcomes, but also can be a liability in the sense that it produces unwanted results” (p. 1).

The role of forming positive relationships can help motivate student energies to areas of self-interest and self-discovery. Maehr and Meyer have claimed that motivation

is a psychological process in which one explores the “direction, intensity, and quality of one’s energies,” in order to answer the question, “why am I doing this for a certain behavior?” (Qtd. in Appleton et al., 2008, p. 379). While motivation spurs interest and focuses energy, engagement is described by Russel, Ainley, and Frydenberg “as ‘energy in action,’ the connection between person and activity” (Qtd. in Appleton et al., 2008, p. 379). In agreement, Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, and Barch have claimed, “Engagement reflects a person’s active involvement in a task or activity” (Qtd. in Appleton et al., 2008, p. 379). Motivation is necessary but not the driver of engagement. To be engaged, one must be actively connected and committed to the learning task (Ainley, 2012). The foundation of engagement is interest. According to Ainley (2012), Dewey stated that the basis of interest is the state of being absorbed and engaged in an activity based on its recognized value.

Student and instructor interaction is important and necessary, but must also be considered in terms of quality, according to Dillon and Greene (2003). Quality of the communications is important, as “students may interpret a high level of feedback as negative feedback when in reality a teacher is merely posing questions to stimulate student thinking,” according to Dillon and Greene (2003, p. 241). Students should not only understand the content in a learning interaction, but should also better understand themselves, according to Dillon and Greene (2003). Dillon and Greene (2003) said that students should reflect on their level of understanding and why they may have had difficulties with certain issues in the problem. While they feel that a lack of skills can be overcome and learning approaches can be developed, Dillon and Greene (2003) stressed focusing on learner approaches rather than student learning traits. They go on to say that



instruction should not be changed to meet student preferences, but rather that learning approaches should be changed to meet the rigors of the instruction.

Albert Bandura said that rapid changes in informational, social, and technological developments place a premium on self-efficacy (Koch, 2009). “Unless people believe they can produce desired results and forestall detrimental ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties” (Koch, 2009, p. 5). The focus shift is due to “recent advances in communications technology and developments in social learning theory” (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2003, p. 114). Koch (2009) said that social learning environments and theories change with new advancements in technology. Tasks in which we have a level of confidence in ability, or high self-efficacy, are approached with more enthusiasm and greater effort. Koch (2009) quotes Bowers-Campbell, “Self-efficacy appears at the top of the motivational hierarchy; that is, without belief in one’s ability to succeed, there will be little chance for learning or achievement” (p. 5). When we doubt our ability, Dillon and Greene (2003) said, self-efficacy theory tells us that we often either avoid a situation, or justify its lack of importance. Effective social capital building and use through engagement and relationship building gives students a stronger sense of belonging and being committed to school and learning. Dewey “described education as a collaborative reconstruction of experience,” according to Garrison et al. (2003, p. 115). Jean Piaget theorizes that knowledge is not simply imparted from teacher to student, but rather students construct new ideas when they are engaged in an activity that they can discuss and share with others (Koch, 2009).

Low success rates in higher education could likely be improved through academic reforms. But Karp (2011) said the reason for these low rates might be due to unfulfilled

nonacademic student needs. Combining academic programs with nonacademic support can result in a symbiotic relationship in which academic outcomes improve through more social involvement in the course. Social interactions can help students gain informational and emotional support that enhances their sense of belonging. Karp (2011) reviewed theories of student persistence and program evaluation literature to identify nonacademic supports that may improve academic outcomes.

Social capital is a social resource that can be developed and used in exchange for access to groups and relationships that can provide influence and support. Student engagement and relationship building increases a student's social capital as well as the attributes associated with the functions of these two activities. Students become more invested in learning and committed to the course through student engagement. The students gain a sense of belonging to the course and a feeling of encouragement and being "cared for" through social relationship building. Lalas and Valle (2007) presented a concept attributable to Valenzuela known as the "politics of caring" to stress the need for caring and trust in a positive learning environment. The concept emphasizes the need for mutual and reciprocal respect between student and teacher. According to Lalas and Valle (2007), Valenzuela "explained that students and teachers need to develop positive feelings of trust and nurture meaningful relationships in order to enhance their learning and academic success" (p. 77). McNulty and Quaglia (2014) said that students respond to high expectations when believing that the encouragement and care demonstrated by the staff is genuine. Students in positive relationships with fellow students "also tend to be more engaged in and even to excel at academic tasks than those who experience problems with peers" (Wentzel, 2009, p. 531). Peer relationships can provide students with

information on goals and behavior. According to Wentzel (2009), peer relationships proved “the affective support and approval to motivate the adoption of these goals and standards, and opportunities to develop the requisite skills to achieve them” (p. 535).

## Chapter Three Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the methodology used in the study. It also describes the research objectives of the study. The research examined the influence of social capital through social relations on the influence of student engagement. A narrative inquiry method was used to elicit the voices of participants as a way for them to openly convey their life experiences and perceptions. This section divides and explains the constituent parts of the methodology, which include information on the research design, population and sample, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations. The chapter ends with a summary of the methodology and analysis of the collected data.

### Research Design

The researcher chose the qualitative approach of narrative inquiry. A qualitative approach was more appropriate than a quantitative approach because it allowed participants the opportunity to express in depth the reality of their experiences. According to Chase (2011), the narrative inquiry is a particular type of qualitative research that allows researchers to emphasize the life stories of the participants. *Narrario* in Latin means narrative or story. *Narrare* is the Latin verb for narrate, or to tell. According to Klenke (2008), “A narrative is a story that tells a sequence of events that is significant for the narrator or his or her audience” (p. 242). The narrative inquiry research method was used because it invites and encourages individuals to openly narrate their stories. Quantitative approaches tend to take a subject-object approach, whereas the qualitative approach takes a subject-subject approach in seeking understanding of the

individual (Smith, 1983). Connelly and Clandinin (2005) cited Mishler from 1986, "In most narrative inquiry work focused on telling whether the interest is on stories told or on interpretations and meanings generated, the primary working methodology is the interview" (p. 479).

### **Narrative Inquiry**

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative inquiry is both phenomenon and method. "The two narratives of participant and researcher become, in part, a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through inquiry" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 5). In Ball and Freedman (2004, p. 204), Bakhtin said:

There can be neither a first nor a last meaning: [anything that can be understood] always exists among other meanings as a link in the chain of meaning, which in totality is the only thing that can be real. In historical life this chain continues infinitely, and therefore each individual link in it is renewed again and again, as though it were being reborn.

Telling one's story gives an individual a voice, which allows one to participate in the community. Through voice, the individual attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Through voice, the individual communicates meaning to others, and at the same time gains meaning through the expression of the experience. The collaborative process between the researcher and the interviewee forms a relationship of understanding each other through a social process of exchanging and sharing their voices in a shared story of narrative inquiry and storytelling.

One theory in education research says that people are storytelling organisms. People lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives. The story is a mental construction of an individual's experience. The storyteller has acquired funds of knowledge through lived experiences. Each person has an "authentic voice" and unique perspectives because

of “interconnections or networks of students’ identities, schools, families, neighborhoods, communities, and overall lived experiences that they have acquired through life” (Lalas & Valle, 2007, p. 77). The narrative researcher listens to the storytellers and describes their lived experiences. The researcher then retells and writes narratives of these collected stories.

According to Chase (2005), a central question for narrative researchers is “which voice or voices” they should use as they “interpret and represent the voices of those they study” (p. 652). The word “voice” draws attention to the what, how, and where that gives particularity to the narrator’s voice (Chase, 2005). Contemporary narrative inquiry has five analytic lenses. First, the narrative is a retrospective perspective of past experiences. Second, the researcher listens to the what, who, and where (particularity) of the narrator’s voice. Then, the researcher considers the narrator’s stories in the context of her socialized and cultural norms, experiences, and historical location. Fourth, the researcher considers the narrator’s story in the context of its setting, audience, and purpose. Fifth, the researcher views herself/himself in a narrator role as she or he interprets and presents ideas about the narrative (Chase, 2005).

As the narrator has listened to the voices of others, they have developed their own voice. The researcher listened to the voices through the first four lenses above. These same four lenses now apply to their own voice, or re-story. This story-of-the-story has its’ own past and particularity, told as a new narrator with social, cultural, and experiential distinctions. The researcher as narrator will likely tell the re-story to a different audience for a different purpose (Chase, 2005).

## **Population and Sample**

Three considerations are used for purposeful sampling strategies, per Creswell (2012). Considerations include characteristics of participants in the sample, the types of sampling, and sample size. “A sample in a research study is the group on which information is obtained. The larger group to which one hopes to apply the results is called the population,” according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006, p. 92). The population in this study consisted of students, teachers, administrators, community members, and parents involved with the parents advisory groups in high schools in Southern California.

### **Parent Advisory Group**

The parent advisory group of interest in this study was formed in order to confront issues of low academic performance of Black high school students. Initially, a teacher advisor to the on-campus Black Student Union (BSU) reached out to concerned fathers of Black students to form a coalition of fathers to mentor, inform, and motivate the students. Eleven years later, the parent advisory group consisted of six board members and a voluntary grassroots coalition of parents, teachers, school administrators, and community leaders. The advisory group conducted parent and student information sessions, student grade checks and interventions, and tutoring/mentoring workshops. The group also sponsored a variety of field trips and guest speakers from the community.

### **The Setting**

The high school of primary interest in the study was located in Southern California, and was one of several high schools in its district. Both the school district and the high school had diverse student race/ethnicity representations. The approximate percentages for the school and the district are in the table below. Differences in student

populations were found mainly in the Hispanic or Latino and White race/ethnicity demographic. A lower percentage of Hispanic or Latino students attended the high school than the percentage attending district schools, on average. On the other hand, a nearly similar higher percentage of White students attended the high school than the district schools, on average.

Table 1:

*Students by Race/Ethnicity Attending High School of Interest and District High School*

Race/Ethnicity	School %	District %
Hispanic or Latino	35	50
White	47	30
Asian	8	8
Black or African American	7	6
Filipino	2	3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, American Indian or Alaska Native, or other	1	35

*Note.* Above information is from the California Department of Education (2012–2013), Ed-Data Website. (percentages approximate)

The school district was located in a predominantly residential suburban community. Many in the community commuted to jobs in metropolitan areas located between 10 and 25 miles away. The area was initially a bedroom community with much lower home and rental prices than in Orange County and Los Angeles County. The community had grown rapidly over the previous 25 years, and although there had been substantial commercial and industrial growth, many residents needed to travel outside the community to their jobs. The high school was located in a middle-to-upper-middle income class neighborhood. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008) *American Fact Finder*, based on a 5-year estimate (2008–2012), the mean and median household incomes in the neighborhood of the high school, by zip code, was substantially higher



than the average mean and median household incomes for the whole city in which the high school was located. Further, greater percentages of households had higher incomes in the neighborhood of the high school than did the average percentages for the city in which the high school was located, as a whole.

Table 2:

*Median and Mean Household Incomes and Percentages for the High School (by zip code) and the City*

	High School (by zip code)	City in which High School is located
Median household income (dollars)	\$97,327	\$78,982
Mean household income (dollars)	\$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

### **Types of Sampling**

Purposeful and convenience sampling was used in order to invite participants involved with the high school, and also possibly associated with the operations of the parent advisory group. The study has a practical significance because the district will use the data from this study.

### **Sample Size**

Sample sizes were based on participants available for the study. The samples of administrators, teachers, students, community members, and parents involved with the specific parent advisory group of concern in the study consisted of a limited number of available participants. Four students attending the high school, but not involved with the parent advisory group, were readily available for interview, and were used as a convenience sample to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the high school.

## **Participants**

Five groups of participants were invited to participate in the study consisting of administrators, teachers, students, community members, and parents. Three administrators at the district level were interviewed, two teachers at the high school site, six students at the high school site, two community members, and two parents involved in the parent advisory group. The participants were all from the same school district. Most participants were invited to participate based on meeting certain criteria including involvement with the high school and the parent advisory group. Four students not involved in the parent advisory group were invited to participate in the study. All participants were requested or invited to participate strictly on a voluntary basis. The purpose of the study was explained to each participant, and a consent form was signed by each of the participants. The consent forms made clear that their participation was completely voluntary and that they had the right to leave the study at any time.

Table 3:

*Characteristics of the Participants\**

<b>P</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>SES</b>	<b>ED</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>AR</b>
1	No	White	Upper	11th grade	Student	Female	3 <sup>s</sup>	15–20
2	No	White	Upper	11th grade	Student	Male	3 <sup>s</sup>	15–20
3	No	Hispanic	Upper Middle	12th grade	Student	Female	4 <sup>s</sup>	15–20
4	No	Hispanic	Upper Middle	12th grade	Student	Male	4 <sup>s</sup>	15–20
5	No	Black	Upper Middle	12th grade	Student	Female	4 <sup>s</sup>	15–20
6	No	Black	Upper	12th grade	Student	Female	4 <sup>s</sup>	15–20
7	No	East Indian	Upper	Masters	Community Member	Female	15 <sup>s</sup>	21–35
8	Yes	Black	Upper Middle	Masters	Teacher	Male	13 <sup>s</sup>	36–50
9	Yes	Black	Upper	BA	Parent-Regional Manager Edison	Male	7 <sup>p</sup>	51+
10	No	Black	Upper	Masters	Administration	Male	6 <sup>s</sup>	51+
11	No	Black	Upper Middle	Masters	Teacher	Male	8 <sup>s</sup>	51+
12	No	Black	Upper	Masters	Administrator	Female	9 <sup>s</sup>	51+
13	No	White	Upper	Masters	Assistant to the Superintendent	Female	27 <sup>d</sup>	51+
14	Yes	Black	Upper Middle	AA	Community Member - Retired Firefighter/ Paramedic	Male	10 <sup>p</sup>	51+
15	Yes	Black	Upper	BS	Parent - International Director - Xerox	Male	7 <sup>p</sup>	51+

\*P = participants; M = member of parent advisory group; E = ethnicity; SES = socioeconomic status; ED = educational level; P = profession; G = gender; Y = years associated with school, parent advisory group, or the district; AR = age range)

*Note.*Superscripts for column Y show breakdown for number of years: 1) associated with school = s; 2) associated with the parental advisory group = p; 3) associated with the district = d.

## **Instrumentation**

Open-ended questions used in the thematic study were developed initially in the Philippines in 2011. The questions were developed by the doctoral advisor, a professor from the University of Redlands, and a focus group of 10 doctoral students from the University of the Philippines. The open-ended questions were designed to elicit responses through narrative inquiry on the influences that social and cultural capital, social class, funds of knowledge, and language have on school practices and student engagement in an educational setting. The questions were field tested and validated in the Philippines on more than 100 participant interviewees in more than five schools. In 2012, the findings of the study were presented by doctoral students and faculty from the University of the Philippines at the International Conference on Teacher Education.

Following the initial research in the Philippines, several doctoral students at the University of Redlands used the instruments on their own thematic dissertation research. Members of the group collected and shared the literature, and developed broad-based interview questions designed to find answers to the research questions. The influence of the funds of knowledge as one of the thematic dissertations was presented at the American Research Education Association in 2012. These doctoral students used the same questions, with some variations to address their specific emphasis within the study (i.e., social and cultural capital, social class, funds of knowledge, and student engagement). Open-ended questions are useful in qualitative research when using a narrative inquiry method in that the interviewee is able to narrate the story of his or her life experiences and perspectives. The questions and responses were voice recorded during the interviews, with the voice recordings subsequently transcribed. A program

known as NVivo 10 was used to aid in coding the emergent themes and patterns from the interviews. The data from the interviews of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members were triangulated as a means to validate the information in the study. Purposeful sampling consists of three considerations: “Whom to select as participants (or sites) for the study, the specific type of sampling strategy, and the size of the sample to be studied” (Creswell, 2012, p. 155). Purposeful sampling was used to choose participants who specifically met the criteria and scope of the study (Creswell, 2012). The number of participants available for sampling was small because of the limited number of people associated with the parent advisory group.

The interviewees in the study were purposely selected because of their connection to the school, and to the parent advisory group. Data concerning the insights and perspectives on the same interview questions by the selected participants were compared through triangulation to validate the information contained in the study. The themes and results of the study were reviewed by the researcher and other doctoral students, dissertation committee advisors, and the dissertation committee chair. The following main questions along with follow-up questions were used as guidelines in face-to-face interviews with the interviewees. Administrators, teachers, and community members were asked questions one through seven. Parents and students were not only asked questions one through seven, but also questions eight through 10. Following are the questions that were used to interview the participants in the study.

1. Tell me about your school and what it offers
  - a. What is the role of the parental advisory group in this?
2. Tell me about the type of learning that is happening in this school.

- a. What is the role of the parental 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. What is the role of the parental advisory group in this?
4. Share some traditions (cultural practices) and activities that you do in school and any effects on children?
  - a. What is the role of the parental advisory group in this?
5. Name some challenges that the school faces.
  - a. What is the role of the parental 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 parental 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 is the role of the parental and 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 role of parental advisory group in this?
9. Parents: When your child is not at school what do you do together? What do you talk about?

- a. What is the role of parental advisory group in this?
10. Students: What do you do outside of school? What do you talk about?
- a. What is the role of the parental advisory group in this?

Please share anything else that you would like to about the school. About the parental advisory group?

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection for 15 semistructured conversational interviews varied in length from approximately 40 minutes to 90 minutes. The interviews were audio taped in several different locations. Three administrators, two teachers, six students, two parents, and two community members were invited to participate in the study. The high school of interest in the study was located in an upper middle class neighborhood. The two teachers and the six high school students attended the high school. The three administrators worked at the district level. The parents and community members were from the area and were involved with activities at the high school.

Office and conference rooms at the high school were used to interview six students and one teacher. Three administrators, one teacher, and two parents, and two community members were interviewed at the home of one of the administrators. One participant was interviewed on the patio of a small restaurant. Participants were greeted and briefed on the interview procedures. The informed consent forms were explained in full before giving them to the participants for their signature. An audio-recording device (i.e., iPad, voice recorder) was used to record the voices of the participants. Generally, two voice recording devices were used to safeguard against loss of data due to technical or human failings. Open-ended interview questions were used so that the participants

were free to fully express themselves. Field notes were taken to document “what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 111). An inter-rater checked for consistency of the interviewer (as a rater). The interview and field note data were safeguarded for the privacy of each of the participants. The interviews were transcribed by a hired outside transcriber.

### **Role of the Researcher**

It is the role of the researcher to treat the interviewee as a narrator (you're not just asking questions for direct answers); thus, certain issues must be taken into consideration, such as which voice the researcher should use as he or she interprets and represents the voice of the narrator(s)—what they are communicating, how they are communicating it, and their social position (what makes the narrator's voice [story] particular in comparison to others with similar experiences. By "giving a voice" to the narrator, the researcher has also given her/himself a voice. Septum Clark said that the more she listened and learned of other's experiences, the more she “earned the right to speak up and introduce some new ideas worth hearing” (Qtd. in Reskill & Brookfield, 2009, p. 79). Bakhtin said the most effective learning comes through social interactions filled with tension and conflict, and that struggles in discourse are necessary to develop new understandings (In Ball & Freedman, 2004). Quoting a participant, “When I'm talking, you know, someone else brings up a point and I'm like well wait a second, you know, and then I change my mind about something” (Ball & Freedman, 2004, p. 152).



## **Background of the Researcher**

I co-created and co-instruct an online real estate appraisal course known as *Market Analysis & Highest and Best Use* at Saddleback Community College. The other co-instructor and I have sought to provide online students with an applicable, inclusive, quality course that meets their needs and expectations. We continually attempt to improve the course by helping students to be more interactive and engaged through the use of discussion boards and an open question-and-answer forum. We have had success with more interactive engagement by having students introduce them and exchange personal and business information. Many of these social interactions have been reported to have led to long-term relationships that benefit both parties.

The research in the present study investigated the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement in a high school setting. Student outcomes to close the achievement gap, improve graduation rates, and strive for higher academic performance for all students are social justice issues, each of which may be improved upon through more student engagement. I conducted this dissertation research to complete the requirements for a doctorate in education with an emphasis in social/educational justice (Ed.D.) from the University of Redlands. I feel that the local community and society in general could benefit from a better understanding of the influence that social relations building could have on student engagement.

## **Data Analysis**

A narrative inquiry is used to convey one's experience. It is through voice that an individual structures a "relationship to the meaning of her/his experience and hence, to language, and the individual's relationship to the other, since understanding is a social

process” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4). The participant in a narrative inquiry becomes more self-aware and understanding of her educational options and opportunities. The interviewer, as initial leader, becomes a participant in the process of growth in awareness and understanding. Participants were asked open-ended questions in approximate one-hour interviews. The interviews were transcribed, and the data from the "voices" of the participants were organized, analyzed, and interpreted to make final recommendations. Individual interviews were conducted, in which open-ended questions were asked of the interviewees. Research questions were determined and developed in conjunction with the best fit to the narrative research.

Individuals were interviewed based on their life experiences in relation to the area of research. Their experiences through their authentic voices were collected, recorded, and transcribed. The data from the transcriptions were then organized and analyzed using the program NVivo 10 to aid in finding and interpreting emergent patterns and common themes. Initial nodes and categories were discussed and created by a team of three researchers. The interviews were reviewed several times to identify the patterns and common themes emerging from the insights and perspectives of the participant interviews. Coding was validated by two other researchers in addition to the primary researcher, ensuring that there was a high degree of confidence and reliability for the three transcripts that were coded separately. The researchers reached consensus on codes for 12 of the 15 interviews, or 80% of participant recorded transcripts.

As a means to provide corroborating evidence, the researcher triangulated the data from the multiple interviews of the administrators, teachers, community members, students, and parents. “When qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code

or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity to their findings,” per Creswell (2012, p. 251). By listening to the authentic voices of each participant, in-depth quality data were made available, which yielded a chorus of patterns and themes that were analyzed to find answers to the research questions. “When qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity to their findings,” according to Creswell (2012, p. 251). The researcher then retold the stories of the interviewees in terms of the collection of perceptions and experiences in order to make sense of the emergent patterns and themes.

### **Limitations on Data Collection**

The small sample size in this study was a limitation typically found in qualitative research. Qualitative research seeks quality data through in-depth questions and responses. Another limitation was that all data gathered focuses on one school from one school district. The results therefore may not fit the demographic and circumstantial differences of other schools, and other school districts. Another limitation was the use of convenience sampling in the process of inviting participants into the study. Another limitation was that the participants were not randomly selected, and may therefore reflect biases of the researcher who invited them into the study. Another limitation was that the particular group in the study may have had cluster biases or collective group biases. These limitations may affect the generalizability of the study to other high school parent advisory groups.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to examine the insights of administrators, teachers, parents, and students concerning the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement in the educational setting. The research in this study will lead to a better understanding of the role that building social relations has on student engagement by investigating the data through Bourdieu's conceptual framework of social capital. The narrative inquiry methodology used in this study enabled the researcher to conduct open interviews in which the voices of the interviewee participants could freely be expressed. The data from these interviews were collected and analyzed to discover commonality in the experiences and perceptions of the participants, which will enable the researcher to answer the research questions.

## Chapter Four Results

Chapter Four presents the results of the qualitative research in the study. The results of the research include narrative interviews that reflect the voices of three administrators, two teachers, six students, two parents, and two community members who participated in the study. The “authentic voices” of the participants were gathered in order to hear the accounts of their perceptions and observations on the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement for the three subcategories of social capital (group memberships, networks and social connections, and personal relationships). Emergent themes from the authentic voices of the participants were categorized and subcategorized using the software program known as NVivo 10. This chapter looks at the organization of the data and analysis of the emergent themes for each of the three subcategories of social capital.

### **Data Organization for Analysis**

The interviews were converted to text-based data, and then imported and coded using NVivo 10. NVivo 10 uses the work nodes to represent labeled codes. The nodes were initially established by viewing the data through the lens of the conceptual framework in Chapter One. The researcher listened for references in the voices of the participants that related to Bourdieu’s concept of social capital. The initial nodes based on the participants’ voices included, among other references, empowerment, accountability, community involvement, social connections, caring, and support. Of the over 60 initial nodes, many of the references were used and categorized into the general themes under the concept of social capital.

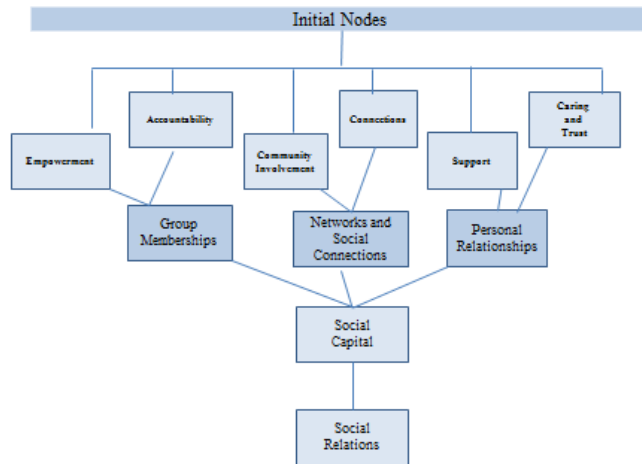


Figure 4. Development of themes.

In the above figure, social capital is divided into three general subcategories (*Group Membership, Networks and Social Connections, and Personal Relationships*) based on Bourdieu’s definition of social capital. From these subcategories, six main categorical themes emerged: *empowerment, accountability, community involvement, social connections, support, and caring and trust*. The emergent themes from the subcategory of Group Memberships were empowerment and accountability. The emergent themes from the subcategory of Networks and Social Connections were community involvement and social connections. The emergent themes from the subcategory of Personal Relationships were support and caring and trust.

### **Group Memberships**

Table 4 gives example of Influences of Group Membership on Student Engagement.

Table 4:

*Social Capital – Group Membership*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Empowerment	Participant 13 said, “They feel empowered to go to school. Because a lot of times it’s that empowerment feeling, feel welcome.”	Affective Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel better about school because they know that they are connected and belong to a group they can count on</li> </ul>
Accountability	Participant 13 said, “They brought lunch to them. And then within their lunch sessions, what I like to call their disguised learning they brought in speakers. Started to motivate the kids. Talked to the kids about motivating themselves. Being self-starters themselves.”	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is encouraged to take responsibility for his or her own success in school and in life</li> <li>• Importance of learning and success in school</li> </ul>
Empowerment	Participant 9 said, “The study groups are significant because what we do are like a community village type deal, where the smart one help the ones in need.”	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students participate in shared experience of teaching and the value of learning</li> </ul>
Accountability	Participant 9 said parent engagement is necessary so that someone is familiar with the school and has access to the school district. He said there is a need for parents committed to continue the work that the parent advisory committee is doing.	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student realizes perceived value of learning and success in school due to parental involvement</li> </ul> Affective Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student has a stronger connection to school due to parental participation and involvement</li> </ul>

*Table 4, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Empowerment	Participant 14 said, “But being what we are and being as involved as we are the kids and many are our kids that slip through the cracks we can catch them early hopefully, and get them on the right track. And we do whatever we need to do to get them caught up to speed so that they can at least graduate. And we tell them . . . oh this is about teachers . . . the teachers just seem to more receptive to us.”	<p>Cognitive Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of learning and success in school</li> </ul> <p>Academic Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring to complete assignments</li> <li>• Mentoring to improve grades and increase participation in class</li> <li>• Monitoring to assure continued improvement in students’ academic studies</li> </ul>
Empowerment	Participant 9 said they develop relationships with them. That’s why the banquet is so important to them. They use it as another motivational piece, and just building relationship with them.	<p>Affective Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student develops a sense of belonging</li> <li>• School connectedness</li> <li>• Identification with school</li> </ul>

Group memberships are important because they provide a means to form companionships or associations with like-minded people in a group setting. Participants in this study were members of a group or were commenting on social relations activities in a particular group, such as the parent advisory group.

Met with caution from some teachers in the beginning, the parent advisory group has built social capital through its social relations with the teachers. Participant 14 reported:



But being what we are and being as involved as we are the kids and many are our kids that slip through the cracks we can catch them early hopefully, and get them on the right track. And we do whatever we need to do to get them caught up to speed so that they can at least graduate. And we tell them . . . oh this is about teachers . . . the teachers just seem to more receptive to us.

The parent advisory group sought more involvement from parents. Parent engagement on a personal relationship level is effective in leading to more student engagement. The parent advisory group strove to involve parents to be accountable for the engagement and activities of their children and the school. Participant 9 said parent engagement is necessary for replication of the parent advisory as it is. But there must also be someone on the inside familiar with the school who has access to the school district. He said, there is a need for parents committed to continue the work that the parent advisory committee is doing.

It did sound as though the parent advisory group at the high school of interest may continue their work for some time, as participant 9 said, “We will continue until we die, or until somebody says, you know, I’ve had enough.” It is this type of commitment and dedication to which students respond, making them feel cared for and supported. Participant 9 said the main focus of the parent advisory group is on the students and the time they are spending in high school. He said every dollar goes to the students. Participant 9 spoke about the trusting relationships he and his fellow members in the parent advisory group have with each other. He said that they had a period of new members joining for short periods, and then leaving. At the time of this study, there were six members in the parents advisory group. One person who had recently joined the group was serving a one-year internship. At the end of one year, the group will vote to

decide whether he met their commitment standard in order to become a full member of the board.

An administrator (Participant 10) said that the parental advisory group made such an impression on a nationally recognized private philanthropic association that the high school of interest was the first school of the several schools in their district to be interviewed and scrutinized for eligibility to compete for a national prize. The school district was only one of four school districts in the country chosen to compete for the national prize. The philanthropic association had become aware of the academic success attributable to the men in the parent advisory group, and during interviews at the high school of interest spent much time with the men in the parent advisory group.

The parent advisory group agreed that parents need to be accountable for their child's education, which they say empowers the parent. Participant 8 said:

It empowers us, and our school district. It's our responsibility. I don't want to go to the school district and say, fund me a bus please, fund me this or that. We got it. We can do this. It empowers the parent. It empowers us, and our school district.

Members of the parent advisory group had arrived at a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Accountability was high on their list, both for the student's benefit and to maintain their own viability and autonomy as a group. The group proactively sought to take on institutional problems that had become accepted parts of the school climate. For example, one parent in the parent advisory group identified that a software program could solve the counselor's lack-of-time problem. Commenting on what he saw as a lack of accountability, Participant 9 asked:

How is it that a counselor with their student load, has no idea who's failing, or a student finds out he's failing his senior year and he's not going to graduate. What is that? And when you try to bring it to their attention, they say they don't have time. Keystrokes! There's software for that!

The parent advisory group stressed the sense of responsibility they felt to the students and to each other as members of the group. Participant 9, a member of the group said that the main focus of the parent advisory group is on the students and the time they are spending in high school. He said every dollar goes to the students. Participant 9 spoke about the trusting relationships he and his fellow members in the parent advisory group have with each other.

One of the parents in the parent advisory group (Participant 9) discussed the importance of providing motivational leadership that stresses students' awareness of the urgency for them to do well in school. The parent advisory group initially aimed to provide guidance and motivation to African American children who were students at the high school. As African American fathers, some with their own children at the school, they wanted to be role models and mentors to these students. As the parent advisory group's African American children attained academic goals based on achievement evidence, they subsequently expanded the program to all students at the school in need of tutoring and mentoring. Participant 15 in the parent advisory group stated, "We're helping everybody, we're not just focused on the low achievers, we're not only recognizing and rewarding the high achievers. We're trying to help everyone."

An administrator, Participant 10, told of the mentoring climate at the school among teachers and staff who participate in the Adopt 5 students for mentoring program. The administrator led by adopting and mentoring 10, and his secretary adopted two. The parents said that many of the kids at school purposely "dumb down" to fit in. Nobody wanted to be seen as smart, a cultural perception that took 3 years to change, according to one of the parents in the advisory group.

One of the administrators (Participant 10) talked about how some students were taking a leadership role in what is commonly known as the community village. In this case, the administrator, who was a principal of the school at one time, related that the tutoring section on Tuesday evenings was student led, most times by the president of the Black Student Union (BSU). It is empowering for students to take charge of this weekly tutorial. It is also relationship building among the students. It builds personal relationships that can become meaningful and a resourceful for reciprocal present or future assistance. The community village teaches the students the value not only of their own learning, but also in helping others learn. Realizing the value of learning and of success in school leads to observable academic and behavioral engagement in which students are more serious about class activities and homework assignments. “The study groups are significant because what we do are like a community village type deal, where the smart ones help the ones in need,” a parent (Participant 10) in the advisory group said. Students often have different strengths in the classes they take. One student helps with French while another is a wiz at math. The community village gives students a forum in which to share or trade on their strengths and weakness.

In the process, students become engaged in teaching and learning activities. They become more prepared for classroom activities and homework completion. These students have a bond that gives them a sense of belonging to a group that shares values of learning and achievement. As mentioned earlier, the parents advisory group began to share motivational leadership and mentoring roles, which they initiated. The engagement of students in the tutorial class led to observable academic and behavioral engagement in which students were more serious about class activities and homework assignments.

As can be seen, relationships between the students and advisory group members are important. But, as advisory group members also stated, good relations among members of the group is important to their internal efficacy. Members also stressed the importance of empowering parents to assist in their students' academic achievement. The parents advisory group further stressed the importance of developing social capital through social relations not only with staff and administration at the school and district levels, but also with political and business members of the community. Next we look at social relations involving the influence of networks and social connections in the community on student engagement. In the last section of this chapter, we will look at the influence of personal relationships on student engagement. Student engagement can be influenced by relations at all levels (group memberships, networks and social connections, and personal relationships). According to an administrator (Participant 10), who was interviewed in this study: "It's relationships! It's relationships! I'm telling you. It's beautiful! It's beautiful!"

### **Networks and Social Connections**

Table 5 below shows example of influences of networks and social connections on student engagement.

Table 5:

*Social Capital – Networks and Social Connections*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Community Involvement and Connections	Participant 8 explained that a state senator made a phone call to congratulate the kids. The mayor, principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents, and a school board member attended an awards banquet.	Cognitive and Affective Engagements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students perceive importance of education and achievement in the community</li> <li>• Students feel more connected to community and school</li> </ul>
Social Connections	Participant 9 stated, “Make it so those who have a problem with it, tell them I said, ‘tough.’ You’re going to allow this group to pull out of class, find out the problem and let these students know that they are cared about, that they are being watched and are not going to be allowed to walk around on campus in a vacuum and nobody check on them. So you have support from the top. Your superintendent and your administration have to see that there is a need, and that – that this thing works. They have to support it.”	Academic Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students knew that someone from the parents advisory group would follow up with them if they did not improve their grades</li> <li>• Grades did improve for students under the tutelage of the parents advisory group</li> </ul>

*Table 5, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
		•
Community Involvement	Participant 13 said that the community financially supported expansion of school facilities so that there would not be an overcrowding problem. “So I’m proud that we have a community that values its schools and they’re the reason why we have to make sure that our families feel welcome because we really benefit from their support.”	<p>Cognitive Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students perceive the value that the community places on their education</li> </ul> <p>Affective Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel identification and connectedness with the school through community involvement</li> </ul>
Social Connections	Participant 10 said, “We’ve got guest speakers in there that reinforce the importance of being a student, understanding what that means and what it can lead to. These kids, they don’t want to hear it from us all the time. But when they hear these guest speakers from a neutral person out in the community, it has more weight and it sticks.	<p>Cognitive Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students perceive relevance of schoolwork</li> <li>• Students often set personal goals based on their role models such as, the guest speakers</li> <li>• Student realize value of learning and success in school</li> </ul>

*Table 5, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Community Involvement	Participant 13 said that some of the small businesses in the area have rewarded students with free haircuts, pedicures, and food for certain levels of GPAs. Participant 9 said the incentives are effective.	<p>Cognitive Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students realize community perception of the value of learning and success in school</li> </ul>

		Affective Engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel connected to the school through participation and involvement of the community</li> </ul>
Social Connections	Participant 9 said that some parents were guest speakers who tell the kids you can be successful by working smart by listening and completing the work. The message from these role models is that hard work pays off.	Cognitive Engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students hear parents' perceptions of the value of critical learning skills and completion of (home)work and success in school</li> </ul>
		Affective Engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students identify with school and feel more connected through parental engagement</li> </ul>

Networks and social connections in this study were used to signify larger political or community resources. Networks and social connections can provide important resources for access to influential persons, information gathering, and public relations.

A number of small businesses in the area had contributed to the school. Some of the small businesses in the area had rewarded students with free haircuts, pedicures, and food for certain GPAs. Participant 9 said the incentives are effective. Students realize that “the world” outside of the high school environment acknowledges the importance of academic achievement.

A few of the participants mentioned that the community pulled together when one of its students was seriously injured during a football game. Concerning this incident:



“And so for months now the community has been reaching out and supporting the school,” according to Participant 3. Participant 13 talked about the sacrifices made by the community:

When school finance and funding wasn't coming to improve old schools, or build the new schools we needed, instead of just having to deal with overcrowding, or split sessions, or all those things that can happen, the community was willing to pay out of their own pockets to pay for these things to happen.

Guest speakers from the community made a connection that students aren't exposed to on a daily basis. According to one of the administrators (Participant 10), when guest speakers stressed the importance of being a student, it was especially relevant and authentic to the students because that message came from a neutral source outside the field of education. The administrator said it had a lasting impression likely because they represent an unknown world compared to the student's experience of attending high school. The guest speakers could impress on students the value that learning and successful achievement in school have on the likelihood of similar success in their future careers. The guest speakers were often role models whom students strove to emulate. Through these social connections, students often accepted that hard work in school is the means to the kinds of successes achieved by their guest speakers and mentors.

The result of forming these relationships raised student awareness that an adult cared enough to take time to encourage them to do better in life. It would seem that the care and camaraderie shown by the adults helped the students feel part of something that had a positive result for them. The success was contagious, and the students were more committed to engagement in their homework. The students became more committed to a personal goal of success based on the motivation and care received from the parents and speakers. They realized the value of success in school, which spurred the student to more

engagement in activities such as spending more time on a task and homework completion. Success breeds more success, so the saying goes. Successful completion of assignments leads to more student engagement. Attitudinal changes in the students lead to more participation in study activities.

Not only had guest speakers given encouragement, recognition, and support as community members, but also acknowledgement was received from principals, a state senator, and district officials who extended their congratulations. The community was involved in affairs relating to the school. Participant 13, an administrator, said that the parent advisory group planned to find a way to bring students on campus together into a learning situation under the guise of it being more like a social event. They planned the get-togethers at lunchtime, providing an opportunity for a good lunch and social interaction. Some of the high school kids were enticed to take advantage of having a good lunch in an air-conditioned area of the campus. Through their social connections, the parental advisory group brought in motivational speakers and began to encourage the students to become self-starters. There was noted improvement in students' completion of assignments and improvement of their grades. The administrator (Participant 13) said that it makes a big difference to kids when they know that there is a caring adult paying attention to them, and rooting them on to success.

One participant talked about the sacrifice of the community:

When school finance and funding wasn't coming to improve old schools, or build the new schools we needed, instead of just having to deal with overcrowding, or split sessions, or all those things that can happen, the community was willing to pay out of their own pockets to pay for these things to happen.

When school funding was down, the community became involved, “And so for months now the community has been reaching out and supporting the school,” according to one participant.

The high school of interest was not only supportive of its own students, but also caring enough to take on challenges of another school outside its neighborhood. The high school was innovative and tenacious in its approach to new challenges. In an effort to assist another school, the high school of interest invited students from an outside neighborhood to be tutored and mentored. Participant 10 said that they reshuffled teachers to remove teachers overwhelmed by having EL kids, and turned having EL kids into a privilege. “You want in, let us know. We’re going to talk to you, see if you’re a good fit for what we’re trying to do. And we’ve had the same teachers since,” the principal said to the teachers.

An administrator (Participant 10) told of requesting help from the parent advisory group to help EL students from another school by tutoring them on the high school campus of interest. After a poor showing on the high school campus of interest, the parent advisory committee transferred the program to that other school. The transfer resulted in a large turn-out of students to take EL classes. The kids thought it was great to see them in their neighborhood. Participant 10 said it’s a good connection. “We break bread together at least four times a year. We do a potluck and they bring these different foods from their culture, and it is good food too! But we just wanted to connect them to the campus.”

## Personal Relationships

Table 6 below shows example of influences of personal relationships on student engagement.

Table 6:

### *Social Capital – Personal Relationships*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Caring and Trust	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 time to follow up with these kids.”	Affective Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is aware that someone really wants them to succeed</li> <li>• Student knows they can count on this person if they need help</li> </ul>
Support	Participant 4 said, “Like if they have a good support system at home, parents or whoever is raising them. That will, that in my own family, my parents, my mom and dad are really supportive in what I do.”	Behavioral Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student feels security of supportive parents</li> </ul>

*Table 6, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
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Support	Participant 5 stated, “So, I grew up, yeah, you’re going to college. What do you mean? College is just the thing; it comes after high school. Like, that’s just it. So, yeah, my parents are supportive and they do encourage me. That’s just what they do.”	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student realized value of education</li> <li>• Student meets high expectations</li> </ul>
Caring	Participant 10 expressed that when students come close to meeting set high expectations – “they’re good!” He said, “That means they’ve improved from where they were. And that’s what the premise is. Let’s get them from here to here, as close as we can get them. If that closeness is right here, we’ll take it.”	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students realize value of achieving their personal best in pursuit of the their goals when meeting set high expectations</li> </ul> Academic and Behavioral Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students realize the value of completing their homework, attending classes, and participating in school activities</li> </ul>
Support	Participant 10 said the school reaches out to the students any way it can.	Affective Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives students a sense of belong and connectedness to the school</li> </ul>

*Table 6, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Caring and Trust	One of the students told a story of personal networking in which she and her friend (Participants 5 and 6) conducted an intervention with junior classmates who were confused about what course of actions they should take now for their futures. These two students are related to a parent in the advisory group, so it is evident that the care and guidance they've received is being passed on.	<p>Affective Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This type of intervention from upper class persons can help students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to the school, which in turn makes them more likely to want to participate in school social and academic activities.</li> </ul>
Caring and Trust	Participant 10 said the most important thing is that they follow up on the kids. "They're meeting right before their grades, finals, mid-terms, making sure they are in for tutoring. They're checking their GPAs on a regular basis." If they become ineligible to play in sports, he says he works to help them. He said, "All I try to do is support their efforts." Table 6 gives example of Influences of Personal Relationships on Student Engagement	<p>Affective Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives students a sense of belonging and school connectedness.</li> </ul> <p>Cognitive Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students learn value of learning and success in school</li> </ul>

*Table 6, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Caring	Participant 13 said, “So then it comes down to a caring adult paying attention to the student. I can see from the students’ interviews that you will get to see a glimpse of just how impactful that adult’s influence was. How impactful it was just to have another friend say come along with me.”	<p>Cognitive Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value of learning and success in school</li> <li>• The students became more committed to a personal goal of success based on the motivation and care received from the parents and guest speakers.</li> </ul> <p>Academic Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students realized the value of success in school which spurred the student to more engagement in activities such as spending more time on task and homework completion. Successful completion of assignments leads to more student engagement. The attitude of the students changed, with these students now participating more in their study activities</li> </ul>

*Table 6, continued*

Theme	Evidence	Influence on Student Engagement
Support	Participant 4 said, "Like if they have a good support system at home, parents or whoever is raising them helps a lot. I know that in my own family, my parents, my mom and dad are really supportive in what I do."	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student realizes value that the family or other support system place on learning and success in school</li> </ul>
Support	Student (Participant 5): "Yeah, my parents are supportive and they do encourage me. That,s just what they do."	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student realizes the value that their parents place on learning and success in school</li> </ul>
Caring	Teacher: "We just want to take care of our kids. Let's take care of them. We'll keep reaching out to the parents."	Affective Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• School connectedness</li> <li>• Identification with school</li> </ul>
Support and Caring	Participant 10 said, "That's the most important thing. They follow up on these kids. They're meeting right before their grades, finals, mid-terms, making sure they're in for tutoring. They're checking their GPAs on a regular basis."	Cognitive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived relevance of schoolwork</li> <li>• Value of learning and success in school</li> </ul> Affective Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• School connectedness</li> </ul>

Personal relationships can be between family, friends, neighbors, or business associates. They are relations built on support, care, and trust.

The high school of interest was interested in finding solutions to support its students. Participant 10 was principal of the high school of concern at a time when they



were having difficulty with their own English language (EL) students. The principal said they found the solution to the problem to be partly better monitoring. He said, “We just created this net and we hit it from all angles. They can’t do anything but succeed. They’re really going to have to try to fail.” This high school was not only supportive of its own students, but also caring enough to take on the challenges of a school outside its neighborhood. It was innovative and tenacious in its approach to new challenges.

Another example of support and caring follows. Participant 3 was a student at the high school who was not associated with the parent advisory group. He shared some thoughts about the high school. He said that they received much guidance on a number of school-related subjects from their teachers in the ROTC program. He said, “They’ll also provide fieldtrips to colleges and scholarship opportunities to make sure we’re prepared.

Participant 10, an administrator, expressed that when students come close to meeting set high expectations: “They’re good!” He said, “That means they’ve improved from where they were. And that’s what the premise is. Let’s get them from here to here, as close as we can get them. If that closeness is right here, we’ll take it.” In support of the students, Participant 10 said the school reaches out in any way it can.

Participant 10 said the most important thing is that they follow up on the kids. “They’re meeting right before their grades, finals, mid-terms, making sure they’re in for tutoring. They’re checking their GPAs on a regular basis.” If they become ineligible to play in sports, he said he works to help them. He said, “All I try to do is support their efforts.” (Table 6 shows example of influences of personal relationships on student engagement.)

Personal relationships are important because human beings are social beings who interact and rely on one another to thrive, and possibly just to survive. As a social capital resource, personal relationships are the most enduring, relying on shared social experiences between two or more persons. One administrator (Participant 10) spoke of the value of developing relationships of support, care, and trust with students. This administrator also took the position that it's good to have an adult around as a mentor. He said that you get an automatic 10% increase in effort by the student if they know you are going to follow up. The administrator, Participant 10, believed so strongly in adult mentorship that he instituted a school-wide program called Adopt 5. "We did what we called Adopt 5, and everybody on campus had the opportunity to adopt five kids throughout their day. Teachers, staff, or security personnel were responsible for calling those kids all year long." Mentors including teachers and staff could adopt five students whom they would follow up on their testing for 1 year. The mentors were responsible for calling the student for a full year. And they did that with the entire school. He said most of the mentors took it seriously. Just think of the return of effort if only half of the mentors followed through for a full year with five students each. The buzz on campus among the student population must have included some surprise at the realization that so many teachers and staff would make the effort to personally care for and give moral support to five students for 1 year. On an emotional or affective level students would feel more connected and committed to the school. Per the administrator (Participant 10), there should be at least a 10% commitment to engagement related to the follow-up efforts of the mentors. Relationships with teachers and staff likely improved, with a sense of a

stronger bond with the school. This stronger sense of closeness to the school was often reciprocated by more school participation.

Two senior female students (Participants 5 and 6) counseled some students in their junior year to keep their grades up if they wanted to get into one of the top schools they were applying to as end-of-the-year juniors. Advice from upper class role models could build positive student-to-student relationships.

A student (Participant 4) who was interviewed said that a good support system in the home contributes to student achievement. He felt that the environment in which a student grows up has a big impact on his or her academic success. Participant 4 said:

I mean if you want to be successful and they surround themselves with successful people and have a good attitude. I think that would be a big boost in being successful academically or wherever they're headed to, even at home.

He said that his mom and dad were really supportive, making sure he gets things done. He said they keep an eye on him to make sure he achieves his goals even when things go wrong. Participant 4 said he sees a lot of opportunities for academic support and guidance in school from the teachers, but didn't see much in regular classes. This student received support from home that encouraged achievement, and pursuing his goals in school autonomously if a teacher was not readily available. He sounded like a student who realized the opportunities that a good support system could have in his everyday life. He talked about how much the home environment contributed to achievement, and how being surrounded by negativity could have an impact on attitude toward school, learning, and desire to participate. Participant 4 said that student achievement is easier when you are surrounded by successful people with positive attitudes, which the student said was his home environment. "My mom and dad are really supportive, making sure that I get

things done, staying on top of me so that I achieve my own goals when things go wrong.” Participant 4 spoke of the support and caring at the high school.

Another student (Participant 5) spoke to the personal relationship she had with her parents. She said, “Yeah, my parents are supportive and they do encourage me. That’s just what they do. It’s not even encouragement, it expectation.” She said that there was no question about going to college, it just follows going to high school. In the film school she would be attending in college, she said she wanted to change the image of African American students as portrayed in film. She said that the lack of a good image of African Americans lowers expectations. This student realized the importance of a supportive family that sets high expectations. The opposite leads to the deficit-thinking mindset that she wanted to change in the media. That type of thinking impacts a student’s engagement in school. If the student buys into it, they feel that they are not good enough to participate in the academic rigors of school. Subsequently they may not feel connected to the school, and may eventually “drop out.” If they don’t feel they can adequately participate, they may not see the relevance to the whole learning process. And, unless some support intervenes, they may not be encouraged to succeed.

### **Summary**

Group memberships, networks and social connections, and personal relationships are forms of social capital that can be thought of as capital resources to be invested in present or future social returns. Each of these resources has dominant themes that emerged from the data of the interviews conducted. Themes of accountability and empowerment emerged from the group memberships. The parent advisory group’s members stressed accountability for themselves and for the students. The group also

stressed empowerment for the students and for their own group. The parent advisory group's intent was to empower the students through education. Themes of community involvement and connections emerged from networks and social connections.

Community involvement in terms of acknowledgement and support was important to the school, especially in times of financial or emotional stress. Connections of both political and social bases were important social resources in the financial and planning decision process. Themes of support, and caring and trust emerged for personal relationships. On a personal level, student engagement seemed most affected by the support systems of those closest to you, such as family and friends. These are normally the people who can be trusted most for care and support.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

Chapter Five presents the findings and recommendations of the qualitative research, which examined the insights of administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community members concerning the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement. This chapter includes a discussion of how findings were examined and used to answer the three research questions.

In this study, social capital is defined as the accumulation of present or future resources based on personal and group memberships, networks of influence and support, and personal relationships. Social capital is built through an aggregate of networking, creating trusting relationships, and developing motivational, goal-oriented behavior that leads to successful achievement. Each component of the aggregate strengthens the student's ability to develop the other components, which results in greater social capital creation.

Because of family moves, I attended three different high schools. In each high school, there were a few students involved in every activity they could fit into their busy lives. They were in student government, involved in sports, belonged to clubs, seemed to know everybody at school, and maintained good grades. These students seemed to get along with students and teachers, had a network of acquaintances, were generally in a steady relationship, and had a few close friends. They seemed well connected to their school environment through their social relations, and had access to numerous social resources when needed. These students were engaged in the business of becoming socially connected, educated citizens. Of course, most students are not as engaged in learning and the school environment as the few cited above, which may be okay. But, it

can become a problem if there is too little engagement. That seemed to be the case for some African American students at the high school that was the focus of this study.

Too many African American students at the high school in this study were earning low grades, and were disengaged from academic activities at school. Some of the parents became involved by forming a parent advisory group because they wanted to find solutions to the problems—they wanted to find out what was missing from their child’s education. Interactions with students led the parent advisory group to a few early discoveries. For example, the kids typically “dumbed down” because they felt that appearing smart was selling out to the dominant culture—“acting White.” They also found that the coaches typically valued sports over academic success, giving some athletes a pass even when it was known that they were getting poor grades.

A research team was set up to examine social, cultural, or economic positions that may influence student engagement for students at the high school. This particular study examined the influence on student engagement from a social capital standpoint.

Research was conducted to answer the following three research questions:

1. To what extent does social capital through social relations influence student engagement?
2. What common themes related to the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement emerge when observing and listening to the voices of teachers, administrators, students, community members, and parents?
3. Based on the study’s findings what recommendations can be made about the role of social relations on student engagement?

This qualitative study used a narrative inquiry semistructured approach. Fifteen participants were audio taped in semistructured interviews lasting between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. Three administrators, two teachers, six students, two parents, and two community members participated in the study. Open-ended questions were asked, and field notes were taken in order to more fully understand the perspectives and experiences of the participants. Their “authentic voices” were gathered in order to hear their perceptions and observations on the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement. Interviews were converted to text-based data collected, and then copied into the software program known as NVivo 10. This software program was used to process the qualitative data by sources and nodes. The source data are the text-based transcripts are referenced by the interviewee. The nodes were separated into data-based themes attributed to subcategories by the various interviewees. The narrative inquiry research method was used because it invites and encourages individuals to openly narrate their stories. Chase (2011) has said that narrative inquiry is a particular type of qualitative research that allows researchers to emphasize the life stories of the participants.

### **Findings and Discussions**

Findings and discussions for the three research questions in the study follow.

#### **Research Question 1**

*To what extent does social capital through social relations influence student engagement?*

The social relations created through the interactions of the parent advisory group made a significant difference in the students’ academic lives. The advisory group parents



initially intervened to help African American students who were performing poorly in school. A member of the parents advisory group said:

It's our responsibility. I don't want to go to the school district and say, "Fund me a bus please, fund me this or that. We got it. We can do this. It empowers the parent. It empowers us, and our school district."

As stated above, the group found problems early on that it began to deal with. One member said it took 3 years for the students to accept that it's good to be smart. When they came to the school they found that kids "dumbed down" because they felt that appearing smart was selling out to the dominant White culture. They found that athletes were given a pass on grades by the coach, and that they were being valued more for their athleticism than for their academic potential. Another problem was that counselors were not monitoring students' grades in order to advise them on how to make improvements.

The parent advisory group told the students that they expected them to perform at the highest level, and that they would have follow up visits from their mentor to ensure they met expectations. After approximately 12 years of the parent advisory group's mentoring, their effectiveness became evident when the average percentage for the achievement gap of the group they worked with went from 29% to 4%. The average GPA for the group rose from 1.7 to 3.2.

The interactive relations between the parent advisory group and the students were empowering because the students were aware that the group provided a support system in which they were not going to be allowed to fail. That the group took on the responsibility of mentoring the students, and would not give up on them meant they cared enough to continue coming back until the students met the higher standards set for them. The social investment of capital by the group through social relations building got the students more

engaged, resulting in a lowering of the achievement gap and improved grades. The group demonstrated such success that its mentoring was expanded to include all students at the high school. It then expanded mentoring to a school located in another neighborhood. Further, the high school of interest had been requested by the superintendent of the district to be given access to the other school in the district in order to help build similar mentoring programs.

The influence of the social relations (interactions) that the individuals in the group, as role models and mentors, had on the students was substantial, according to the changes that took place. Further the success of the parent advisory group seemed to have an impact on the school climate. Although the group met with some resistance at first, subsequent teacher and administrator cooperation and enthusiasm demonstrated that they had earned social capital for demonstrated success at the school. There had been influence at the school district level with administrators and the superintendent interested in spreading the evident success engendered through the work of the parent advisory committee. Members of the advisory group garnered much social capital and were even allowed to pull students out of class to consult and advise them on tests and their grades. The superintendent stood up for the parent advisory group when it requested permission to take kids out of class to advise them on meeting their personal goal of improving their grades. The superintendent said:

Make it so those who have a problem with it, tell them I said, “tough.” You’re going to allow this group to pull them out of class, find out what the problem is and let these students know that they are cared about, that they are being watched and are not going to be allowed to walk around this campus in a vacuum and nobody check on them. So you have to have support from the top.

According to an interviewee, the parent advisory group was acknowledged by an organization that grants a nationally recognized educational award because of its part in closing the achievement gap at the high school. Only four school districts in the country are given an opportunity to compete for the award. It seems apparent from interview comments at all levels that replication of this mentoring program would be desirable for the district, and beyond. However, problems may arise in finding the right combination of someone inside of the school (i.e., a dedicated teacher) and members of a group as dedicated as the parents advisory group. The parents advisory group itself limited membership in order to maintain the quality of their care and support for the students. The credibility that the parent advisory group had established with the students at the high school was built by demonstrating vigilant support and care that had gained student trust and made many more engaged cognitively and emotionally, which translates to observable changes in their engagement behaviorally and academically.

## Research Question 2

*What common themes related to the influence of social capital through social relations on student engagement emerge when observing and listening to the voices of teachers, administrators, students, community members, and parents?*

Table 7

<i>Common Themes Related to the Influence of Social Capital</i>		
Social Capital	Themes	Minor Topics
Group Memberships	Empowerment Accountability	Motivate Responsibility Being a self-starter
Networks and Social Connections	Community Involvement, Connections	Access Information Community Resources
Personal Relationships	Support Care and Trust	Encouragement Expectations Goals

Common themes emerged in the process of interviewing the participants. The most frequent themes that emerged in connection to the subcategory Group Membership were empowerment and accountability. The parent advisory group held itself to these standards, as well as to other parents, teachers, administrators, and students. Social capital for the group, and within the group, was built through trusting and caring relationships. The minor topics reflect the relationships and connections within the common themes for each of the subcategories of social capital. For example, common themes for Group Memberships are empowerment and accountability. Group members encouraged parents to become empowered by taking responsibility for their children's education by being engaged in their academic environment. The group encouraged teachers and mentors to find ways to motivate students, and for students to become responsible for themselves by being self-starters. The common themes for Network and Social Connections were community involvement and connections. These themes emerged as being important outside support systems in promoting and recognizing student achievement and school activities and needs. The common themes for personal relationships were support and care—support and care for the students by the parent advisory group, teachers, and administrators build trusting relations. Important other personal relationships were found at the student-to-student level, student-to-teacher level, student-to-parent level, and at the teacher-to-parent level.

### **Research Question 3**

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

Findings in this study show that the social relations (interactions) with the students had a substantial influence on student engagement, improvement in student grades, and lowering the achievement gap for the students mentored by the parents advisory group. The positive results of the mentoring program shows that social relations building made in a caring and supportive environment can be significant. Although attempts at duplication have been made in the past, it is recommended that further study and further attempts be made to establish similar mentoring programs in other schools. Social relations at all levels were found to be important in that effective student support is a community concern, in the sense that “it takes a village.”

#### **Limitations of the Study**

- Interviews all associated with one specific school
- Interview sample size was small
- Nongeneralizable to other schools
- Shortness of time on recorder—had to restart two interviews
- Some difficulties with appointment cancellations due to stormy weather
- One interview with bad quality recording—difficult to hear in some places
- Difficult to hear one recording due to barking dog
- Scheduled one interview in an outside, somewhat noisy location
- Short window for data collection
- Although used previously, the instrumentation was difficult for some students to answer

## Conclusions and Implications

There is little doubt that the students looked up to members of the advisory group as leaders, based on the evidence of academic engagement and success at the school. It is the support and sincerity of the mentors that gained student trust. The group showed it cared by being persistent. Participant 10 said, “Because of this mentorship, these kids blossom.” Participant 14 stated, “One mentor gets the most joy when the kids come to his classroom and tell him that ‘I got accepted to this school (college) or that school.’” Academic and behavior changes in student engagement became evident when students accepted being smart as an individual, rather than a societal attribute. Participant 11 claimed:

We have the highest graduation in the county, with a 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.

The student significantly raised their GPAs from 1.7 to 3.2, on average, over several years. Participant 14 stated, “The kids started to change when they found out that someone truly cared about their grades.” This gives the students a greater sense of belonging to a group, and a connectedness to the school by extension. Participant 9 said, “What we see is an opportunity to enhance, enrich, to guide, to provide perspective, and hopefully, to generate a sense of urgency and compellingness for these students to do well in high school.” The relationship between students and mentors as role models sent the message to the students that being educated and responsible like the men in the advisory group is a worthwhile personal goal. Social relations are important when establishing a program such as the one the parent advisory group began several years ago.

Over the years, the parent advisory group had built important and meaningful social relations with students, teachers, school administrators, district administrators, and community members. The social and political connections made over the years have garnered social capital for the parent advisory group. The benefit of such accumulated capital could be used for some present purpose beneficial to the students. These benefits may include school or community funds or decisions that could be used to enhance or expand the capabilities of the parent advisor group program for the students.

The findings establish that the parent advisory group successfully mentored students by closing the achievement gap from 29% to 4%, on an overall average for the mentored students in the program over several years of the program's existence. The advisory group made meaningful connections with students by demonstrating care and trust, and by not abandoning the students in the school even after their own children had graduated. The group encouraged students to improve at all academic levels. According to Participant 14, "We usually figure out who is going to be the most improved. We give awards not only for those who are doing really but also for the one who goes from not doing well to doing well." Through their social interactions, the student members of the group accumulated social capital with the students. Participant 14 said, "And the progress reports since then, while we were there and involved and our kids were there we didn't lose another kid." This gives the advisory group members meaningful credibility and power to motivate students through their leadership. Participant 14 said, "But our kids, a lot of them don't think they are intelligent." Participant 14 stated, "You are as smart as you think you are. But you don't give yourself a chance, and that's when we started doing grade interventions."

It would seem as though the leadership model established by the parent advisory group should be replicable elsewhere; however, the possible compositions of parents in other parent advisory groups may have different results. And, while the parent advisory group at the high school of interest has broadened the scope of its mission to include a more diversified population of students at the school, it may be that another high school has such a different demographic make-up of students that even an exact model of their mentoring method may not have similar results.

The evidence shows that the social relations (interactions) at the high school effectively increased student engagement. It is known that the parent advisory group held the students accountable for high expectations, and that a mentor would pull students out of the classroom to counsel them if they did not improve their grades. Participant 14 contended, “All the kids stayed on top of their grades cause they knew that they would get low grades and knew that they we’re not playing.” It is known that the advisory group took a hard stance on putting academics before participation in sports activities. Participant 12 stated, “And so it’s part of our focus, because we always say, you’re student athletes first, before athletics. And the coaches have bought into that.” They also sponsored guest speakers, had lunchtime tutoring session, and trained young student leaders to conduct tutoring sessions. Participant 14 stated, “Role models that show it’s not about how smart you are, but about how hard you are will to work.” One active student (Participant 5), commented, “You feel like school is the center point of the community, which is good— that’s the way all schools should feel. You feel like you belong.” The results that came out of the meaningful social relations built at the high school were



significant. These involved social relations at the group level, the community level, and the personal level.

The parent advisory group reached out and made a difference with other parents of students at the high school. Participant 10 stated, “With these families, truly, there was one mom who was so afraid to talk to us. With these guys she had a voice.” They relieved suspicion with some African American parents. Participant 14 said, “The schools, they don’t trust the schools because school is a white guy’s thing.” The social capital gained through building trust through genuine care has led to more parental engagement. Participant 15 said, “But the parents were saying, we want more of that. When are you going to have the next seminar?” Further, social capital has accumulated with teachers on staff who viewed the group initially with some caution. Participant 15 went on to say, “But after the other teachers began to understand what we were doing, then they said, ‘Johnny’s not doing well, please talk to Johnny.’”

Based on the findings, a conclusion can be made that social relations are important when establishing a program, such as the one the parent advisory group began several years ago. Further, based on the findings, a conclusion can be made that the parent advisory group successfully mentored students. Over the years, the parent advisory group had built important and meaningful social relations with teachers, school administrators, district administrators, and community members. The social and political connections made over the years in connection to the positive notoriety of the mentorship influence garnered from social interactions is social capital. The benefit from such accumulated capital can be used for some present purpose, which could be used for some purpose beneficial to the students. These benefits may include school or community

funds or decisions that could be used to enhance or expand the capabilities of the program for the students. The implications of the study are that the parent advisors mentorship program is successful at the one high school. There has been interest in the advisory groups' program because of its substantial success. But one member said that a couple of attempts to replicate the program had not worked at other schools. The qualitative study of the researcher involved a small sample only at the one site. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate whether a program similar to the parent advisory group program would be effective in another school environment. The following practical implications are recommended for consideration by the high school of interest and the appropriate district:

1. Provide school-wide professional development training and critical conversations about social relations, race, and achievement gap.
2. Establish a Parent Center where parents can network with other parents and build relationships.
3. Hold Parent Informational Meetings so that parents can interact and build social capital.
4. Consider plans to replicate other parent advisory groups throughout the district.

### **Equitable Opportunities Through Policy and Practice.**

Policies and practices that promote the public good should include government support and investment at all levels to insure that opportunities are available to all persons to reach their full educational and vocational potential. Good policies and practices can be capitalized on for exponential growth in student (gain) interest. On the

other hand, poor policies and practices can lead to exponential losses (i.e., economic disinterest or disinterested students who eventually become disengaged).

Student engagement creates a sense of investment in learning and in one's own future success. It is a feeling of being connected to the school, and academic goals are enhanced by the social capital building made possible through the relationships and networks that students become involved with when they are engaged in social activities. The contributions to educational knowledge and practice by expanding access and increasing graduation rates resulted in some students being the first in their family to graduate, possibly breaking a cycle of social reproduction. Students have a better opportunity to attain their education goals, advance financially or socially, or personally advance by graduating. Whatever the individual reasons, our democratic society ultimately gains economically, socially, and politically from having a better-educated populace. A core belief in our country should be that everyone be given equal opportunity to succeed.

According to Halpern (2012, p. 285), "In practice, social capital is not a pure public good, and may often be expressed as 'club good' that provides advantages only to those who have access to it." Policy and practice considerations generally recommend evaluations and measurements to realize "what works!" Evidence of academic success at the high school of interest is the indication that their methods "do work." Policy suggestions made by Halpern (2012) are similar to the practice of the parent advisory group. Halpern recommended parent-to-children relationship building as a way to build social capital. This interaction helps bond a relationship that builds trust and self-confidence. Halpern recommended assisting students' parents with guidance, support,

and counseling. Halpern recommended mentoring by a caring adult, claiming evidence that indicates a boost in academic achievement and reduced drop-out rates. Halpern suggested that student-to-student mentoring builds interpersonal relationships and helps students develop healthy self-images. The parent advisory group at the high school of interest advanced policies and practices that made social capital influence through their interactive sponsorship available to all students at the school. These policies and practices have provided equitable opportunities that have demonstrated academic successes at the school through increased student engagement.

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Appendix A:  
Consent Form for School Administration



Appendix B:  
Consent Form for District Administration

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 [REDACTED] Parent Advisory Group ([REDACTED]) 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

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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 C:  
Consent Form for Teacher

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 [REDACTED] Parent Advisory Group ([REDACTED]) 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

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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 for Parent Member of Advisory Group



Appendix E:  
Consent Form for Parent Non-Member of Advisory Group

CONSENT FORM: NON-CPAG 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 [REDACTED] Parent Advisory Group ([REDACTED]) 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

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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 for Student over 18 Years-Old

CONSENT FORM: STUDENT (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 [REDACTED] Parent Advisory Group ([REDACTED]) 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

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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 for Student Under 18 Years-Old





Appendix H:  
Consent Form (General) for Community Members, etc.

CONSENT FORM: \_\_\_\_\_

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 [REDACTED] Parent Advisory Group ([REDACTED]) 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](mailto: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 I:  
Curriculum Vitae

## Marcus J. Hanson, Ed.D.

### Education:

Ed.D. (Doctor of Education in Leadership and Educational Justice) University of Redlands - 2014

MS (Real Estate, Finance) University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota-2010

Advanced Real Estate Appraisal Study Certificate, University of St. Thomas St. Paul Minnesota-2005

MBA (Finance, Real Estate, and Law) California State Polytechnic University, Pomona - 2003

BS (Finance), California State University, Long Beach-1998

Real Estate Certificate, Santa Ana College, Santa Ana, California-1981

BA (Communications) California State University, Fullerton-1974

AA (Liberal Arts) Santa Ana College-1971

### Dissertation/Theses:

- **Doctoral Dissertation:** *The Influence of Social Capital through Social Relations on Student Engagement*, University of Redlands, Redlands, California - 2014
- **Master's Thesis:** *A Study in Incurable Functional Obsolescence Due to Superadequate Construction*, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota-2010
- **Master's Thesis:** *A Locational External Obsolescence Study*, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona-2003

### Licenses, Professional Designations, and Honors:

Certified General Real Estate Appraiser - California

Real Estate Broker's License - California

SRA (Senior Residential Appraiser, retired) – Appraisal Institute

Beta Gamma Sigma – California State Polytechnic University, Pomona Chapter

### Work Experience:

Fall 2008; Fall 2009; Spring 2010; Spring 2011; Spring 2012; Spring 2013; Spring 2014 Co-instructor

and co-creator of Real Estate Appraisal 3 (Market Analysis and Highest & Best Use)

Saddleback

College, Mission Viejo, California

Fall 2007 Co-instructor of Appraisal 1 (Residential Appraisal) Irvine Valley College, Irvine, California

May 1982 to August, 1984 Property Analysis Corporation – independent fee appraiser

August, 1984 to January 2009: Self-employed - independent fee appraiser

February, 1979 to May 1982: General Manager, Konex Corporation, Corona, California

June, 1974 to February, 1979: Real estate salesman and independent fee appraiser

### Specialized Real Estate Valuation Courses:

- GIS: The Building Case Study, Appraisal Institute, Jul., 2010
- GIS: The Novice Case Study, Appraisal Institute, Jun., 2010
- Investment Property Analysis, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Jan., 2010
- GIS Planning Support Systems, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Jan., 2010
- GIS: The Executive Overview, Appraisal Institute, Sep., 2009
- Residential Market Analysis and Highest and Best Use, Appraisal Institute, Jul., 2007
- Income Valuation of Small, Mixed-Use Properties, Appraisal Institute, Jul., 2007

- Advanced Topics in Real Estate Appraisal, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Jan. 2006
- Urban Land Economics, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Aug., 2005
- Legal Issues in Valuation, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Jan., 2005
- Market Analysis and Feasibility Studies, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Aug., 2004
- Statistical Analysis for Real Estate Appraisal, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, Aug., 2003
- Real Estate Law in California, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Jun., 2003
- Real Estate Finance and Investments, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, Feb., 2001
- Feasibility Analysis, Appraisal Institute, Oct., 1992
- Course 2-1 Case Studies in Real Estate Valuation, Appraisal Institute, Jan., 1992
- Course 1BB-Capitalization Theory and Techniques (Part B), Appraisal Institute, May, 1991
- Course 1BA-Capitalization Theory and Techniques (Part A), Appraisal Institute, Mar., 1991
- Course 102-Applied Residential Property Valuation, Society of Real Estate Appraisers, Feb., 1985
- Course 101-Introduction to Appraising Real Property, Society of Real Estate Appraisers, Dec, 1984
- Real Estate Investments, California State University, Long Beach, Jan., 1983
- Income Property Valuation, Coastline College, Jun., 1978