

The Lived Experiences of Faculty Who Guide Students Toward Postsecondary
Aspirations

Submitted by

Jennifer Lynn Sutliffe-Auch

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctorate of Education

Grand Canyon University

Phoenix, Arizona

November 30, 2017

ProQuest Number:10687567

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10687567

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

© by Jennifer Lynn Sutliffe-Auch, 2017

All rights reserved.

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

The Lived Experiences of Faculty Who Guide Students Toward Postsecondary

Aspirations

by

Jennifer Lynn Sutcliffe-Auch

Approved

November 30, 2017

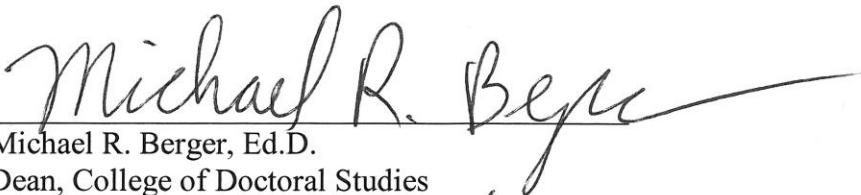
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:

Michael Jazzar, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair

Nancy A. Walker, Ph.D., Committee Member

Lynn R. Miller, Ed.D., Committee Member

ACCEPTED AND SIGNED:

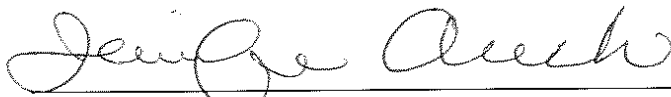

Michael R. Berger, Ed.D.
Dean, College of Doctoral Studies

11/30/17
Date

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

The Lived Experiences of Faculty Who Guide Students Toward Postsecondary
Aspirations

I verify that my dissertation represents original research, is not falsified or plagiarized, and that I have accurately reported, cited, and referenced all sources within this manuscript in strict compliance with APA and Grand Canyon University (GCU) guidelines. I also verify my dissertation complies with the approval(s) granted for this research investigation by GCU Institutional Review Board (IRB).



Jennifer L. Sutcliffe-Auch



Date

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide students from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations. This study was derived from the funds of knowledge theory, status attainment theory, and social capital theory. Using these theoretical foundations collectively provided a stronger foundation for the study. Through interviews with 10 teachers, that taught a combination of fourth-through eighth-grade students, this study is an attempt to understand their lived experiences. This study was not an attempt to develop a new theory. However, this study was able to understand the perceptions and perspectives of college and career readiness teachers as they guided students toward their postsecondary aspirations. The results of this study present an analysis of the data in a non-evaluative, unbiased, organized manner that relates to the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers. This study had five themes. The themes were: The idea that the structure of the schedule influences relationships; the influence of school support in relation to curriculum for the college and career readiness program; the influence of the socioeconomic status of the students in relation to the teacher's instructional outcomes; the importance of postsecondary education; and parental influence in relation to student aspirations. Given that at the time of this study the researcher was unable to find any literature related to elementary students postsecondary aspirations, this study potentially opens the door to additional future research in the area.

Keywords: Postsecondary aspirations, student aspirations, elementary student aspirations.

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. I have a special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, John and Mary Sutcliffe who offered consistent words of encouragement, instilled a drive to succeed, and taught me that I could do anything that I put my mind to regardless of what obstacles I had to overcome. To my sister and brother, Susan and Tom for keeping me moving forward even through the tears!

To my many friends who have supported me throughout this process. I will always appreciate the continuous words of encouragement and support. I specifically want to thank Lynne Suidinski for the many hours of proofreading and her willingness to read and reread my documents throughout this process.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my son, Zachary Auch. Although today he is too little to understand why “mommy is doing homework,” I hope that someday he will see me as an example and continue with his own educational journey. I hope to also instill the ideas that he can do anything he puts his mind to, the understanding of the power of education, and the realization that the only thing that can never be taken away from him is his education!

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my committee members who were more than generous with their expertise and precious time. A special thank you to Dr. Michael Jazzar, my committee chair for his countless hours of reflecting, reading, rereading, encouragement, conference calls, and most of all patience through this process. Thank you to Dr. Nancy Walker, my methodologist for staying with me through the end and providing useful insight from her extended wealth of knowledge. A huge thank you to Dr. Lynn Miller who has not only been a mentor to me for several years but has stayed with me through this seven year process giving me motivation and encouragement to continue to move forward even through my weakest moments.

I would like to acknowledge my participating district for allowing me the privilege to conduct my research and providing me with assistance when requested. Finally, I would like to thank the college and career readiness teachers that agreed to participate in my research. Their willingness to meet with me during their personal time and provide me the opportunity to explore their lived experience through open honest conversation made the completion of my research an enjoyable experience.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background of the Study	2
Problem Statement	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Question	7
Advancing Scientific Knowledge	8
Significance of the Study	9
Rationale for Methodology	11
Nature of the Research Design for the Study.....	12
Definition of Terms.....	14
Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations	15
Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study	16
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
Introduction to the Chapter and Background to the Problem	18
Theoretical Foundations.....	20
Funds of knowledge	20
Status attainment	22
Social capital	23
Review of the Literature	24
Personal characteristics	25

Citizenship	33
School support services.....	40
Current trends in CCR.....	46
Methodology and instrumentation	53
Summary	53
Chapter 3: Methodology	57
Introduction.....	57
Statement of the Problem.....	57
Research Question	58
Research Methodology	59
Research Design.....	61
Population and Sample Selection.....	62
Sources of Data	64
Validity	66
Reliability.....	66
Data Collection and Management.....	67
Data Analysis Procedures	68
Ethical Considerations	71
Limitations and Delimitations.....	72
Summary	73
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results.....	75
Introduction.....	75
Descriptive Data.....	76
Data Analysis Procedures	78

Results.....	82
Theme #1: The structure of the schedule influences relationships	83
Theme #2: School and district support in relationship to the curriculum	87
Theme #3: Socioeconomic status of students influenced instruction	91
Theme #4: Importance of postsecondary education to students	94
Theme #5: Parental influence in relationship to student aspirations	96
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations	101
Introduction.....	101
Summary of the Study	101
Summary of Findings and Conclusion.....	102
Theme #1.....	103
Theme #2.....	104
Theme #3.....	105
Theme #4.....	106
Theme #5.....	106
Implications.....	107
Theoretical implications.....	107
Practical implications.....	109
Future implications.	109
Strengths and weaknesses	111
Recommendations.....	111
Recommendations for future research	112
Recommendations for future practice	114
References.....	117
Appendix A. IRB Approval Letter.....	133

Appendix B. Informed Consent	134
Appendix C. Copy of Instruments	137
Appendix D. Recruitment Script.....	138
Appendix E. Sample Transcribed Data Related to Themes.....	139
Appendix F. Sample Transcripts with Codes	140
Appendix G. Site Authorization	141

List of Tables

Table 1. Breakdown of Interview Data by Participant	78
---	----

List of Figures

Figure 1. Participant characteristics	77
Figure 2. Process steps leading to data analysis.	79
Figure 3. Codes to themes.....	81
Figure 4. Participants with similar responses for each theme.....	83
Figure 5. Number of schools each participant was placed at.....	87
Figure 6. Greatest influence on student aspirations.	97

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The decision whether to attend some level of formal education after high school is one that numerous students make each year. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2015), more than half of all students graduating high school each year attend some form of postsecondary education. Many assumptions as well as variables influence students' aspirations toward postsecondary education. However, it is not known what lived experiences college and career readiness teachers' encounter as they guide fourth-through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations.

This study focused on the lived experiences of faculty who taught college and career readiness to fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students in a large district in Arizona. Specifically, it explored what interventions college and career readiness teachers were using to guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations. With these factors identified, additional interventions can be developed and used with the possibility of positively influencing a student's decision to participate in postsecondary education (Cook, Pérusse, & Rojas, 2012; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Kiyama, 2011; Lee, Almonte, & Youn, 2013).

Through an in-depth interview with faculty who teach college and career readiness to fourth through eighth grade elementary students in a large school district in Arizona, this study explored the faculties lived experiences of working with elementary students as they develop their aspirations toward postsecondary education. Focusing on fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students who attend school in Arizona provided a new perspective that has not previously been researched. The need for this research was

identified in Kiyama's (2011) study concerning college aspirations and limitations where children were only included through limited conversations and were not the focus of the data collection. A previous study of interventions provided by counselors also recommends that future research should be conducted to understand the effects of different interventions on the college-going rates of students (Cook et al., 2012)

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the details of this study. The remainder of this chapter will review the details of this study including the study background, statement of the identified problem, the purpose of the study and the research question. Additionally, an explanation of how this study will advance the current scientific knowledge, the significance of the study, the assumptions, limitations, and the definitions of terms related to this study.

Background of the Study

The percentage of minority students attending postsecondary education is disproportionate to the percentage of non-minority students attending postsecondary education. The racial and ethnic classification for Title I students published by the United States Department of Education (2015) determined 36% of students were Hispanic, 22% were Black, non-Hispanic, 34% were classified as White, non-Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander students represented 4% of the group, and American Indian or Alaska Native students accounted for 4% of the group. These data show that the majority of Title I students are also minority students. When looking at the postsecondary enrollment patterns by racial and ethnic classification, the number of students who attend postsecondary education in the United States varies widely. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), in 2012, White students earned 70% of all

bachelor's degrees awarded, Black students earned 10.7%, Hispanic students earned 9.8%, Asian/Pacific Islander students earned 7.3%, and American Indian/Alaska Native students earned approximately 1% of the degrees. These data present a problem for the United States.

After reviewing the statistics related to adults living in households of poverty and how those percentages are associated with their highest level of education, Lopez (2009) stated the problem very clearly, after discussing that children are growing up in a world that has a continuously decreasing number of high paying jobs for people without postsecondary education. This not only creates a financial burden for U.S. children but also for society as a whole. Providing education and interventions that have the ability to increase the number of students from high minority and high poverty that attend postsecondary education could decrease their financial hardship as well as the burden that is placed on society (Lopez, 2009).

Previous research (Cooper, 2009; Geckova, Tavel, Van Dijk, Abel, & Reijneveld, 2011; Kirk, Lewis-Moss, Nilsen, & Colvin, 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013, Thomas, 2011) has been done in correlation with the relationship between student aspirations toward postsecondary education and the assumptions that influence those aspirations. The areas of focus have been parental influences, financial considerations, school support, personal characteristics, and citizenship. It is through these specific areas that researchers have acknowledged that student assumptions have the ability to have both positive and negative influences on their individual aspirations toward postsecondary education. There is a gap in the research that exists at the time of this study in the area of college and career readiness for elementary students. In the past, the majority of scholarly research in

the area of student aspirations and assumptions toward postsecondary education was focused on high school students with a few studies that included some middle school students (Bélangerr, Akbari, & Madgett, 2009; Croll, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011). The results of these studies have been used not only to identify student assumptions and aspirations but also develop and implement different interventions and resources into the school system for students (Bohon, Johnson, & Gorman, 2006; Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009; Cooper, 2009, Lee et al., 2013). However, this study targets teachers who work with elementary (or elementary-to-middle school) level students, focusing specifically on teacher perceptions of this under-analyzed group when it comes to postsecondary aspirations.

Problem Statement

It was not known how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students, from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations. Fourth- through eighth-grade students were used in this study because the college and career readiness teachers who teach in the selected district taught classes that had students from multiple grade levels in one classroom. Although the number of minority students in the United States is steadily increasing, the same trend cannot be seen in the enrollment in postsecondary education (Bedsworth, Colby, & Doctor, 2006; Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Kena, Aud, & Johnson, 2014). This is important when looking at the relationship between poverty and education.

A person's highest level of education is related directly to the poverty line. According to U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015), the median yearly earnings vary significantly based on educational attainment. Someone without a

high school diploma earns an average of just under \$25,000 per year. A high school diploma increases the average salary by \$9,000. The average income for a person with an associate degree is \$41,000, a bachelor's degree is \$55,000, a master's degree is \$68,000, a doctoral degree is \$84,000, and a professional degree is \$90,000.

The need for this research was to identify what college and career readiness teachers were doing to guide fourth- through eighth-grade students toward their postsecondary aspirations. The general population for this study is therefore comprised of readiness professionals who teach fourth-through-eighth grade students. For this particular study, the target population consisted of faculty who teach fourth- through eighth-grade students in a Phoenix area school district, with special emphasis on college or career readiness preparation. This population approaches its teaching with the idea that aspirations and assumptions are developed long before high school, which is where previous research has been focused (Cook et al. 2012, Gonzalez et al., 2005). With these factors identified, additional interventions can be developed and used that will provide students with information that, in turn, may positively influence their decision to participate in postsecondary education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide their fourth through eighth grade students from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations. The information gathered from this study can be used to develop interventions that will provide students with additional information that, in turn, may positively influence their decision to participate in postsecondary education. The

term *postsecondary education* will generally be defined as any formal education after high school.

Several research studies have been completed in the area of student postsecondary aspirations (Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al. , 2011; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013; Lee et al., 2012; Thomas, 2011). These studies have been focused on high school students with a few studies that have included middle school students. For this particular study, the target population consisted of faculty who teach fourth- through eighth-grade students in a Phoenix area school district, with special emphasis on college or career readiness preparation. Previous researchers have suggested that aspirations are developed at early ages (Gonzalez et al., 2005). However, it was not known what specific assumptions students have about postsecondary education or if their assumptions and aspirations are developed in elementary school.

Through the use of a phenomenological study, college and career readiness faculty who teach students in grades fourth through eight participated in an in-depth interview that provided the researcher with general information about what curriculum they use for their instruction as well as their students' aspirations toward postsecondary education and how those aspirations develop throughout the curriculum. The interviews were conducted by the researcher to gain further understanding based on the participants individual lived experience of how effective they believe their instruction is as it relates to the outcome of elementary students' postsecondary education. The results of this study contributes to the research by focusing on fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students and the interventions that are used at the early stages of identifying their aspirations toward postsecondary education (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Addressing the

assumptions that affect the aspirations of students at an early age provides an opportunity to guide students through additional intervention and resources as a way to provide a clearer understanding of the opportunities at the postsecondary level.

Research Question

Given that the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers from a K-12 district in Phoenix, describe their lived experiences as they guide their fourth through eighth grade students toward their postsecondary aspirations. It was feasible for the researcher to gain this information through an in depth interview with the teachers that work directly with the students. Direct communication with the research participants was provided including the research design, and the purpose of the study.

The use of an in depth interviews allowed the researcher the flexibility to ask and answer follow-up and clarifying questions. This ensured that the researcher had a clear understanding of the lived experience of fourth- through eighth-grade elementary college and career readiness teachers. It also provided the researcher the opportunity to converse with the study participants to get their inside beliefs related to their teaching position. This study focused on the lived experiences of faculty who teach college and career readiness to fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students in a K-12 district in Phoenix.

Using a combination of the three theoretical constructs as a foundation - funds of knowledge, status attainment, and social capital - this study addressed one primary research question:

RQ1: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations?

The uses of these three theoretical foundations are appropriate for this study because they have previously been employed in areas related to the themes that surfaced throughout the literature review. These themes were all related to college and career readiness, attendance, and outcomes. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical foundation in greater detail.

Advancing Scientific Knowledge

The majority of the studies that have been previously conducted in postsecondary education have examined the aspirations of high school students, with findings that suggest that there are multiple variables that influence a student's postsecondary aspirations (Cooper, 2009; Gallup-Lumina Foundation, 2015; Geckova et al., 2011; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Lee et al., 2012; Salazar, 2013; Thomas, 2011). There are a few studies that have been examinations of the aspiration of middle school students also identifying multiple variables that influence a student's postsecondary education (Bélanger et al., 2009;).

Prior to this study, the researcher was unable to find any studies that focused on the postsecondary aspirations of elementary students. However, this area has been suggested as a need for future research (Kiyama, 2011). Identifying what interventions college and career readiness teachers are using to guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations advances the scientific knowledge base by determining what

factors influence the development of student aspirations toward postsecondary education, as well as to what extent elementary students have developed postsecondary aspirations.

Multiple theoretical foundations have been used to help understand student aspirations. This particular study was derived from the funds of knowledge theory (Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzales, 1992), status attainment theory (Blau & Duncan, 1967), and social capital theory (Coleman, 1988). Although each of these theoretical foundations could be used individually for this study, using them collectively provided a stronger foundation for this study related to student assumptions that influence their aspirations toward postsecondary education.

An effective school is a school that is consistently growing, changing, and improving with the intent to become better (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2012). This study is grounded in the field of education with an emphasis on effective schools because the limited number of low-income students attending postsecondary education has already been identified as an issue (Cook et al., 2012; Kena et al., 2014; King, 2012; Pell Institute, 2005). This study worked to determine what is causing this problem with the idea that future research can be conducted to develop additional interventions and resources that can help students make their choices with not only additional knowledge but also accurate information.

Significance of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study was used to identify the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they work with fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students to develop their postsecondary aspirations. This study fits within the field of previously conducted research in the area of educational

aspirations. The research that has been previously conducted (Bélanger, Akbari, & Madgett, 2009; Croll, 2009; Gallup-Lumina Foundation 2015; Geckova et al., 2011; King 2012; Thomas 2011) is focused on the aspirations of high school students with a few that examine the aspirations of middle school students. Similar to these studies, the current study focused on student postsecondary aspirations. However, it specifically focused on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guide fourth-through eighth-grade elementary students toward their aspirations.

The results of this study are significant, as it identifies the live experiences of elementary college and career readiness teachers as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations, resulting in insight into the problems that can be associated with the low number of high poverty students attending postsecondary education (Kena et al., 2014; King, 2012; Pell Institute, 2005). If the factors that influence student aspirations are identified early, then information, interventions, and resources can be provided to students before high school, allowing them more time and information that can be used in their decision-making process (Gonzalez et al., 2005).

Focusing on fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students opened a new area of research. Previous research had a primary focus on high school students (Cook et al., 2012; Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011; King, 2012; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013; Thomas, 2011). A few studies included middle school students (Bélanger et al., 2009). This study focuses on the lived experiences of elementary college and career readiness teachers and will contribute value to both the community as well as the society at large. Providing insight into college and career readiness for elementary students will

have the potential to begin the development of additional interventions, resources, and information. These interventions, resources, and information can then provide students with the knowledge and support necessary to make a well-educated decision about their participation in postsecondary education.

Rationale for Methodology

A qualitative rather than a quantitative or mixed methods approach to research methodology was used for this study. Silverman (2013) stated that the phenomenological method is a qualitative approach to research where the investigator studies one or more individuals in-depth to understand their lived experiences concerning a specific phenomenon. Hatch (2002) mentioned, in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument in the data collection process. For this study, the researcher conducted in depth interviews related to the specific research question. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999) and Hatch (2002), qualitative research is focused on the participants' perspectives and multiple subjective views. Also, according to Hatch (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2010), an evolving qualitative design is more flexible compared to a quantitative study that follows a tightly pre-established design.

Specifically, Sanders's phenomenology is being used for this study. Gill (2014) discussed Sanders's phenomenology as a method to use within organization studies, to make explicit the implicit essences and meaning of human experiences. This particular methodology was chosen because it provides the researcher the ability to answer the research questions accurately while working with a small number of research participants. Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative research is used when quantitative measures such as statistical analysis do not match the problem. For this particular study, a

qualitative approach was a better fit for our research problem addressing the lived experiences college and career readiness teachers' encounter as they guide fourth-through eighth-grade elementary students from a K-12 district in Phoenix toward their postsecondary aspirations. The ability of the researcher to conduct individual interviews with each study participant as they provided the specific perceptions of their own lived experiences.

Nature of the Research Design for the Study

According to Creswell (2013), several research designs can be used for a qualitative research study including the grounded theory method, and narrative, phenomenological, ethnographic, and case study research. Although there is more than one design that would have been appropriate to use for this study, this researcher followed the procedures for conducting a phenomenological study. Specifically, how a phenomenological study was being used to answer the research question, the sample being studied, and the process that was used to collect the data are outlined below.

The qualitative phenomenological study was been chosen since it provides the researcher the ability to answer the research question accurately while working with a small number of research participants to understand the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they work with students to develop their aspirations. This study was focused on the following research question: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations? For this particular study, the target population consisted of faculty who teach fourth-through eighth-grade

students in a Phoenix area school district, with special emphasis on college or career readiness preparation.

In establishing that a phenomenological method was the most appropriate design for the study, it was necessary to look at the research problem: It is not known how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students from a K-12 district in Phoenix toward their postsecondary aspirations. Compared to other qualitative designs, a phenomenological study was the most appropriate design for this study because it requires a qualitative approach to understand the lived experiences of study participants, and the data collection process was an attempt to understand teachers' perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009; Vagle, 2014). For this particular analysis, the phenomenon being studied was postsecondary aspirations.

According to Husserl (1983), people only know what they have had the opportunity to experience. Since this study was intended to explore the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of the interventions they are using with their students that influence student aspirations, phenomenology fit the framework for this study. The sample for this phenomenological study included college and career readiness teachers who had experience teaching fourth-through eighth-grade elementary students in a specific district in Arizona. Participants were chosen to be part of the sample for this study based on their employment with a specific school district, as well as their willingness to participate in the research.

According to Abigail Adams, learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought with ardor and diligence. It is important to recognize and identify what influences students as they begin to develop their postsecondary aspirations. Revealing individual assumptions provides first-hand descriptions of the thought process that takes place when choosing whether to attend some form of postsecondary education. Phenomenology assisted in this process. This research study was an attempt to represent the experiences of elementary college and career readiness teachers as they work with fourth- through eighth-grade students to develop, understand, and make their decisions about postsecondary education.

Definition of Terms

At this stage in the research, the assumptions that influence the aspirations toward postsecondary education will generally be defined as the beliefs, perspectives, and/or misconceptions that influence a student's decision whether to participate in educational programs offered after high school. The following terms are used operationally in this study:

Aspiration: a strong desire to achieve something noble (Merriam-Webster, 2014, p. 28). This study is focused on the desire to achieve formal education or training after high school.

Assumptions: to take for granted or true though not proved (Merriam-Webster, 2014, p. 28). This study will identify what beliefs or assumptions students have that influence their choice whether to attend postsecondary education.

Elementary school: a school usually including the first six or the first eight grades (Merriam-Webster, 2014, p. 158). Students in this study qualify to attend an elementary school that offers grades kindergarten through eight.

Secondary school: coming after the primary or elementary schools (Merriam-Webster, 2014, p. 447). This definition is included with the purpose to help explain postsecondary school, which for this study is defined as any formal education after high school.

Title I students: are students who attend a school that has been classified as high poverty and receive federal funding used to support academic growth and achievement.

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Based on this qualitative phenomenological study that focused on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they work with fourth- through eighth-grade elementary school students to develop their postsecondary aspirations, the following information has been assumed to be true in this study:

1. It is assumed that participants in this study were not deceptive with their answers and that the participants answered the questions honestly and to the best of their ability. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and the audio was recorded of each interview.
2. It is assumed that this study was an accurate representation of the situation at the time of the study with a small group of faculty who teach within a specific school district in Arizona. All willing participants were included in the study.

The following limitations and delimitations were present in this study:

1. Lack of funding limited the scope of this study. This study was conducted by one person over a short period.
2. Lack of access to college and career readiness teachers at the elementary level limited the scope of this study.

3. A small sample size was used because the researcher was constrained by the recruitment list sent by the district, which resulted in a smaller amount of descriptive data for analysis.
4. The interview used with elementary faculty who taught students was delimited to faculty who taught in a specific school district within Arizona, limiting the demographic sample. The geographic boundaries of the targeted population was motivated by an ease-of-access to the prospective participants.
5. The researcher was an employee of the participating district, had no prior relationship with the study participants, and had limited knowledge of the college and career readiness curriculum. These affiliations are being listed as a potential bias.
6. The researcher did not use bracketing to mitigate bias in the data analysis process.
7. The results of this study are generalizable to the population of faculty who teach fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students. The study sample was determined based on the willingness of faculty to participate in the study, and all participants who agreed to participate were included in the research. If this research were repeated, using the same processes and procedures, the results would be similar.

Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of elementary faculty who teach college and career readiness to fourth- through eighth-grade students. A group of teachers were interviewed using a specific set of questions as a guide to lead the discussion additional bulleted questions were used for follow up when needed. The study sample included college and career readiness teachers who taught students in fourth through eighth grade, from a K-12 district in Phoenix. The current research on student postsecondary aspirations as well as postsecondary education has been reviewed in Chapter 2. The methodology, specific research design, and procedure for this phenomenological study is described in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The fourth chapter details how the data were analyzed and provide written as well as graphic summaries of the results when appropriate. Chapter 5 is a discussion as well as an

interpretation of the results as they relate to the existing body of research on student aspirations toward postsecondary education. The data collection process was completed at the end of December 2016, and the dissertation was completed shortly after that time.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction to the Chapter and Background to the Problem

Many low-income and Title I students do not choose to attend postsecondary education. According to the Kena et al. (2014), only 34% of people ages 25 to 29 had earned a bachelor's or higher degree. When looking at data between 1990 and 2013, the gap between white-black widened by 7% and the gap between white-Hispanic widened by 7%. The purpose of this study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide their fourth through eighth grade students toward their postsecondary aspirations. If the factors that influence students' aspirations are identified early, information, interventions, and resources can be provided at a young age, which can later provide them with additional knowledge and support necessary to make a well-educated decision about their postsecondary education (Gasser, 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2013). Carpenter and Ramirez (2012) found that raising the aspiration levels of low-income students to the same level of middle and upper-income students cannot be accomplished without first understanding the factors that are related to high aspirations.

Dyce, Albold, and Long (2013) stated that 62% of jobs in the United States will require a college education, and half of those jobs will require a four-year degree. If this rate continues, there will be a shortage of 16 to 23 million college-educated people in the workforce by 2025. There is an abundance of research attempting to understand why low-income students are not prevalent in postsecondary institutes. For example, in previous studies (Dyce et al., 2013; Froiland, Patterson, & Davison, 2012; Hill & Wang, 2015; Kim & Díaz, 2013; King, 2012; Kirk et al., 2011; Myers & Myers, 2012; Sciarra &

Ambrosino, 2011), parental influence was the focus, while other research focused on financial considerations (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Kantrowitz, 2013; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013; Tolan, Hossain, & Krom, 2012). Additional research emphasized school support (Barnes & Slate, 2013; Cham, Hughes, West, & Im, 2014; Christofides, Hoy, Milla, & Stengos, 2015; Conley, 2011; Cook et al., 2012; Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson 2013; Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, Akos, & Rose; 2013; Radcliffe & Bos, 2013; Sciarra & Ambrosino, 2011; Thomas, 2011), and personal characteristics (Christofides et al., 2015; Dyce et al., 2013; Gasser, 2012; Johnston, 2012; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Sciarra & Ambrosino 2011, Tolan et al., 2012).

All of these factors are important. However, determining what interventions college and career readiness teachers are using to guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations were still unanswered questions. At the completion of this qualitative phonological study, answers to this question can begin to be developed, and additional knowledge has been added to the existing body of research in relation to student aspirations toward postsecondary education.

The following literature review is being provided as a way to synthesize previously conducted research in relation to student aspirations toward postsecondary education and the variables that influence those aspirations. The literature surveyed in this chapter was from the public domain and accessed from the Grand Canyon University library as well as Google Scholar. The following key terms were used to begin the review of existing literature: postsecondary aspirations, minority aspirations, college aspirations,

postsecondary options. After completing the initial review, five main variables were identified through the examination to attempt to understand the factors that influence a student's decision to pursue postsecondary education, including *parental influences*, *financial considerations*, *school support services*, *personal characteristics*, and *citizenship* with sub-variables embedded into each main variable. Each of these variables was also researched further using the public domain to complete this literature review. At the conclusion of this literature review, it will be clear that extensive research has been completed in relation to student aspirations. However, there is a gap in the research related to the aspirations of elementary students (Guilfoyle, 2013).

Theoretical Foundations

Multiple theoretical foundations have been used to help understand student aspirations. This particular study was derived from the funds of knowledge theory (Moll et al., 1992), status attainment theory (Blau & Duncan, 1967), and social capital theory (Coleman, 1988). Although each of these theoretical foundations could be used individually for this study, using them collectively provided a stronger foundation for this study related to student assumptions that influence their aspirations toward postsecondary education.

Funds of knowledge. In 1992, anthropologists Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg first acknowledged funds of knowledge as a theoretical framework. Researchers Moll et al. (1992) defined funds of knowledge as the body of knowledge and skills that are formed through generations as well as cultural traditions and beliefs. The knowledge and skills gained are used as household or individual resources to improve effectiveness, well-being, and survival. In addition to this study that focused on the lived experiences of

college and career readiness teachers, this model has been used as the theoretical framework by several other researchers.

Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) originally used the funds of knowledge theoretical foundation as a way to explain how working class and low socioeconomic families used their relationships and experiences to compensate for the difficulties that came with their low socioeconomic status. However, the majority of previous studies have used the theoretical framework of funds of knowledge in kindergarten through eighth-grade school settings for two purposes. Researchers Rios-Aguilar, Gravitt, Moll, and Kiyama (2012), used funds of knowledge to gather information from low-income families that resulted in teachers and schools using the information to make connections between the academic standards and the students' home life. Funds of knowledge has also been used by researcher Olmedo (1997) as a way of contesting the deficit model that previously was the focus of studies involving low-income children and their families.

The funds of knowledge framework directly aligns with this study. When working with study participants as they describe their lived experiences as they work with a variety of learners including those that are coming from low socioeconomic status or from homes that are considered to be lacking in the quality of educational experiences offered to their children, the funds of knowledge foundation was recommended (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Kiyama (2011) suggested that the family's fund of knowledge comes from a combination of their personal experiences and the experiences of those who are closest to them. According to Rios-Aguilar et al. (2012), the researcher must first establish a connection to their children, the funds of knowledge foundation is recommended (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Kiyama (2011) suggested that the family's fund of

knowledge comes from a combination of their personal experiences and the experiences of those who are closest to them. The researcher must first establish a connection between the families' fund of knowledge to understand how it affects a student's aspirations including college enrollment and success (Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012).

Status attainment. Status attainment theory was first established in 1967 by researchers Blau and Duncan. The focus of the status attainment model (Blau & Duncan 1967) is an explanation that the amount of education that a person receives directly correlates with where the person is located on the socioeconomic status matrix. This model was found to be lacking by Sewell and Hauser, who added factors associated with ability, aspirations, and the influence of relationships to the status attainment model (Sewell & Hauser, 1972; Sewell & Shah, 1968).

The status attainment model is used by many researchers when studying postsecondary attainment. According to Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2012) and Deil-Amen and Turley (2007), the status attainment model is predominantly found in sociology studies relating to college transition. Using the status attainment model, Wells, Seifert, Park, Padgett, and Umbach (2011) found that the negative effects associated with being from a lower socioeconomic class were increased when looking at the educational attainment levels of students. The status attainment model has been chosen as a theoretical framework for this study because of the selected focus population. This study was focused on how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations.

Social capital. Social capital theory is a theoretical framework originally established by Bourdieu in 1986 and defined by many researchers. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as a collection of resources combined and used as a benefit to all of the members of the group or community. This definition is summarized by Portes (2000), who explained social capital as a group of people building relationships and working together as a way of providing resources for the future. The relationships that are built through social capital provide a way for people to achieve their objectives by working together to combine their knowledge as a way of helping themselves and each other (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, p. 265).

Several researchers have used social capital theory for educational research. Specifically, Cabrera et al. (2006), Gonzalez et al. (2013), Perna (2006), and Perna and Titus (2005) determined that students who have not built or do not have the knowledge of particular systems of social capital have shown a reduced chance of attending college. Coleman (1988) found that social capital theory was a way for students to gain insight, knowledge, beliefs, models, criteria, and opportunities related to education by the direct relationships they have with their family, friends, and others.

Using a combination of the three theoretical constructs as a foundation, funds of knowledge, status attainment, and social capital, this study addressed one primary research question: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations? The funds of knowledge theory (Moll et al., 1992), is directly connected to this study because it looks at what standards are being taught and relating them to the lived experiences of the students and teachers. The status attainment theory

(Blau & Duncan, 1967), is connected to this study by looking at the lived experiences of teachers working at both Title I and non-Title I schools and how the amount of education that the parents students had related to their socioeconomic status and the instruction provide to the students in those groups. Finally, the social capital theory (Coleman, 1988) is present in this study when looking at the different way the teachers were working together with the students to provide additional resources to our future student. The uses of these three theoretical foundations are appropriate for this study because they have previously been employed in areas related to the themes that surfaced throughout the literature review.

Review of the Literature

A wide range of literature exists in relation to a student's postsecondary aspirations and what influences those aspirations. Personal characteristics such as gender, academic performance, and expectations have been shown to have a significant bearing on the outcome of student enrollment in postsecondary institutions (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Christofides et al., 2015; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Johnston, 2012; Wells et al., 2011). Researchers have determined that parental influences, including family background in relation to postsecondary attendance and expressed expectations for children, are also factors that have influenced student aspirations (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2012; Dyce et al., 2013; Froiland et al., 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Kirk et al., 2011; King, 2012; Nora & Crisp, 2012).

The task of actually enrolling in school, being prepared when arriving, and determining how to pay for tuition are also influences on postsecondary attainment. Obtaining enrollment eligibility (Behnke, Piercy, & Diversi, 2004; Kirk et al., 2011;

Gallup-Lumina Foundation, 2015; Klasik, 2011; Lee et al., 2013; Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013), cost of tuition (Kantrowitz, 2013), qualifying for financial aid (Kantrowitz, 2013; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013), and current legislation (Barnes & Slate, 2013; Blume, 2011; Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014; Russell, 2011) are all factors related to a student's citizen status that can influence postsecondary aspirations and attendance.

How well a student has been prepared for college through preparation in elementary and secondary education (Barnes & Slate, 2013; Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca. 2009; King, 2012) as well as the relationships the student has built (Cham et al., 2014; Cook et al., 2012; King, 2012; Sciarra & Ambrosino, 2011; Thomas, 2011) can also influence his or her decision. Once a student has mastered the task of getting into college, determining how to pay for college becomes the next challenge depending on the student's socioeconomic status (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012) as well as his or her knowledge of financial aid (Gallup-Lumina Foundation, 2015; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Kirk et al., 2011; Thomas, 2011). All of these topics and themes were chosen based on a review of existing literature related to student postsecondary aspirations. Below, you will find an explanation of each topic identified through the research, the themes that are related to each topic, and the specific research findings.

Personal characteristics. A person's character is built on numerous traits. However, research (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Johnston, 2012; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Wells et al., 2011) has shown gender, academic performance, and expectations can influence a student's aspirations toward postsecondary education. Carpenter and Ramirez

(2012) found in their quantitative study that the majority of the underachievement gap is manifested in student and family behaviors and characteristics such as parental aspirations, and the composition of each student's family.

Gender. Gender is a common variable used when researching postsecondary aspirations and attainment. Johnston (2012) supported the findings from several other researchers indicating females have surpassed males in multiple aspects of education and at various levels, not only in numbers but also in aspirations, achievement, and completion rates. Blackhurst and Auger (2008) indicated there may be important gender and developmental differences in the career aspirations of elementary school and middle school children, and these differences may have long-term implications for college enrollment rates.

Cooper's (2009) quantitative study identified twelfth grade girls were 8% more likely than boys of the same age to aspire to attain at least a bachelor's degree or higher. The attendance rates for college are rising for both sexes. However, the attendance rate of women is increasing at a faster rate (Johnston, 2012, p. 2). This was supported by Croll's (2009) longitudinal analysis that also found, at approximately the age of 16, female students were approximately 10% more likely than male students were to vocalize their plan to stay in school and pursue a postsecondary degree. He also found the gender gap in post-16 participation between females and males was almost 17 percentage points.

Geckova et al. (2011) found fewer males than females in specialized secondary schools reported the desire to continue further in their studies. Hanson (1994) indicated girls were more likely to have aspirations that did not match their expectations. However, boys were more likely to have both fewer and unrealized educational expectations.

Johnston (2012) reported that boys who grow up in families that do not show a history of postsecondary attainment do not consider postsecondary attainment a masculine trait and will often discourage it.

Hurtado-Ortiz and Gauvain (2007) identified the gender of older siblings can influence student aspirations, specifically stating that older brothers and sisters model different behaviors related to college, including study habits or how they interact with their younger siblings in college-related areas. Lee et al. (2013) identified the effects, although small, of gender as a significant indicator of postsecondary education and girls were more likely to attain higher degrees than boys were. Lee et al. (2013) identified the effects, although small, of gender as a significant indicator of postsecondary education and girls were more likely to attain higher degrees than boys were. On the contrary, Salazar (2013) found no significant difference in the aspirations of males and females.

Academic performance. How well a student performs academically, as well as how confident he or she is academically, can affect his or her aspirations toward postsecondary education. Gasser (2012) suggested that the habits and accomplishments created academically during a student's high school career have a significant effect on the success they experience in college. Alva (1991) went on to say, a student's own personal appraisal of how well prepared he or she is for college is influenced directly by the grade point average he or she carries throughout secondary school.

French, Homer, Popovici, and Robins (2014) showed that the grade point average earned by high school students significantly affected their educational attainment and future job earnings as an adult. Lee, Daniels, Puig, Newgent, and Nam (2008) showed, students who scored high on their math tests were repeatedly more likely to attain a

higher degree later on. This statistic was supported when Cooper (2009), found, a student with mathematic achievement one standard deviation above the mean had a 10% higher probability of aspiring to at least a bachelor's degree in twelfth grade. The effect of academic performance is summed up in a qualitative study by Weiner and Kukla (1970) where they accredited the lack of success to a shortage of skill insinuates that achievement is not an option in the future, whereas a lack of effort implies success is possible with appropriate action.

Aspirations. Many people have heard, and often live by, the old statement “believing is achieving.” Berzin (2011) stated that a variety of influences are linked to high aspirations. For many people, this can go both ways; if one believes one cannot do something, one will not and if one believes one can do something, one will.

Geckova et al. (2011) found that a student's attitude toward school has a significant effect on his or her aspirations. When looking at the role of educational expectations and the attainment process, data showed that the majority of students updated their personal expectations at least once between eighth grade and eight years post-high school (Jacob & Wilder, 2010). Hanson (1994) identified 16% of American students who aspire toward a college degree do not expect to receive one. If we identify the factors students have that are linked to higher aspirations, we can establish interventions that provide valid information that can influence those factors (Berzin, 2011).

Parental influences. Most parents truly do want what they believe is the best for their children. For some, this is the same lifestyle that they had as a child and for others, this is a better lifestyle than what they had growing up. Several researchers (Carpenter &

Ramirez, 2012; Geckova et al., 2011; Kantrowitz, 2013; Kirk et al., 2011; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Kiyama, 2011; Lee2013, Oreopoulos & Petronijevic, 2013; Tolan et al., 2012) have found that parents have a significant effect on their child's aspirations. Their family background along with the expectations they have for their children are two main variables that have been found to influence students' aspirations toward postsecondary education.

Family background. Many factors are included when looking at the composition of a family and how that composition affects a student's aspirations toward postsecondary education. Two of these factors include the highest level of education achieved by an adult in the family and the members of the family who have attended a postsecondary institution. There have been several research studies that focus on the family background of students in relation to their aspirations.

Ziol-Guest, Duncan, and Kalil (2015) found that children from families with only one parent were significantly more likely to drop out than children who lived with both of their biological parents. It also has been consistently shown that there is a parallel relationship between the highest level of parental education and the level of educational aspiration and attainment achieved by their children (Geckova et al., 2011). Bukodi and Goldthorpe (2012) found that children who come from homes where their parents did not attend college are much less likely to be prepared for college than their peers whose parents attended college. Students whose parents had not obtained a postsecondary degree were also more likely to find completing college more challenging than their peers who were living in college-educated families (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015).

A significant correlation was found between generational status and college

aspirations (Salazar, 2013). According to Geckova et al. (2011), the highest level of education parents received correlated with the future educational aspirations of their children. In another study, both the mother's and father's educational level were significant in the effect, but the effect of the father's education was only significant among respondents attending grammar school, where the mother's education was significant for all participants (Geckova et al., 2011).

In addition to parents, other family members influence the postsecondary educational aspirations of students. Of the students who participated, 75% stated that their parents encouraged them, 70% indicated that their siblings encouraged them, and 75% stated that their extended family encouraged them to pursue an education (Medina-Astran, 1996). Johnston (2012) reported that boys who grow up in families that do not show a history of postsecondary attainment do not consider postsecondary attainment a masculine trait and will often discourage it.

Kiyama (2011) identified that students develop their conceptions about college from a combination of both their peers and their family members' personal experiences or modeled attendance in college. Bryan and Griffin (2010) analysis revealed that parents, family, and early education were the strongest factors when choosing whether to attend some form of postsecondary education. According to Jones (2015), older siblings' experiences in postsecondary education have shown an effect on their younger brothers' and sisters' aspirations, specifically stating that older siblings model different behaviors related to college, including study habits or how they interact with their younger siblings in college-related areas.

Expectations for children. Most children look for ways to please their parents and meet their parents' expectations that have been set for them. For some parents, postsecondary education is a priority for their children while others believe it is not a necessity. Research studies (Dyce et al., 2013; Sciarra & Ambrosino, 2011) have shown that the aspirations parents hold for their children often mirror the aspirations that students hold for themselves. Froiland et al. (2012) indicated that when the expectations parents hold toward their children's postsecondary attainment are established early, the effect has a greater influence on eighth-grade students' postsecondary attainment than the overall home-based involvement of their parents.

Behnke et al. (2004) found a broad range of educational aspirations among their respondents. The aspirations of all of the parent participants were parallel to their children's aspirations. However, only slightly more than half of the parents were capable of explaining their child's aspirations for education to the researchers. If parents are unsure of their child's aspirations, the ability to support their children in attaining these aspirations becomes a daunting task. Parents may even be less likely to believe that their children are capable of pursuing higher education, which can result in parenting characteristics that limit their children's opportunities (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, Yeung, & Smith, 1998).

Research has also identified that students are not always sure of what their parents expect them to accomplish in relation to their postsecondary education. Christofides et al. (2015) found that perceived expectations of their parents have both direct and indirect effects on students' aspiration levels toward postsecondary education. Cooper (2009) identified that students who believed that their parents expected them to attain at least a

bachelor's degree were 18% more likely to hold the same aspiration for themselves in twelfth grade. However, according to Kirk et al. (2011), student aspirations were only moderately correlated with their parents' expectations. In this same study, the educational level of the parent did not affect the level of expectations that he or she held for his or her child.

Sciarra and Ambrosino (2011) indicated that parent expectations have a stronger effect on students who do not attempt postsecondary education than on those who attempt but drop out within two years. Although parent expectations have been shown to have a strong effect on student aspirations, it is not the only form of support. Support can be identified in other ways than simply the expectations that parents hold for their children. Parental support can be more physical and include financial assistance, touring colleges, obtaining information about financial aid, and helping to fill out applications and other required forms (Gonzalez et al., 2013).

Children who come from families with high expectations and tangible support are more likely to pursue some form of postsecondary education. Alternatively, parents who do not have experience with college and are not able to provide financial and social resources, tend to have lesser ability to assist with college planning (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2012; Froil et al., 2012; King, 2012). Studies have shown that no matter what socioeconomic status or ethnicity high achieving students come from, they usually have parents who have provided them with motivation, expectations, and an environment conducive to learning in the home (Kim & Díaz, 2013). Froiland et al. (2012) also reported that when students perceived that their parents supported them, the same students identified higher expectations for themselves.

Kiyama (2011) suggested that future research should be completed that specifically examined family aspirations and student aspirations independently to grasp a more thorough understand of how educational beliefs affect postsecondary aspirations. The researcher went on to explain that looking into family and student aspirations independently might result in a clearer understanding of how and if college aspirations are transferred between family members and if they transform into student postsecondary aspirations.

Citizenship. Most students in the United States do not need to think about their citizenship when making decisions about postsecondary education. For many, however, their citizenship status has a significant role in their decision-making process. According to the Pew Research Center (2011), the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States has more than tripled since 1990 to over 11 million. Russell (2011) estimated that each year 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high schools in the United States, only 5-10% of them actually go to college, and the majority of those end up attending a community college.

According to Badger and Yale-Loehr (2008), an undocumented student is “a foreign national who: entered the United States without inspection or with fraudulent documents; or entered legally as a nonimmigrant but then violated the terms of his or her status and remained in the United States without authorization” (p. 1). These students are not automatically eligible for social rights of United States citizens such as the right to work, equal opportunity, and the right to an education. When making decisions about postsecondary education, undocumented students must overcome barriers related to their

enrollment, tuition, financial aid, and legislation that their peers that are United States citizens do not face.

Enrollment. Many low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education are the first in their family to do so and are often on their own or left to depend on their schools to prepare them sufficiently for the enrollment process and college. Chavez, Soriano, and Oliverez (2007) indicated that regardless of the effort that they put into their education, undocumented students who are highly distinguished and earn roles such as high school valedictorian, award winner, and advocate continue to be denied full admittance to enroll in many of the country's postsecondary organizations due to their residency status. According to Oliverez (2006), undocumented students who are highly motivated to obtain higher education and are fully accepted into four-year institutions are often forced into declining their acceptance and end up attending community colleges simply due to the cost of attendance and the lack of aid available to them.

Tuition. In 1996, a federal law was passed that outlawed undocumented students from attaining in-state tuition rates while attending public institutes of higher education, specifically, stating:

an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a state (or a political subdivision) for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit (in no less an amount, duration, and scope) without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident. (Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, 2017)

Although this federal law is in force, the legislation and policies that have been

passed regarding undocumented students receiving in-state tuition rates differ from state to state as well as at the federal level. Several states have been able to find a loophole in the federal law and still provide in-state tuition to undocumented students by not asking any students about their citizenship status or if they are in the United States legally. According to Kantrowitz (2013), the state of California was able to pass the law by qualifying students for in-state tuition based on their attendance or graduation from a high school in California rather than their residency. Additionally, several states have specifically written laws that prohibit public institutions of higher education from offering in-state tuition or tuition discounts for non-US citizens. Arizona, Colorado, and Georgia do not grant in-state tuition for undocumented students, and South Carolina does not allow undocumented migrants to enroll in state colleges.

Financial aid. The high costs of a postsecondary education and the fact that many undocumented students come from low-income families places the possibility of a university education out of reach for them (Beaudry & Green, 2005). Chavez et al. (2007) stated that financial aid is usually not an option for undocumented students and non-US citizens and often presents the greatest challenge that they face when attempting to pursue their postsecondary education. Kantrowitz (2013) stated that with the exception of a few options, student aid, including federal student aid, requires applicants to be United States citizens, permanent residents, or a non-citizen who is eligible under other qualifications. However, a limited number of states permit undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition rates. There are also several private scholarships available to undocumented students.

It is not a requirement for a student's parents to be United States citizens for them to be eligible to receive federal student aid. There are different options for funding depending on the status of the applicant's residency. If a student can show financial need, has a high school diploma or GED, is accepted into a degree or certification program, has a social security number, stays in good standing academically while enrolled, is not past due on other federal loans, and is a United States citizen or non-citizen, he or she is eligible to apply for state and federal aid. The Office of the U.S. Department of Education lists that non-citizen applicants do not qualify for federal student aid if they only have a notice of approval to apply for permanent residency, they reside in the United States with a student visa or on an exchange visitor visa, they hold a G series visa, or are in the United States illegally (Federal Student Aid, 2013).

Undocumented students who are unable to qualify for state and federal aid sometimes develop their own student organizations to serve as support networks as they move through their higher education journey. These organizations work to attempt to fundraise, campaign for students' rights, and increase their access to resources. According to Chavez et al. (2007), these student organizations offer students a support system in an environment that can be unfriendly at times, as well as providing them the opportunity to work together to raise funds for their educational experiences.

Legislation. Although there is no federal or state law that prohibits undocumented students from being admitted into any college in the United States, many undocumented students have been denied the right to participate in postsecondary education due to a variety of policies and practices that have been put into place at the state and federal level (Chavez et al.,2007). This has given students, educators, advocates, legislators, and others

a reason to try to take action to guarantee that undocumented students are given the opportunity to participate in a postsecondary education, should they choose to. Through their efforts, several legislative measures have been created as ways to provide these students with a postsecondary education.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 prohibits individual states from allowing undocumented students to be eligible for postsecondary educational benefits that would not also be available to students who are citizens or nationals living in another state. In 2001, Assembly Bill 540 was signed into law in California. Chavez et al. (2007) indicated that Assembly Bill 540 made postsecondary education more affordable for undocumented students. AB540 provides undocumented students the right to pay in-state tuition at public colleges and universities regardless of their immigration status. To qualify, the student must have attended for at least three years and received a diploma or its equivalent from a California public high school. Texas also passed a law supporting in-state tuition for undocumented students. House Bill 1403 had been adopted in 2003. Like California's Assembly Bill 540, House Bill 1403 allows undocumented students to pay in-state tuition if they graduate from a state high school that they attended for a minimum of three years. In addition, House Bill 1403 also makes state-sponsored financial aid available to these students (Chavez et al., 2007).

According to Badger and Yale-Loehr (2008), although there are several laws and mandates related to undocumented students attending postsecondary institutions, there are two main federal legislative efforts that clarify some of the uncertainty institutions face when determining how to work with undocumented students. These acts include the

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act and the Student Adjustment Act. Both of these bills would provide undocumented students with residency options that are currently not available to them.

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, also known by many as the DREAM act, opens the opportunity for undocumented students to obtain a postsecondary education, legal residency, and ultimately the opportunity for employment. Chavez et al. (2007) stated that the DREAM act legislation would allow many talented undocumented students the possibility to become economic contributors, which would lead to an increase not only in the workforce but also in the revenue for the United States. The DREAM act is considered the only federal policy that has the ability to significantly decrease high school dropout rates nationwide. Under the DREAM act, tuition and ultimately a path to citizenship are only available to undocumented students who graduate from high school.

In the spring of 2001, three members of the House of Representatives proposed the Student Adjustment Act. The purpose of this bill was to give states the right to create their own definition of state residency for tuition purposes. This bill also touched on the financial aid issues of undocumented students by allowing some of them to change their residency status to lawful permanent residents based on specific requirements. However, this bill failed to pass.

Similar to the DREAM Act and the Student Adjustment Act, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program, which is part of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services department, is an executive mandate under President Obama. In June 2012, this mandate served as a means to provide undocumented students who came

to the United States before the age of 16 and before 2007 an opportunity to request consideration for two years with the possibility of extending that time, making them not only eligible to work legally but also the chance for those in good moral standing to become legal residents, making them eligible for federal student aid.

Depending on one's understanding of the immigration laws, education laws, state laws, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, ethics, and postsecondary instructional policies, the question of undocumented students attending postsecondary institutions often provides an unclear answer. Chavez et al.,(2007) stated that many prospective undocumented students are unaware of the options available to them at the postsecondary level. Several community advocates and groups have recently taken on the responsibility of filling this information gap by developing resources and providing workshops and training full of information for future students, parents, and high school and college employees who work with these students.

Although there are legal punishments for aiding people in violation of laws, public institutions providing undocumented students with admission and or housing does not constitute a breach of this law. Nonetheless, these bicultural students are living in two worlds faced with the struggle of being born or spending time somewhere else, but identifying with the culture of growing up as an American (Russell, 2011). According to Beltran (2004), even if these undocumented students are able to maneuver through the system and requirements, overcome barriers related to their enrollment, tuition, financial aid, and legislation that their peers who are United States citizens do not need to face, these students will still find themselves unable to obtain legal employment in the United States.

School support services. Providing an environment that supports academic rigor is a necessity, but not the only function of the education system. It is also necessary to support students through a social system that can increase the possibility that all students will graduate with the skills needed to continue their education at a postsecondary level. Numerous research studies (Conley, 2011; Guilfoyle, 2013; Kiyama, 2011; Medina-Astran, 1996) have been conducted supporting the need to provide students with a variety of resources that prepare them for postsecondary education as well as relationships with others who support aspirations toward postsecondary education.

College prep. A considerable body of research (Barnes & Slate, 2013; Cook et al., 2012; Geckova et al., 2011) suggested for students to be successful in college, our public school system must first provide each individual with the skills necessary to be prepared to enter the postsecondary environment. Conley (2011) defined college readiness as having the contextual expertise and awareness, academic behaviors, key context, and key cognitive strategies necessary to be successful in beginning level general education courses. The research has also identified that each student is different and enters the school system with a variety of needs. Johnston (2012) stated that programs developed to promote postsecondary attainment need to be inclusive of not only the student but also the family, community, and school culture in which the students spend their time. Lieber (2009) explained that a key component to engaging more youth in postsecondary education must be included in high school reform. She went on to explain that this must include school-based models of postsecondary preparations, planning, and support that are more comprehensive.

Through a wide range of social and academic support, the Preuss School at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) campus is doing just this. UCSD, which has developed a charter school located on their campus for middle and high school students from low-income families, utilizes a detracting strategy to deliver the curriculum and provide students with the individual support they need to be successful. Alvarez and Mehan (2006) found the members of the first class of 55 students to graduate from the Preuss School had each been accepted into and planned to attend either a university or community college for the fall semester following graduation. According to Cooper (2009), students enrolled in vocational and general courses were 12% and 9% respectively less likely than students enrolled in college preparatory courses to increase aspirations between the tenth and twelfth grade. Geckova et al. (2011) remarked that educational aspirations are significantly different among students from different educational experiences. Specifically, 86% of grammar school students claimed they wanted to attend some form of postsecondary education; only 56% of specialized secondary school students and only 28% of apprentices had a desire to participate in additional schooling (Geckova et al., 2011).

Schools need to provide students with current information about the variety of options available at the postsecondary level. Roderick et al. (2011) stated that to connect college aspirations with attainment, both high schools and teachers need to have a clear understanding of students' needs to be ready for college as well as a set of standards that can outline the process. A study conducted by the Alexandria (2005) found that students who receive college counseling in middle school held higher aspirations for attending college. Conley (2011) argued that the success of a student's transition into college could

usually be related back to the experiences, both educational as well as personal, that have prepared them for the requirements and difficulty of college.

Relationships. Research clearly suggested that school counselors have the ability to affect students' aspirations toward postsecondary education. Cook et al. (2012), found the postsecondary aspirations that students believed their counselor had for them varied by the type of school and affected whether they met with their counselor to obtain college information. Students have the opportunity to form many different relationships with adults in their schools that can influence their aspirations toward their postsecondary education.

Teachers are at the forefront of students' education. The interactions teachers have with students are actually a form of acknowledging the potential and talents of individual students. Sciarra and Ambrosino (2011) stated that possibly due to a greater understanding of the different postsecondary options, expectations set by teachers might be more accurate compared to those established by parents and students. Medina-Astran conducted a study in 1996 where 85% of the participants agreed that their teachers encouraged them to pursue higher education.

Peers are also an important variable in relation to aspirations toward postsecondary education. In a quantitative study conducted by Puyosa (2009), when looking at enrollment in postsecondary institutions, variables related to community involvement and social networks were the strongest predictors of attendance. According to Cham et al. (2014), students who come from impoverished neighborhoods were influenced the most by their peers when it came to making decisions about college. Cooper (2009) found that students between tenth and twelfth grade who had peers with

higher educational values were more likely than other students to aspire to at least a bachelor's degree.

Geckova et al. (2011) identified those students attending specialized secondary schools who had support from their friends held higher educational aspirations. South, Baumer, and Lutz (2003) revealed, students whose friends exhibited positive behaviors such as attaining good grades, staying in school, and planning for college were significantly less likely to drop out and more likely to attend postsecondary schooling. Hanson (1994) also found people with friends who valued education were more likely to aspire to postsecondary education. Kiyama (2011) stated in her findings that social networks served as informational resources and provided families with clear examples to which they could then aspire. Medina-Astran conducted a study in 1996 where 80% of the participants agreed that their peers encouraged them to pursue higher education.

Financial considerations. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015), the average price in the 2008-2009 school year for annual tuition, room, and board for an undergraduate student was \$12,283 for public institutions and \$31,233 for private institutions. For some families, these amounts of money could be considered unattainable. In a quantitative study conducted by Calderone, Johnson, and Hare (2010), it was found the actual number of students entering college has gone up. However, there is still a significant discrepancy in the enrollment rates of low-income students compared to their peers who come from middle and upper-income families. A variety of researchers (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2012; Geckova et al., 2011; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Sewell & Hauser, 1972) have found the socioeconomic status as well as the limited knowledge of financial aid sources have influenced student aspirations toward postsecondary education.

Socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status can affect many aspects of a child's life. The quality of elementary education a student receives, along with a lack of resources, can lead to limited postsecondary aspirations for students. In quantitative research conducted by Kim and Díaz (2013), low-income children were found to have fewer cognitive enrichment opportunities, both at home and in their neighborhoods.

It was stated that low-income children have fewer books, read less frequently, do not go to the library as often, and spend a lot more time watching television when compared to middle-income children. Buchanan (2006) retested the results of Sewell and Hauser (1972) and found, socioeconomic status is still a strong predictor of a student's postsecondary attainment. She went as far as to state that poor children today will not attain as much education as wealthier children do, and this can seriously affect the future occupational attainment and chance for upward social mobility for these students.

Cooper (2009) stated that twelfth grade students with greater than average socioeconomic status are substantially more likely than students from below average socioeconomic status to aspire to attain a bachelor's degree or higher. Twenty-five percent of lower SES students compared to 12% of upper SES students had aspirations toward postsecondary education that did not correlate with their expectations of attainment. (Hanson, 1994)

Family income dictates residential patterns, which in turn dictates the range and quality of public and private elementary and secondary schools that students are able to attend (Bryan et al., 2009). According to a study conducted by Hu and Kuh (2003), when comparing the postsecondary aspirations and enrollment of students in rural schools to students in non-rural schools, students in rural schools were significantly disadvantaged.

Students who live in neighborhoods falling one standard deviation below the mean on the neighborhood disadvantage index are more than twice as likely to drop out of school as their peers who live in average neighborhoods (South et al., 2003). According to Geckova et al.'s (2011), the unemployment rate of a student's father had an adverse effect on the probability of planning for postsecondary education. Stewart et al. (2007) stated that disadvantaged neighborhoods had a negative influence on student aspirations toward postsecondary education.

Knowledge of financial aid. The thought alone of paying for postsecondary education can be overwhelming for many prospective students. Often, it is this cost that can actually influence a parent's aspirations for their child's postsecondary education. This was shown by Kiyama (2011), who specifically stated that the educational aspirations parents hold for their children were often clouded by the anticipation of financial barriers. Kirk et al. (2011) found that both parents and students listed the cost of postsecondary education as a primary reason for the lack of pursuit.

Cooper (2009) showed how parents perceive the cost and aid of postsecondary education are directly correlated to how their children increased, decreased, or maintained their aspirations toward postsecondary education in tenth through twelfth grades. Geckova et al. (2011) supported this idea with their study showing doubts about the affordability of postsecondary education can be used as a predictor of future aspirations. According to Kirk et al. (2011), parents who held higher expectations were more likely to believe their child would be able to afford to go to college.

Olson and Rosenfield (1984) also found that parents who have college educations usually encompass more knowledge about financial aid including availability and

qualifications than low-income parents do. According to King (2012), approximately one million students did not even apply for federal Pell grants even though they were eligible to receive these awards. Hurtado-Ortiz and Gauvain (2007) identified a positive relationship between acculturation and the perceptions of the affordability of college, specifically suggesting these results imply that less acculturated students may not continue toward postsecondary education because they simply lack the information they need concerning financial resources such as loans, grants, and scholarships.

Current trends in CCR. At the time of this dissertation, there is not a universal definition for College and Career Readiness (CCR). According to Conforti (2013), researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders have tried multiple times in the past to lay out exactly what it means for a student to be college and career ready. However, none of these groups are able to come together to determine exactly what students need to be successful for their life after high school. What can be agreed on is that students need to be prepared for options after high school and not just college. Feller (2014), stated students from all backgrounds and of all ages are provided with more opportunities when the focus is on postsecondary education and not just college. Postsecondary education is simply a commitment to continued learning where college is seen as a place or location.

Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), mentioned the days of getting ready to graduate high school and making a once in a life time choice regarding what you want to be when you grow up are over. For many students, their academic performance or lack of academic performance is what guides them toward their postsecondary path. Hooley, Marriott, and Sampson (2011) argued, students ability to perform academically, their personal aspirations, the flexibility to transition, and the knowledge to plan for their own

career path are necessary skills for students to actually be prepared for either college or careers after high school. College and career development is taught overtime starting at the beginning of school age. It cannot be used at the end of a student's schooling to provide a quick fix against dropping out (Nebbergail and Hamfrick, 2013).

Federal initiatives. With the acknowledgement of a need to make a change in our education system to better prepares our students to be college or career ready introduces a variety of initiatives. This is nothing new. In the early 90's, Congress brought up the lacking skills students had to identify their career goals and to develop the educational foundation necessary to accomplish them. These conversations lead the discussion and establishment of many initiatives including: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), The Alliance for Excellence in Education (AEE), and The School to Work Opportunity Act (STWOA).

In 2009, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Race to the Top initiative were brought to the forefront. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), describe these as a way to encourage an improvement in education to strengthen the curriculum in schools, reinforce academic achievement, and a decrease the dropout rate. This process was seen as a plan to help the current education system, and intensify the competitiveness within the United States. In 2010, The Alliance of Excellence in Education (AEE) was established. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013) suggest that at the time of this legislation, 1.3 million students annually did not reach graduation and that 7,000 students each day were dropping out of our schools.

The School to Work Opportunity Act (STWOA) focused on increasing student engagement as a way to produce better results. Hoyt (2004), clarifies that the act was

based on the theory that if students are given more knowledge of how what they are doing in the classroom is related to the real world they would become more engaged in their own learning. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), stated that the Obama administration identified that making a connection with the education system and the reinforcement of college and career readiness would support economic recovery. Having our students experience real life learning that can be transferred into their postsecondary path. Rothman (2012) stated that there is not a finishing point for career readiness, learners need to be flexible and commit to lifelong learning. Dalton and St. John (2017), found that when a mentor communicates and focuses on experiences, expertise and student interest, the student usually feels supported and excited to work toward their goal.

Career and college readiness skills. Many students have aspirations that lead them to some form of postsecondary education. Conforti (2013) defined readiness as having the knowledge, skills, academic grounding, and fundamentals necessary to ensure success in credit-bearing classes, without remediation. These classes have a variety of means to an end including certification, license, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree. There is not one way or a checklist of skills to prepare students for their postsecondary aspirations. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), stated that career exploration activities aim to achieve a variety of results for the individuals engaged in them. It does not matter if a student is taking an academic or a vocational path, career development and readiness activities can be integrated through multiple areas of the curriculum.

Holzer (2008) identified that how a student performs academically in 8th grade has a greater impact on their postsecondary success after high school than anything that happens scholastically in high school. This aligns with ACT research that shows

providing younger students with more rigorous curriculum in elementary school better prepares them for high school as well as any of their postsecondary aspirations.

Nebbergail and Hamfirck (2013), found beginning career development skills at an early age, provides student with the knowledge necessary to make a choice whether to follow an academic or conventional direction when it is time to make that choice.

There has not been any research that gives a definitive answer about the perfect time to provide students with college and career readiness skills. According to Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), students who were taught and introduced college and career readiness skills in the beginning of their learning through opportunities both in the classroom as well as out of the classroom, show a higher level of academic achievement than those students that did not have exposure or received their instruction later on in their schooling. Nebbergail and Hamfrick, go on to state that college and career development skills are most effective when introduced early and continued throughout the entire learning process. Swanson and Schneider (2013), mentioned that in order to achieve standard and above standard job performance, a person's abilities must match the requirements of the specific job. This is another support for college and career readiness not just being a class you take to check off that you are now prepared for life after high school but actually skills that are differentiated to individual student needs.

The use of technology throughout daily life is consistently improving as well as changing. However, Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), found that technology has the ability to provide additional opportunities for students but if used as the main facilitator of instruction it can be significantly less useful than traditional forms of instruction. The use of technology to enhance classroom instruction allows for student centered differentiation

throughout the instruction. Hooley et al. (2011), found evidence to support the inclusion of students, teachers, counselors, and communities representatives throughout the delivery of an effective college and career readiness program. With the right people and the right tools students can be provide the skills they need across their entire school experience.

Career exploration shills. The postsecondary success varies among stakeholder groups. Dalton and St. John (2017), reported that 25 million students from low-income neighborhoods either do not have jobs or are underemployed. According to Dalton and St. John, this is not because they lack ability but because they were not exposed to college and career readiness training throughout their schooling. A study conducted by Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), found that students who were exposed to college and career readiness skills along with their core academic skills were less likely to drop out of school. However, they also found that college and career readiness programs that did not include a focus on the academic curriculum do not make an impact on student retention rates.

According to legislators, stakeholders, educators, and the community our students are in need of some form of college and career readiness. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), how well a student achieves academically is not enough of a focus to ensure postsecondary success for students. Including career development throughout the curriculum adds another layer of skills students can be exposed to. Hooley et al. (2011) concluded with our consistently changing labor market, students are not able to identify exactly what they want to do when they ‘grow up’. However, the role of the school is to

provide students with knowledge and information about their options based on their own interest which in turn will ultimately help them guide their decision.

Workforce skills. According to Dalton and St. John (2017), in the next 10 years, there will be 23 million job openings due to the lack of available works that have the required skills and education. Often times, the focus in school is lost in insuring that all students have mastered all academic standards. Although having a handle on basic skills is important, Carnevale (2013), stated that communication skills, critical thinking, speaking and active listening are skills that are just as valued in the workforce. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), identified in their quantitative study that eighty-one percent of their respondents reported that if their school had offered more real world opportunities for them as well as job skill training, they felt these activities would have improved their likelihood of graduating from high school. This was also supported by Dalton and St. John (2017), where he identified that the connections that students make in school influence how motivated and prepared they were when they graduated and entered the workforce.

The skills that students leave high school with need to be flexible in order to reflect the needs of the consistently changing economy. Research conducted by Carnevale (2013), mentioned that the days of rote skills and assembly lines are no more, our students are entering a working environment that requires flexibility as well as employees that have more skills and show independence. Providing the same education to all students is no longer the best option for preparing students for careers after high school. Carnevale (2013), stated that in order for students to become competitive among

the workforce, they need to have the right type of talent and knowledge base for their desired field of work.

Active learners are able to do more than just recite or preform a list of basic skills. Feller (2014), states that the true measure of success is when a learner is able to promote their own learning through self-awareness and considering multiple option to create a meaningful life for themselves. Creating a variety of opportunities for our students enables them to have options when preparing for the life after high school. Hooley et al. (2011), suggested that students are more engaged in school and less likely to dropout when they have a goal or an idea about what path they want to take toward their career. This statement is also supported by research conducted by Feller (2014), where it was found that a lack of curiosity and self-awareness, increases the chance for peer pressure and decreases the contention between student specific interest and their natural talents.

According to Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), students who perform well in school are more likely to maintain employment, be covered by health insurance, are less reliant on public assistance, are less likely to participate in illegal activities, more likely to be active members of their community, and are healthier. These benefits support the need to provide students with college and career readiness skills that translate into workforce and postsecondary skills used by our learners. In the end, Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), summarize college and career readiness as a way to provide students with the tools and skills they will need in order to maintain and manage their career throughout their life.

The roles of stakeholders in career and college readiness. There are a variety of variables that have the ability to influence students and their postsecondary options.

According to Hooley et al. (2011), although schools have the ability to influence student's postsecondary aspirations, they are not the only influence. Encompassing multiple aspects into college and career readiness has shown the greatest success. Nebbergail and Hamfrick (2013), found that the largest impact on students postsecondary success are programs that start early into students schooling, use curriculum that is differentiated based on student interest, and expose students to the experiences of multiple stakeholders.

Methodology and instrumentation. While several research studies focus on the many aspects of postsecondary aspirations, there is not as large of a variety of chosen methodologies. This literature review identified previous peer reviewed studies that followed a qualitative approach. While there are several types of qualitative studies, the research identified studies for the literature review that consisted of a variety of methods.

At the time of this study, the researcher was unable to identify any instruments that had been used by previous researchers that would have been appropriate for use in this study. The majority of previous research studies related to postsecondary aspirations use instruments that specifically related to their research study or the results were based on observational data. For this reason, the research created an instrument that was specific to this studies research question and purpose.

Summary

Overall, the majority of the research in the area of student aspiration has focused on high school students with a few studies available that include some middle school students (Bélanger et al., 2009). One possible reason for this could be the additional steps and consents required when working with high-risk populations including children under

the age of 18 in a research study. However, a broad range of research studies, both qualitative and quantitative, are related to students' postsecondary aspirations.

When reviewing the literature related to student postsecondary aspirations, five major themes surfaced: personal characteristics, parental influences, citizenship, school support services, and financial considerations. It is through these specific areas that researchers (Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013) have acknowledged that student assumptions have the ability to have either a positive or a negative influence on their individual aspirations toward postsecondary education. As identified by Bélanger et al. (2009), by the time students are thinking about postsecondary education, many have already excluded or disqualified themselves. Although there is a significantly limited amount of extant research regarding elementary student aspirations toward postsecondary education, several researchers (Bélanger et al., 2009) suggested that student aspirations toward postsecondary education are often developed as early as elementary school. Salazar (2013) also suggested that student aspirations are often engrained at an early age and possible interventions may be more effective if implemented at a young age.

The three theoretical foundations (i.e., funds of knowledge, status attainment, and social capital) used collectively to provide a stronger foundation for this study related to interventions that influence student aspirations toward postsecondary education. Funds of knowledge is defined by researchers Moll et al. (1992) as the body of knowledge and skills that are formed through generations as well as cultural traditions and beliefs. This theoretical foundation is related directly to the themes identified through the review of existing literature, including parental influences as well as school support services.

Status attainment theory, originated by Blau and Duncan (1967) and revised by Sewell and Hauser (1972), explains that the amount of education, one's ability, aspirations, and the influence of relationships directly correlates with where one is positioned on the socioeconomic status matrix. This theory directly correlates to several themes that surfaced throughout the review of the literature including personal characteristics, parental influences, and school support services. Finally, social capital theory, defined by Stanton-Salazar (2001) as a way for people to achieve their objectives by working together to combine their knowledge as a way of helping themselves and each other, is directly related to all of the themes identified through the review of existing literature.

These research findings, theoretical foundations, and the provided review of existing literature provide evidence as well as justification for the necessity to conduct further studies in the area of elementary students' aspirations toward postsecondary education. Silverman (2013) stated that phenomenological research is a qualitative approach to research where the investigator studies one or more individuals in-depth to understand their lived experiences around a specific phenomenon. To understand the lived experiences of the study participants, it is necessary to talk to the individual directly to gain insight into his or her personal experiences related to student's postsecondary aspirations. Therefore, conducting a qualitative, phenomenological study that uses face-to-face interviews to collect data was the most appropriate for this dissertation. Additionally, at the time of this dissertation, there were not any studies related to the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they work with elementary students to develop their postsecondary aspirations. This dissertation is unique because it

provides information about what specific lived experiences college and career readiness teachers experience as they guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations. The following chapter explicates how this phenomenological study was designed and implemented, including the step-by-step methods and procedures that were employed. These procedures include the specific detail related to the research design.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This study focused on how college and career readiness teachers' describe their lived experiences as they guided fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students from a K-12 district in Phoenix toward their postsecondary aspirations. Specifically, it explored the college and career readiness teachers' role, the interventions they use with their students as well as how they identify their students assumptions related to their aspirations. Extensive research (Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013) related to student aspirations has been focused on high school students with a few studies including some middle school students. The purpose of this study was to begin to fill a gap in the previous body of literature by focusing on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they work with elementary students to develop their postsecondary aspirations.

There is one main research question that was answered throughout this study. The question was: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations? The remainder of this chapter will be an outline of the specific details of this particular study including exactly how this study was conducted as well as the details necessary for future replication if desired.

Statement of the Problem

It was not known how college and career readiness teachers' describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students from a K-12 district in Phoenix toward their postsecondary aspirations. Title I students are identified

in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) as students who come from low-income families. It also includes children from families that have migrated to the United States. Although the number of minority students in the United States is steadily increasing, the same trend cannot be seen in postsecondary education enrollment (Kena et al., 2014; Pell Institute, 2005). Blau and Duncan (1967) identified that the most successful way to break the cycle of poverty and stop the reproduction of social inequality was to increase one's level of educational attainment. This is important because when looking at the relationship between poverty and education, a person's highest level of education is related directly to the poverty level.

The need for this research was to identify what elementary college and career readiness teachers describe as their role as they support their fourth through eighth grade students toward the development of their postsecondary aspirations. For this particular study, the focus was on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers who teach fourth through eighth grade elementary students with the idea that aspirations and assumptions are developed long before high school, which is where previous research has focused (Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013). With these assumptions identified, additional interventions can be developed and used to provide students with additional information that, in turn, can positively influence their decision to participate in postsecondary education.

Research Question

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide their fourth through eighth grade students toward their postsecondary aspirations. A qualitative

phenomenological design was chosen since it provides the researcher the ability to answer the research question accurately while working with a small number of research participants to identify their personal experiences related to their lived experiences as they work with their students to develop their postsecondary aspirations. The research question was:

RQ1: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations?

The researcher gained this information through in depth interviews. The document used throughout this process is attached as appendices A. This was the best means of collecting data because it provided the researcher access to the specific lived experiences of the study participants and, according to Giorgi (2009), the preferred way to gather information in a phenomenological study is through interviews.

The perceptions and lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers who teach fourth through eighth grade elementary students was used for the data sample. The use of interviews was not only the preferred method of collecting data in a phenomenological study (Giorgi, 2009); it also allowed the researcher the flexibility to ask follow-up and clarifying questions to ensure the participants' understanding of what was being asked as well as the researcher's understanding of the participants' answers.

Research Methodology

Giorgi (2009) stated a phenomenological study requires a qualitative approach to understand the lived experiences of study participants, and the data collection process attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a

particular phenomenon. Because of the limited amount of extant research found in the area of elementary students postsecondary aspirations, the researcher believed a phenomenological approach was ideal. Understanding the lived experiences elementary college and career readiness teachers have in relation to the interventions they provide their student's as they develop their postsecondary aspirations provided information toward the development of additional interventions and resources (Gonzalez et al., 2005). With the unavailability of a current body of research specifically focused on elementary students, it was necessary to find a means to communicate with those who work directly with fourth through eighth grade elementary students as they form their aspirations.

Throughout this study, data was collected using interviews including open-ended questions as well as short answers. After receiving consent, participants were asked a series of questions (Appendix A) as a way to start the conversation with the participants. If participants were unclear of what was being asked, the researcher restated the question using different wording while maintaining the content of the question. If additional clarification was needed, follow-up questions were asked. All interviews will be conducted by the researcher and taped for future reference and analysis. It was predicted that the information gathered from the interviews could be used as a foundation for determining appropriate interventions and resources that could be utilized within the school systems as a way to provide students with additional information, knowledge, and support that can be employed when making their decision whether to participate in postsecondary education (Gonzalez et al., 2005).

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research approach was used for this study. A qualitative rather than a quantitative or mixed methods approach to research methodology was used for this study. Silverman (2013) stated that the phenomenological method is a qualitative approach to research where the investigator studies one or more individuals in-depth to understand their lived experiences concerning a specific phenomenon. Hatch (2002) mentioned, in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument in the data collection process.

For this study, the researcher conducted in depth interviews related to the specific research question. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999) and Hatch (2002), qualitative research is focused on the participants' perspectives and multiple subjective views. Also, according to Hatch (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2010), an evolving qualitative design is more flexible compared to a quantitative study that follows a tightly pre-established design. According to Husserl (1983), people only know that which they have had the opportunity to experience.

Since this study was intended to explore the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers and what they are doing to guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations as they work with students to explore the opportunity whether to attend some form of postsecondary education, phenomenology seemed to fit the framework for this study. Specifically, Gill (2014) discussed Sanders's phenomenology as a method to use within organization studies, to make explicit the implicit essences and meaning of human experiences. In this study, a phenomenological approach was used rather than a grounded theory approach. Through interviews with elementary teachers,

this study was an attempt to understand the lived experiences of college and career readiness teacher as they guide elementary students toward their postsecondary education. This study was not be an attempt to develop a new theory.

At the time of this study, there were no standardized instruments previously used that could have been adapted to this study. Therefore, the researcher created her own instrument to facilitate a semi-structured interview (appendices A). The inclusion criteria used to find appropriate participants for this study was experience as a college and career readiness teacher, and employment in a specific district in Phoenix. These inclusion criteria were specified as a way to ensure study participants met the specific population for the research question focusing specifically on elementary students in a specific district in Arizona.

Population and Sample Selection

This study incorporated in-depth, semi-structured interviews scheduled by the researcher at the convenience of the study participant. The general population for this study was comprised of K-12 teachers in the state of Arizona who had experience teaching college and career readiness to students. The target population was comprised of fourth-through-eighth grade teachers in a Phoenix area school district who specialize in teaching college and career readiness at the elementary level. The phenomenon of study was students' postsecondary aspirations, as perceived by readiness teachers.

Using criterion-based sampling, participants were recruited by the researcher with the help of the district in which the teachers worked. A list of 12 candidates who met the inclusion criteria was provided to the researcher. The targeted teachers were employed by the participating district, for which the researcher had obtained a site authorization to

access (Appendix G). The list included each candidate's name, school, and e-mail address. The researcher sent all 12 candidates an e-mail (Appendix D) requesting their participation. All but two of the candidates on the recruitment list responded to the researcher with a willingness to participate. Before any interviews or data collection started, all participants signed documents of Informed Consent.

The identified candidates were asked to allow permission for their responses to be included in the results of the study. All identified candidates who agree to participate were included in the study based on meeting the requirements of: current employment within a specific district, and experience in that district teaching college and career readiness to fourth- through eighth- grade students. The only identified candidates who did not participate were the two who declined the researcher's invitation to participate. The researcher did not pursue any candidates that were not already identified through the list provided by the district (a sufficient sample size was obtained by recruiting this list).

After providing the participating district with the inclusion criteria, the district provided the researcher with a list of candidates that met the criteria. The candidates were informed of the research project initially through a recruitment e-mail (Appendix D) that was distributed from the researcher. Follow-up phone calls and e-mails were made by the researcher to schedule interview time as well as location based of each individual's availability. The follow-up phone call was for recruitment purposes only; no data collection took place at this stage. Prior to starting any of the interviews, all of the participants were issued an Informed Consent and the process for maintain their confidentiality was reviewed. Participants submitted signed copies of Informed Consent to the researcher prior to beginning interviews and any data collection, which were then

placed on file with GCU-IRB. All study participants chose for the researcher to go to their place of employment outside of their time with students for the interview. Prior to contacting study participants to ask for their participation in the study, site authorization was obtained from the participating district (Appendix G).

The rationale for setting the sample size is based on the researchers' access to participants as well as the evolving nature of a qualitative study. According to Seidman, Rubin and Rubin (2004), in a phenomenological analysis, there are not a predetermined number of interviews established before data collection. This study required participants who taught college and career readiness to fourth- through eighth- grade elementary students in a specific school district in Arizona. To insure the researcher was able to obtain a richer data set from the limited number of participants, the researcher was able to reference more probing questions (Appendix C) that were used with participants when additional information was needed providing the opportunity for a more robustness of data. Informed Consent paperwork was obtained by all study participants before any interviews were started and data was collected, and a copy was provide to them for their reference. All study participants were from the same district and the district gave their consent to interview the each of the participants.

Sources of Data

Data was gathered using in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interview questions (Appendix C) were used to guide the conversation however, the researcher reserved the right to prompt more to gain additional information regarding the questions that already exist. The inclusion criteria applied in this study included fourth- through eighth- grade college and career readiness teachers that were employed within a specific

district. These inclusion criteria were chosen as a means to maintain the validity of the research questions, which focus specifically on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guide their elementary students within a specific district in Arizona toward their postsecondary aspirations.

Candidates were identifying based on their experience as a college and career readiness teacher and their employment within a specific district. Once study participants agreed to participate and returned Informed Consent, documents, participants were interviewed individually (Appendix C) by the researcher and all interviews were audio recorded for review and analysis. Based on participant preference, the interviews took place at the school at which they worked, at a time that did not interfere with their time with the students. The interviews included three questions to start the conversation, and the researcher anticipated that each interview would take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The data collected through this process was recorded by the researcher, and all interviews were transcribed to identify consistency in responses among research participants.

The instrument used to collect data was created by the researcher. A semi-structured method for conducting interviews was employed. For validity purposes, the researcher audio recorded all interviews and will maintain a copy of the recordings as well as the interview transcripts for a period of five years following the completion of this study. The instrument development for this study was completed through a two-step process. First, the researcher identified sub questions directly related to the study's main Research Questions. Three open ended interview questions were identified and used as an outline for the semi-structured interview with all study participants. Additional questions

and prompting (see Appendix C) were used with those participants needing further guidance or to improve the conversation.

Validity

This research focused on a group of individuals and took place over a short period of time. The results of this study can be found to be both credible and believable, as the researcher provided documentation of the research findings including sample transcripts (Appendix F) of participant interviews, as well as copies of all instruments used to collect data. Due to the researchers' familiarity with the participating district, the researcher knew the context to a large extent and did not use bracketing during the data analyses process. With this information, this research is transferable to other contexts and settings. The context of this investigation, as well as the processes and practices of this research project, has been discussed as a way of providing an additional means to transferability. The results of this study can be confirmed and corroborated by others by following the procedures and documentation used for collecting and analyzing the data.

Reliability

Silverman (2013) defined a phenomenological study as a qualitative approach to understanding the lived experiences of study participants through analyzing people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular phenomenon. In this phenomenological study, in depth interviews (Appendix C) were used where the researcher included interview questions as well as possible probes (Patton, 2002). The information gathered through this process was analyzed to identify participant background, similarities, and differences in responses, and any other information observed that could possibly have an influence on the results of the study. In addition to

the above, all data collected throughout this research project will be retained by the researcher in a secure location for a period of five years following the completion of the study.

Data Collection and Management

This study was conducted after receiving the approval of the dissertation committee, a site authorization from the participating district, approval from the internal review board (IRB), and the permission of participants (via Informed Consent). Before any research began, the dissertation committee approved the prospectus and proposal for this study. After the committee's approval, the IRB was asked to approve all aspects of the study. Once IRB approved the study, participants were recruited and asked for their permission to participate regarding their lived experiences as they teach college and career readiness to children who attend elementary school in a specific district, and are in grades four through eight. Informed consent was obtained prior to the start of each participant's interview.

Data was collected using in depth interviews (Appendix C) used to gather information from individual college and career readiness teachers regarding specific interventions they use with their students as they develop their aspirations toward postsecondary education. Based on the request of the individual participants, interviews were conducted at the school that they worked, at a time that was outside of their time with students. The researcher interviewed each participant individually and privately, ensuring all participants were given the opportunity to respond with their own ideas.

To maintain the participants' anonymity, the recorded interviews were labeled with participant numbers 1 through 10. As part of this confidentiality protocol, the

participant names are substituted with interview numbers and the researcher ensured that there was no correlation to their assigned number. Interviews were also audio recorded to allow the researcher the ability to listen to the interview and transcribe the data for data analysis. To prepare for the data analysis, each interview was recorded, which allowed the researcher the opportunity to transcribe the interviews during the analysis process. Each participant was assigned a number 1 through 10 that was used in place of his or her name to correlate all documents to each participant. All documents and recordings were locked up, and only the researcher had access to the key and location. Although none of the participants did, all of the participants were given the opportunity to opt out at any time throughout the process.

Data Analysis Procedures

This qualitative phenomenological study has been chosen since it provided the researcher the ability to gain a deeper contextual understanding of the lived experiences of the participants as they guide fourth through eighth grade students toward their postsecondary aspirations. The specific research question that was studied was:

RQ1: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations?

College and career readiness teachers who teach students in grades four through eight were asked to participate in the study. The interviews were labeled using numbers as a way to identify participants without using their names. All documents related to each participant had the same number. Information for the research question was gathered through interviews with college and career readiness teachers. The interviews were

conducted by the researcher. All interviews were audio recorded for data analysis by the researcher. The researcher's audio recordings and transcripts were labeled with the participant's number, and no names were included in the results.

According to Wertz et al. (2011), the procedures for a phenomenological psychological analysis need to be explicit, systematic, and accountable (p. 131). An inferential and non-statistical analysis was used to interpret the results of this study. An inductive approach to data analysis, using a three cycle coding process was used by the researcher.

The data analysis processes for this study started during the transcription of audio recordings from data collected through in-depth interviews and taking marginal notes of key phrases identified in the interviews (see Appendix F). The researcher started the first cycle of data analysis while transcribing the interviews. In order to transcribe the interviews, the researcher was required to listen to the audio recording of the interviews multiple times. As the transcription process took place, the researcher was able to generate a list of key words or phrases that were identified during the transcription of the data (see Figure).

The second cycle of the data analysis process consisted of pattern matching. This process included linking similar words or phrases together from the study participants' responses in the interview transcripts. After recording and transcribing the interviews, the researcher looked for trends in the study participants' responses to each question and included those in the results of the study. This process took place after all transcripts from the research participants' interviews were created, and the researcher reviewed them by reading through the text and making marginal notes. According to Saldaña (2016),

pattern matching is appropriate to use when developing major themes from data. The 35 codes were organized using pattern matching to develop similar topics and used to identify patterns among participant responses to create the themes. The specific themes were identified through the third phase by completing this process (see Appendix E).

The third cycle and final phase of the data analysis process for this study was the synthesis phase. This phase involved identifying themes by looking at the patterns that emerged when the codes were sorted by similar topics. The researcher took the participants' responses and merged them into an excel spreadsheet that was set up using each of the five identified themes (from second-round analysis) as columns and each of the study participants as rows. Once the spreadsheet was complete, the researcher reread through all of the responses identifying which responses best captured the idea of each theme. Those responses were included in the findings. A narrative explaining the results as well as a table showing similarities among participant responses is included in the results.

Throughout the entire data analysis process, the researcher interpreted all of the data that were collected and organized using an inductive approach to data analysis and a three cycle coding process. Hence, no preconceived words, phrases, or patterns governed the analytic process in this study. This study describes the expressed lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guided elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. With the final participant number being 10, this being a qualitative phenomenological study used to collect information through open-ended responses, the data analysis process was completed by the researcher and it was not necessary to use a specific commercial program to help with the analysis. Transcribing

the interviews and analyzing the data independently allowed the researcher the ability to be closer and more connected to the data.

Ethical Considerations

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) mentioned that there are not any specific procedures to be used with all qualitative research studies. However, it is imperative that the research is professional and does everything possible to abide by confidentiality, be respectful, honest, and report the results accurately. Ethical considerations were put into place and were approved by the IRB prior to any research being conducted. Prior to collecting any data from the participating district or the study participants, all of the components of the dissertation were submitted to IRB and it was determined by IRB that this study would receive Exempt status.

Subject recruitment was carried out through e-mail (Appendix D) to college and career readiness teachers who taught college and career readiness in a specific district in Phoenix. The informed consent processes (e.g., methods, purpose, and research questions) was completed with all study participants. Informed consent was reviewed and obtained with each participant prior to the start of their interview. Results were labeled so that each participant's identity remained anonymous (non-sequential numeric labeling was used in place of names). To ensure confidentiality, the names of organizations and schools at which participants worked were not disclosed. During the collection and analysis of data, all documents, recordings, and a flash drive with the researcher's work were stored in a locked safe, only accessible by the researcher. All data collected through the process of this study was analyzed only by the researcher herself. After analysis, all notes and data collection instruments were

stored in a secure area for a period of five years. The results of this research study will be published in this dissertation including the data collected related to the college and career readiness teachers' lived experiences as they work with their students to develop their aspirations. However, participant names or identifying information other than what pertains to the study was not included.

Limitations and Delimitations

The main limitations of the research approach and methodology involve the sample size, population, and procedures. A small sample size was a limitation of this study due to the constraints of the recruitment list given to the researcher from the participating district. This resulted in a smaller amount of descriptive data for analysis. Given the chosen population for this study were college and career readiness faculty who work with elementary students, in a specific district, the researcher participated with the school district that the potential study participants were employed, to gain access to the names and contact information for study participants. The sample framework provided by the district included 12 potential study participants. It was believed that this would limit the number of participants for this particular study. After sending out the recruitment material (Appendix D) 10 potential participants agreed to participate. The researcher made sure to have additional probing questions available during the interviews to account for a richer data set from the interviews.

The researcher was required to create the interview instrument used in the data collection process due to the unavailability of previously conducted research in this specific area. The instrumentation and data collection process were limited to information collected over a short period of time with each individual participant. Due to the lack of

funding, the scope of this study was also limited. The analysis of the data was limited to what was collected at the time of the interview. The researcher ensured that the scheduled time with each study participant was planned for and the time was focused on the interview questions (Appendix C).

The researcher was an employee of the participating district. However, the researcher had no prior relationship with the study participants. It should also be noted that although the researcher was employed in the same district as study participants, she had limited knowledge of the college and career readiness curriculum. These affiliations are being listed as a potential bias.

All of the limitations throughout this research study are unavoidable due to the requirements of the participants, including college and career readiness teachers who teach elementary students in grades four through eight in a specific district and the accessibility to this population. However, these limitations did not affect the results negatively, and the results obtained still were able to be used to answer the research question that was the focus of this study. If this study were replicated exactly as it was originally conducted, it is believed comparable results would be found.

Summary

In this qualitative phenomenological study, college and career readiness teachers who teach children in grades four through eight were asked to participate based on their employment in a specific school district and their permission to participate. Data was collected using in depth interviews (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Patton, 2002). The main limitations of this study involve the sample size. However, the number of participants of this study met the requirements of the university as well as a

phenomenological study and will be large enough to represent the desired population.

Although many factors contribute to the possible validity and reliability of the data collected in this study, they were listed, were unavoidable, and did not affect the results obtained. The research question focused on in this study was answered, and the study is replicable if desired. The ethical issues associated with this study have been accounted for, including confidentiality of participants. Chapter 4 includes an in-depth description of the data collection processes as well as the analysis and findings of this phenomenological study.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers described their lived experiences as they guided their fourth-through eighth- grade students from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations. Given that this was a phenomenological study that focused on lived experiences it was feasible for the researcher to gain this information through an in-depth interview with the teachers who worked directly with the elementary students. Potential participants were recruited through e-mail (Appendix D) using the e-mail addresses provided by the participating district. Interviews were scheduled with 10 of the 12 potential study participants. Based on the request of the study participants, interviews were conducted at the school that they worked, during a time that did not interfere with the time they had with their students. After receiving consent, participants were asked a series of questions (Appendix C) as a way to start the conversation with the participants. If participants were unclear of what was being asked, the researcher restated the question using different wording while maintaining the content of the question. If additional clarification was needed, follow-up questions were asked. All interviews were conducted by the researcher and audio recorded for reference and analysis.

The researcher started each interview with three interview questions that focused on one research question: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth-through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. In this chapter, the researcher provides a description of the study participants, a summary of the collected data, how it was analyzed, and the

study's findings. The findings are the themes that emerged from the interviews with college and career readiness teachers as they described their lived experiences as teachers who guide elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations.

Descriptive Data

There were 10 participants in this research study. An e-mail (Appendix D) was sent to the 12 potential participants that were identified with the help of the participating district. The 10 participants were certified teachers and, at some point in their career, an elementary college and career readiness teacher for a specific district within the Phoenix area. Although not an inclusion requirement for the study, the participating district also required all of the college and career readiness teachers to be appropriately certified as both teachers as well as councilors. However, not all college and career readiness teachers had previous classroom teaching experience or experience in a formal counseling position.

The specific characteristics of the 10 study participants are outlined as follows, as well as represented in Figure 1. The study sample included four male participants and six female participants. Seven of the study participants had prior experience teaching in a classroom and three of the participants had no classroom experience. Six of the 10 study participants were currently teaching college and career readiness to elementary students and four participants had taught college and career readiness to elementary students within the five years previous to the date of this study. The years of experience teaching college and career readiness to elementary students varied among participants ranging from their first year to fourth year. Five of the participants were new that school year to the college and career readiness position. Two of the participants had taught for two

years, one for three years, and two for four years. The position placement also varied among participants. Eight of the study participants had been placed halftime at two different elementary schools and two of the study participants had been placed fulltime at one elementary school. All of this descriptive data was obtained through the conversation that was had using the interview instrument (Appendix C) as the guide.

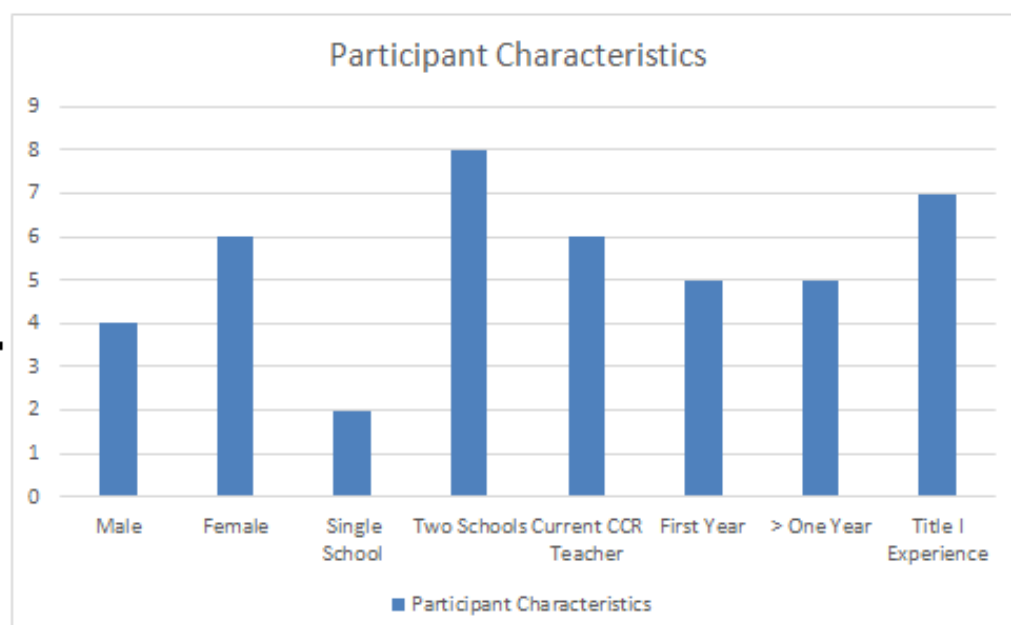


Figure 1. Participant characteristics

Although the study participant characteristics varied, according to the participating district, all college and career readiness teachers were required to be highly qualified and appropriately certified. They were all willing to participate and were open to having an honest conversation with the researcher regarding their experiences as elementary college and career readiness teachers. On request of the study participant, the researcher met each of the study participants at their place of employment. The researcher scheduled an hour and a half for each interview to provide enough time to complete the interview. Before the audio recording started, the researcher reviewed the background of the study, the

formal consent, and answered any questions. The recorded interviews varied in length among participants ranging from approximately 19 minutes to an hour and 5 minutes. However, there were three study participants that, even with probing, did not elaborate on some of the questions. This resulted in a shorter recorded interview. However the actual time spent with each study participant was over an hour. Table 1 breaks down this raw data based on each individual participant. The “per recording time” column (middle) represents the total data collection time spent with each participant.

Table 1

Breakdown of Interview Data by Participant

Participant	Interview duration (per recording time)	Number of pages (single spaced) of transcripts obtained
1	00:50:23	15 pages
2	00:36:25	10 pages
3	01:04:36	20 pages
4	00:27:11	19 pages
5	00:48:38	24 pages
6	00:48:21	27 pages
7	00:59:20	27 pages
8	00:23:45	27 pages
9	00:59:24	21 pages
10	00:19:19	8 pages

Data Analysis Procedures

In an effort to make the data analysis process easier to understand, a data analysis figure was created. In Figure 2, identified below, using a three cycle coding process taken by the researcher to conduct an inductive approach to data analysis is displayed. Each cycle of the data analysis process is listed followed by a brief description of the actions performed by the researcher.

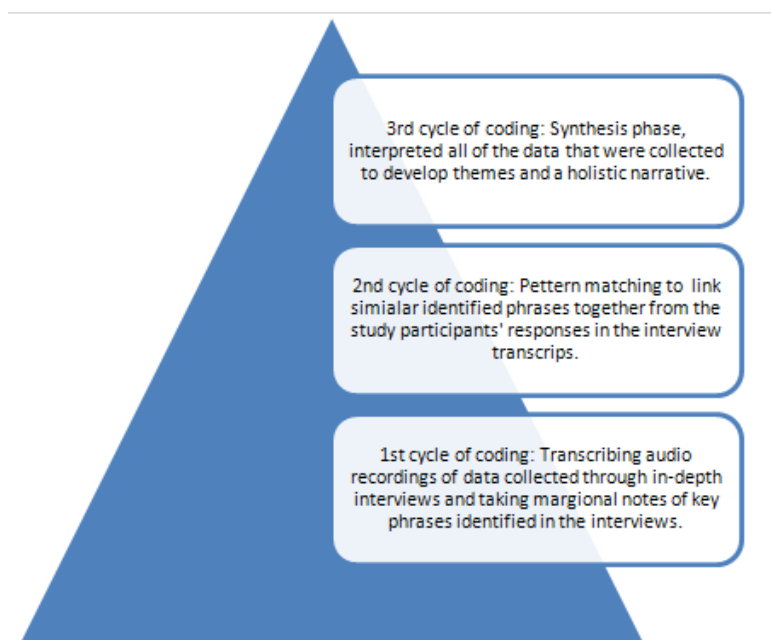


Figure 2. Process steps leading to data analysis.

According to Wertz et al. (2011), the procedures for a phenomenological psychological analysis need to be explicit, systematic, and accountable (p. 131). An inferential and non-statistical analysis was used to interpret the results of this study. An inductive approach to data analysis, using a three cycle coding process was used by the researcher.

The data analysis processes for this study started during the transcription of audio recordings from data collected through in-depth interviews and taking marginal notes of key phrases identified in the interviews. The researcher started the first cycle of data analysis while transcribing the interviews. In order to transcribe the interviews, the researcher was required to listen to the audio recording of the interviews multiple times. As the transcription process took place, the researcher was able to generate a list of key words or phrases (Appendix E) that were identified during the transcription of the data.

The second cycle of the data analysis process consisted of pattern matching. This process included linking similar words or phrases together from the study participants'

responses in the interview transcripts. After recording and transcribing the interviews, the researcher looked for trends in the study participants' responses to each question and included those in the results of the study. This process took place after all transcripts from the research participants' interviews were created, and the researcher reviewed them by reading through the text and making marginal notes (Appendix D). Figure 3 shows the next step where the 35 codes from participant interviews were combined and organized into one document using Microsoft Word. According to Saldaña (2016), pattern matching is appropriate to use when developing major themes from data. The 35 codes were organized using pattern matching to develop similar topics and used to identify patterns among participant responses to create the themes. The specific themes were identified through the third phase by completing this process.

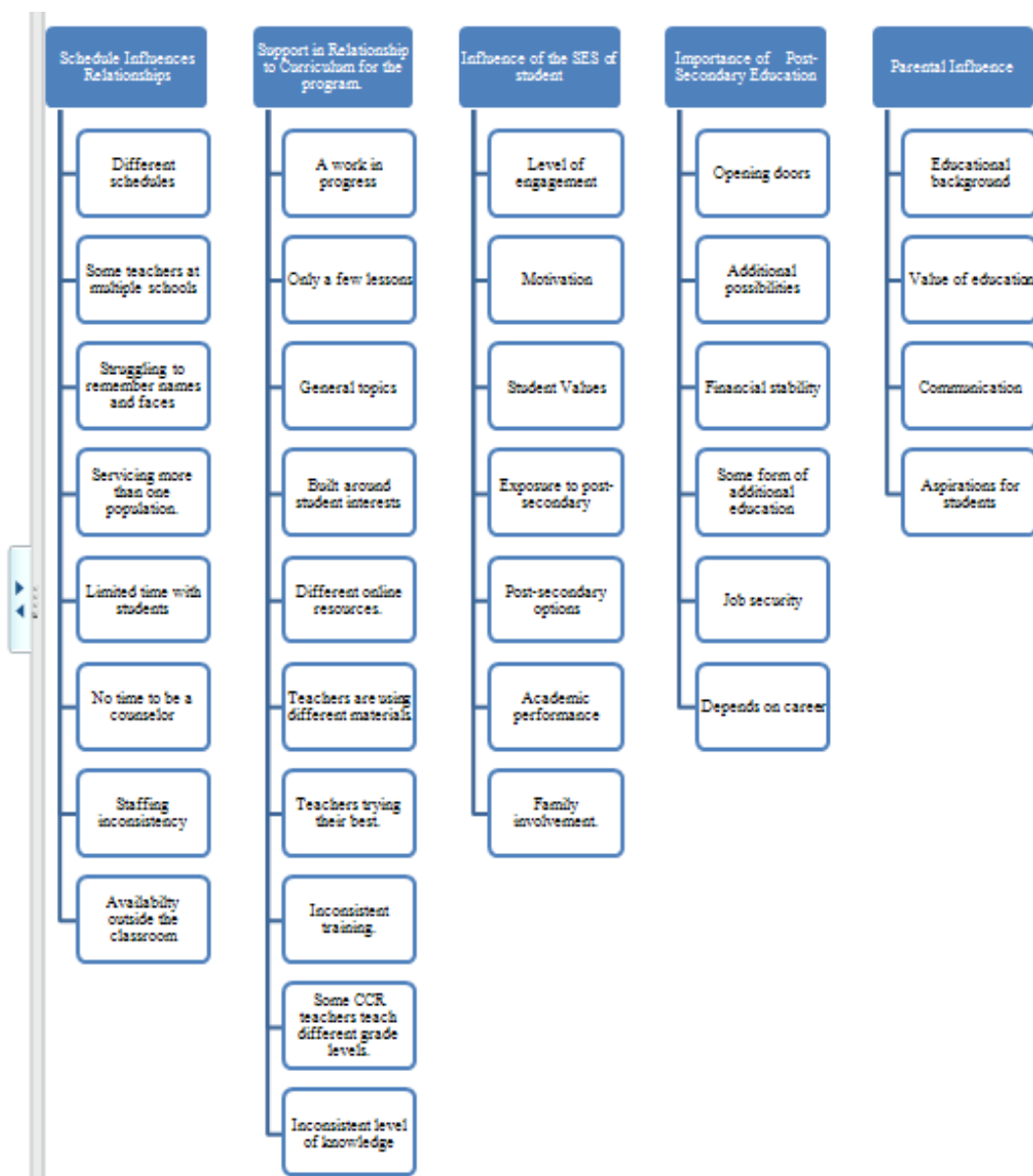


Figure 3. Codes to themes.

The third cycle and final phase of the data analysis process for this study was the synthesis phase. This phase involved identifying themes by looking at the patterns that emerged when the codes were sorted by similar topics. The researcher took the participants' responses and merged them into an excel spreadsheet (Appendix E) that was set up using each of the five identified themes as columns and each of the study participants as rows. Once the spreadsheet was complete, the researcher reread through

all of the responses identifying which responses best captured the idea of each theme. Those responses were included in the findings. A narrative explaining the results as well as a table showing similarities among participant responses is included in the results.

Throughout the entire data analysis process, the researcher interpreted all of the data that were collected and organized using an inductive approach to data analysis and a three cycle coding process. This process describes the expressed lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guided elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. With a final participant number being 10, this being a qualitative phenomenological study used to collect information through open-ended responses, the data analysis process was completed by the researcher and it was not necessary to use a specific commercial program to help with the analysis. Transcribing the interviews and analyzing the data independently allowed the researcher the ability to be closer and more connected to the data (Almeida & Silva Filho, 2012).

Results

This section presents an analysis of the data in an organized manner that relates to the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guided elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. Initially, 35 codes (Figure 2) emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts. From these 35 codes, five themes emerged and were analyzed to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guided their students toward their postsecondary aspirations. The themes were: The idea that the structure of the schedule influences relationships; the influence of school support in relation to curriculum for the college and career readiness program; the influence of the socioeconomic status of the students in relation to the

teacher's instructional outcomes; the importance of postsecondary education; and parental influence in relation to student aspirations. This section is written using the words of the participants. Their words are significant because they offer insight into their experiences as college and career readiness teachers. Figure 4 identifies the number of participant with similar responses for each of the 5 themes.

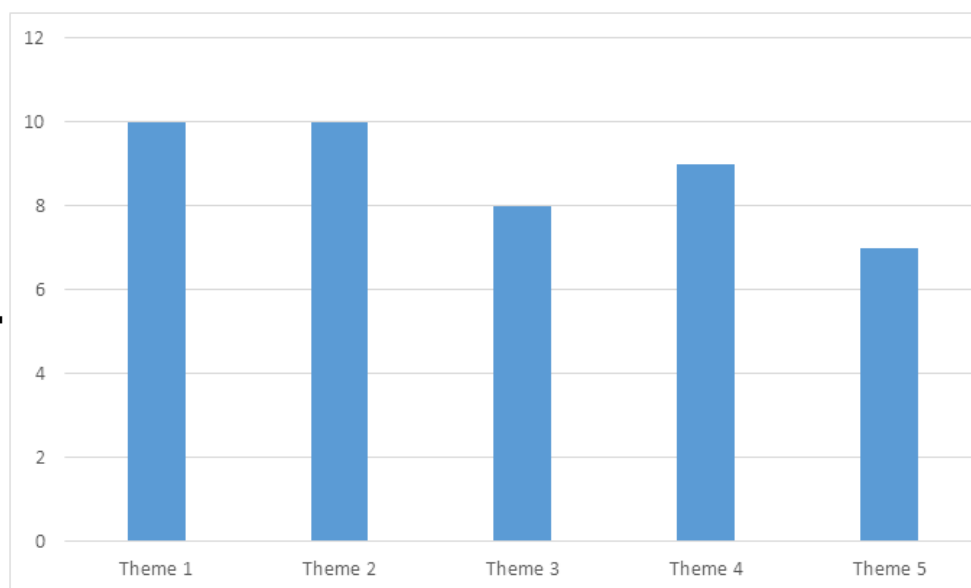


Figure 4. Participants with similar responses for each theme.

Theme #1: The structure of the schedule influences relationships. When participants were asked to tell the researcher about their experience as a college and career readiness teacher, all 10 of the study participant brought up their schedule in the conversation and how it affects their ability to develop relationships with students.

Participant 1 stated:

If I am able to build relationships with my students, it will make a big difference.

At one school I feel like I have been able to find some time on my prep to build relationships. At the other school I feel like I am simply dealing with behavior

and spending my extra time meeting with kids building relationship because of their behavior not because of my position as a college and career readiness teacher. Being at two schools we see so many students. We do not have necessarily the time to build relationships with them and I feel that I am still struggling to remember names and faces. Being on one campus you can build those relationships and sort of focus on the one population versus having two different populations.

Although all of the college and career readiness teachers were certified councilors, none of them thought their position offered them the flexibility to council students actively or build relationships.

The way a school runs their schedule is usually dictated by the school principal and created based on a combination of the allocated staffing and number of students needing to be serviced. Participant 3 discussed the differences between her to schedules as

I didn't get to know the kids as well at one school as I did at the other because I saw every class every week. So I was able to build that rapport, at the other school, I only had the kids a couple of days. I mean for the eighth graders, I think I connected with them more because they really took off with the project but for some of the younger kids. It was harder for me to remember the younger kids' names because it was more study skills and with the little time you have it was hard. All the schools have a different schedule for CCR and you're not going to have consistency if it's made like that. I also think that CCR teacher would be great to just have one per campus. In this time and age of the CCR having one per

campus is important because the role of the CCR teacher was being a CCR teacher not a counselor. And I really wish it would be CCR fifth through eighth grade half a day and the other half be the counselor. Some of those things the kids are dealing with are affecting their aspirations. We have a counselor there...yes but she's teaching . . . I was eating my lunch in the car coming from the other school because there was no time.

One study participant discussed that there was a need to find create ways to build relationships outside of the classroom in order to connect with the students. In conversation during the interview, Participant 5 described their experience

I go to the dances as many as I can and I go to games. I can and I know some of the CCR teachers don't do that because they said it's just really hard. I'm probably fortunate that my children are raised, so, I am able to go to their events and show them that I'm here for you outside of the classroom. I feel like the kids even though it's a specials class, if you stay at the same school, they get to know you and it's good if the CCR teachers don't trade schools or like quit.

All ten of the study participants communicated the desire for a consistent schedule among their schools as well as other college and career readiness teachers. However, the research found through the discussion, that all of the study participants had different schedules.

With the exception of two college and career readiness teachers, all of the study participants were placed half-time at two different schools servicing a combination of fourth- through eighth grade elementary students. Participant 7 expressed, "Staying at the same school, you really built relationships with the kids that they feel comfortable that

they know you well enough that they could come up to you and have conversations without you directing a conversation.” All of the study participants agreed that being placed at one school rather than between two schools made a difference in the ability to build relationships.

The two college and career readiness teachers who participated in the study and were only placed at one school on one campus also believed their schedules influenced the relationships they were able to build with their students. Participant 2 states

If I was at two schools my position would be different because I think I would have a bit more spread. Three weeks is not a miracle time and I can't make miracles but I can plant seeds and so I planted some seeds with some of my students, and now that I do not have them anymore, they come and find me during the recess. But if I don't put in the work, and the time which I know nobody else with the flip flopping schedules can do. There's no way, no way because the students feel like: I don't trust you, you're not here now. Who are your strangers?

You can't tell me about my life? Who are you to tell about my life my choice?

Both participants agreed that being on one campus was better than being on two campuses. Having the ability to stay on one campus and not travel between two campuses every day provided them the sense of belonging and opened opportunities for building relationships.

All 10 of the participants reflected on their experiences and reported a similar situation. They believed that because their schedules dictated how often and for how long they were able to service their students in a college and career readiness classroom, there was a direct influence on the relationships that they were able to build with their students.

They thought that being at two different schools each day prevented them from building solid relationships. Figure 5 portrays the number of participants that were at 1 school verses 2 schools.

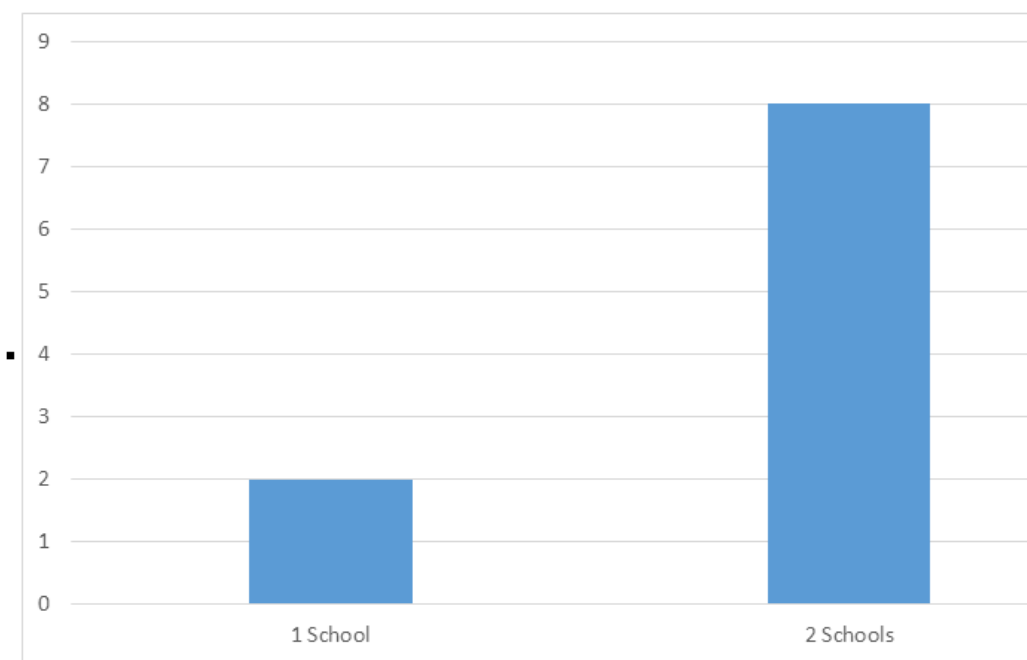


Figure 5. Number of schools each participant was placed at.

Theme #2: School and district support in relationship to the curriculum.

How do you determine the interventions you use to guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations was the second interview question. The information shared during the college and career readiness course regarding these requirements and options was inconsistent across different schools. Participant 1 discussed this experience

CCR is definitely a work in progress because I am very new to the position. There are only a few lessons with general topic to focus on for a time frame. I base my lessons on what the students feel like they want to be when they grow up, they

exploring careers, jobs and the different possibilities that they have within those jobs and careers. I give them the flexibility of choosing a career that they're interested in and finding out more about it. My lessons are basically built around the student's interest. If my students are not interested, why I am going to teach them about that if they have no interest.

When asked about the curriculum that was being used during this conversation, participant 4 also discussed a level of frustration

I was told to go to the AZCIS website, there you go, there's your program. I said, "Well, wait a second. What are our objectives? What are we supposed to be doing with kids?" I mean there's no guidelines that even say, "You know eighth grade would like to cover this." Which basically means that most of the time every school's doing something different.

Participant 2 described the situation as being "lucky" because there was somewhere to start when planning lessons for the students.

I'm going off the Arizona state standards and using their road to college and career readiness model. I use this model to make sure I'm within the rules of the district and making sure I'm within state rules and improve my data and all that. On professional development Mondays, we (CCR teachers) all come together and I get my materials from them. I guess my position that I have which I was fortunate to have, I was lucky the lady that had it before me was the actual lead for CCR. So I have all the curriculum paper stuff and she has everything spelled out really good for me. Fifth grade to me is more like the Who am I learning styles, interest inventory, different things in that aspect because you have to start

somewhere. A lot of kids in fifth and sixth grade are not going to know what they want to do, so that's important.

The summer before the first school year that college and career readiness was offered, the teachers were brought together to receive training before their first day of school with students. Participant 3 mentioned the need to continue this training.

If we were able to have the training we had in the first summer that would be great but the new people they try their best. We were told originally that the position was teaching fifth to eighth grade but colleagues of mine said well I'm teaching fourth grade too and it's like what are you going to teach because the curriculum we're working on is fifth to eight grade and you can't repeat something fourth grade that they're going to see in fifth grade.

Throughout the interviews with the study participants it was clear that there were a variety of different approaches to teaching college and career readiness and all of the study participants fluctuated what they were using based on the materials they had as well as the resources that they knew about and were provided.

In discussion of the interventions that college and career readiness teachers use with their students, the question of how familiar are you regarding the admission requirements and placement policies for different postsecondary options came up. When asked, Participant 2 states

When it comes to the admission requirements and policies for postsecondary options, I am just a little familiar, not very much. I haven't really talked about it with the kids yet because it has not come up. I like that the students know I am real. Just because I do not know the answers, we look it up real quick.

Participant 8 had experienced with children that had attended high school however, was still not exactly clear of all of the admission requirements.

I don't know specifically what Dysart requires for graduation but I know the basic just coming from my previous experiences. Kids have to have four years of English, four years of Math, those kinds of things. But I know there's a CTE program in I think it's on each one of the high schools.

Although the reason is unknown to the research, many of the study participants were unaware of the requirements that students needed to meet in order to be eligible to attend some form of postsecondary education after high school.

The participating district offered a variety of signature programs to their students based on student specific interest. During the conversation, Participant 9 mentioned the different signature programs and shared

So, I share with all the students we have a fabulous district that offers all these signature programs, and so, some students will tell me I can't go to a specific school because my mom and dad work. So I share with them how sometimes as a junior you'll be able to drive or sometimes things work out for you, junior, senior year you might be able to go to a trade school and high school. I share with them the other avenues. We have signature videos that I show and I've shared with the other CCR teachers how to do that. So I share those videos and then I have the kids do a video response to it.

Through conversation during the interviews, it was also identified that all study participants were unaware of the different options their students had in relation to signature programs that led to postsecondary education at the different high schools

within their district. Participant 7 had changed from a college and career readiness teacher to a high school counselor and honestly stated

I did not know anything about the signature programs that the district offers. The idea that different high schools offered different programs based on student interest was foreign to me. It was not until I became a high school counselor that I learned about all the wonderful opportunities that are offered by our district.

All 10 of the study participants agreed that the college and career readiness program would be more effective if all teachers were teaching the same curriculum or set of standards. All of the study participants mentioned that they would like to have an actual curriculum that they could use to teach college and career readiness to their students. The overall suggestion was to provide college and career readiness teachers with a set of objectives that should be taught with each grade level.

Theme #3: Socioeconomic status of students influenced instruction. Although the researcher did not ask any direct questions related to the socioeconomic status of the students, when study participants were asked to tell about their experience as a college and career readiness teacher, 8 out of 10 of the participants discussed a different experience at a Title I school versus a non-Title I school. This is described by Participant 6

At one school, the students are talking about college right and left, that's just what they are planning on doing but my other school that is a Title I school, not as much of that college push. The students do not see postsecondary education as even an option for themselves, the students are just so focused on what is happening today.

The study participants stated that what they focused on and were able to teach at a Title I school varied from what they were able to do at a non-Title I school. With frustration,

Participant 1 explained their experience at the two different schools

At one school I feel like I am actually able to teach. The students are more flexible and if I tell them to work they actually listen and engage in those instructions versus over at the other school (which is Title I), I do not feel like they have any motivation. I feel like they don't have the interest in CCR at all. I spend my time sorting out discipline problems. I feel like the difference is definitely the environment. The way that they are being raised. The things that they actually value.

The difference in academic ability between Title I and non-Title I schools was discussed by participant 9

At the Title I schools, the students do not know a lot of terms that the students at a non-Title I school know. When I talk about terms, things that I think an eighth grader should absolutely know and they have no clue what I'm talking about. The students' academic ability a lot of times are much lower with the kiddos at a Title I school.

Parent involvement and the conversations they have with their children seemed to also vary at Title I schools verses non-Title I schools. Participant 3 explains their experience

I think at one of my schools a lot of kids have the idea that their parents are making them do this they want us to go somewhere blah, blah, blah. At my other school (which is Title I) I just try to get the students exposed over there. If the parents do want their kids to go to college they do not know how to get them

there. The kids at my non-Title I school say that we know we have to do better and I will ask what does that mean you have to do better. They say well our parents want us to go to high school but then more than high school. I follow up with: you want to go to a university, do they want you to go to trade school. Some of the students at my Title I school know that they need to continue but they do not know how to get there and some of their parents do not know how to get their children in there because it's generation, there's three or four generations. The difference is at my non-Title I school, I have a group that has gone through college, so the kids know it is an expectation you need to do. At my Title I school, it is like the students know they need to get there but we don't know how, so that was different and I wish I could have done more to get them where they need to in that sense. Their parents just do not know what to do to help their kids. So you have to take that into consideration, not lower the bar, but they don't have the same resources, as their teacher, how can I help them.

The parent involvement related to the conversations that parents have with their students as well as how disciplined the students were was discussed by Participant 10

Parents are more involved at a non-Title I school. When parents are really involved in the student's lives, it makes a difference in their behavior and you can make a phone call when anything happened and it is fixed. At my Title I school the students do not care they say "Call my mom."

With sympathy, participant 7 expressed their experience at both Title I and non-Title I schools

My experience is at Title I schools, some of the parents were working two or three jobs just to make ends meet and so yeah they are doing all they can just to keep a roof over their head. There may not be that extra time to say, “You know, have you thought about college?”

Although the study participants’ placement varied from teaching only at Title I schools, teaching only at non-Title I schools, and teaching at one Title I school and one non-Title I school, the overall consensus was the same. What was taught in the college and career readiness class at a Title I school was different than what was taught at a non-Title I school within the same district. The focus was on what interventions used to guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations.

Theme #4: Importance of postsecondary education to students. As a follow up to interview question 3, study participants were asked how important they thought it will be in the future for their students to have a degree or professional certificate beyond their high school diploma and why. All but one study participant agreed that it was important to their students’ future for them to attain some form of postsecondary education. However, the justification for the importance of education varied among participants from financially to personally. Participant 1 explained that education is important both financially as well as personally.

I think postsecondary education is very important. It brings a lot more possibilities and I feel that as much as it brings more income it also opens a lot of doors within yourself. I feel that education is a way of opening yourself to view the world in a different way versus not having an education.

The senses of accomplishment as well as the financial security were two influences on the justification for postsecondary education by Participant 10.

I think postsecondary education is very important. It gives the students that sense of accomplishment and if you have some kind of degree or certificate you're going to have some kind of job out there, some job placement, you are certified in something which in turn can probably make more money and just feel better about yourself in the long run. I think it's very important and I've got to push that.

Being "happy" as an adult was most important to Participant 7 although they also agreed that it for financial reasons a postsecondary education is important.

Financially, I would think postsecondary education is important. But if there is something they really want to do and they don't need a degree, I am for that too. But I think it is important in order for them to be financially stable. In a perfect world we want everyone to go college and make a great living and all that stuff. But you don't have to go to college to make a great living. I think as long as they are happy and they know what they want to do and they are financially stable. It is only important if it fits their needs.

The ability to financially support yourself as an adult was identified by Participant 4 as the reason why some form of postsecondary education is important.

For this generation, I think a postsecondary education is really important. I think it's going to be really hard to find a job that you can live off of without some kind of advanced degree. That does not mean it has to be college, students are going to just need some form of postsecondary education. Something to get them a job that they're going to be able to live off of.

Whether it is college, trade school or some other form of postsecondary education, Participant 5 also identified financial reasons for the importance of a postsecondary education.

If you want to make a decent living...I think you need something pass high school but I think it depends on the student. If you are not gifted academically as much as we, teachers want our students to be successful and I think we do everything we can, some children have disabilities, they have struggles, for some student, school is not easy for them. Being a mechanic might be easy for them, they still have to have schooling to go through the paperwork part of it. I like the signature programs the district offers for this reason.

The one study participant that did not believe it was important for their students to obtain some form of postsecondary education used their own experience as a justification.

Participate 8 explains

I honestly don't think postsecondary education will be very important to our students. Even right now it's not that important. For instance my ex-wife, she dropped out of high school, got her GED but she doesn't have a college degree and she makes more money than I do. Even the managers at QT, they make more than some teachers do.

There are always outliers in any scenario. However, 9 of the 10 study participants believed that it was important for their students to obtain some form of postsecondary education. However the importance was not always communicated to their students.

Theme #5: Parental influence in relationship to student aspirations. What do you think are the main reasons why some students attend some form of postsecondary

education and others do not was a follow up question used with interview question 3.

Figure 6 represents the number of study participants that directly identified family as the greatest influence on their students' aspirations.

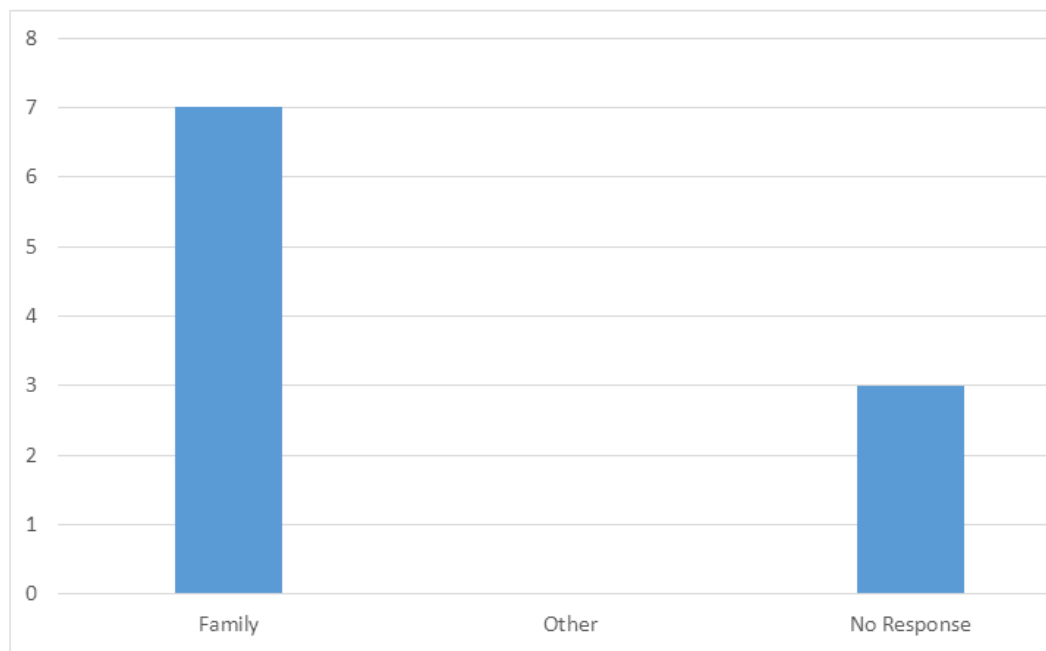


Figure 6. Greatest influence on student aspirations.

Regardless of whether the study participant was teaching at a Title I school or a non-Title I school, 7 out of the 10 participants thought that the greatest influence on their student's aspirations toward postsecondary education was parental. Participant 7 justifies their response.

Parents for sure are the greatest influence on students' postsecondary aspirations, that would be number one and then of course the teachers and their education system. Some of the students say "my parents don't care so why should I care?" Eventually, after time the students' parents are called and then the parents, they validate it.

The value of postsecondary education that parents communicate to their children was the justification for Participant 5 response that parents play the greatest role.

If the parents don't value education the students do not seem to – some of them do, some of them are just bright themselves but the parents do not value postsecondary education then they themselves do not see the value.

The personal experiences of Participant 4 were part of the justification for parents being the greatest influence on their children's aspirations.

I think parents definitely play a part in their child's postsecondary aspirations. A lot of my students knew they were going to college but did not know why or what they were going to do. Again from parents. My own personal children, they know they're going to college; they just have no idea what they are going for. All three of the schools I have worked at were not considered Title I. Many of the kids have parents that have gone to college for their education.

Participant 8 discussed their personal experience about how parental influence had a negative effect on their children's postsecondary aspirations.

I think home influences my student's postsecondary aspirations. My step-daughter her dad -- like she is actually going to ASU and her dad was like, "Why are going to ASU? You don't need to go to ASU, it's too expensive." So more parental influence. We have kiddos whose parents don't really care about their grades...if parents aren't making education a priority then why will the kids.

Many of the study participants had experience working with both Title I as well as non-Title I students. The results from the interviews with the study participants identified that parents had the greatest influence regardless of the Title I status. The students that

were most successful and received the most from the college and career readiness class were those students who were influenced by the postsecondary aspirations that their parents had for them.

Summary

As the college and career readiness teachers who participated in this study shared their lived experiences as they guided fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations, five major themes related to preparing their students for some form of postsecondary education were easily identified. The researcher used the 35 identified codes from the analyzed transcripts to develop patterns and relationship that the themes emerged from. The themes were: The idea that the structure of the schedule influences relationships; the influence of school support in relation to curriculum for the college and career readiness program; the influence of the socioeconomic status of the students in relation to the teacher's instructional outcomes; the importance of postsecondary education; and parental influence in relation to student aspirations. The themes that were identified are in direct relation to the literature review.

This study used in depth individual interviews to obtain data on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers. This process provided a glimpse into the factors associated with students' postsecondary aspirations. In the next chapter, a complete summary, conclusions, and recommendations are used to describe the implications derived from this study on the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they work with elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations.

There were 4 main limitations that were identified by the researcher. The lack of funding limited the scope of this study. This study was conducted by one person over a short period. The lack of access to college and career readiness teachers at the elementary level limited the scope of this study. However, the research used in depth individual interviews to ensure that the data collected strived for an even richer data set buy including probing questions in the interview questions (Appendix C). The interview used with the elementary faculty who taught students was delimited to faculty who taught in a specific school district within Arizona, limiting the demographic sample. The geographic boundaries of the targeted population was motivated by and ease-of-access to the prospective participants. The researcher was an employee of the participating district, had no prior relationship with the study participants, and had limited knowledge of the college and career readiness curriculum. These affiliations are being listed as a potential bias to the results.

The results of this study are generalizable to the population of faculty who teach fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students. The study sample was determined based on the willingness of faculty to participate in the study, and all participants who agreed to participate were included in the research. If this research were repeated, using the same processes and procedures, the results would be similar. In the next chapter, a final summary of the research study, conclusions, recommendations and implications will be discussed in detail.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This research study explored the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guided fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), the median yearly earnings varied significantly based on educational attainment. The variation was from an average of \$25,000 per year for someone with a high school diploma to an average of \$90,000 per year for someone with a professional degree.

The need for this research study was to identify what college and career readiness teachers are doing to guide fourth- through eighth- grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. For this particular study, the focus was examining the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers who specifically taught elementary students. Previous research (Cook et al. 2012, Gonzalez et al., 2005) has focused on preparing students for their postsecondary education in high school without examining preparation in elementary school. It was not known how college and career readiness teachers described their lived experiences as they guide fourth-through eighth-grade elementary students, from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations. Following a brief summary of the study, the conclusions, implications, and recommendations are presented based on the results found from the analysis of data collected through individual interviews with study participants.

Summary of the Study

When researching student postsecondary aspirations, several studies (Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013; Lee et al.,

2012; Thomas, 2011) have been conducted. However, all of these studies have been focused on high school students with a few studies that have included middle school students. The present study focused on fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students. Previous researchers have suggested that aspirations are developed at early ages (Gonzalez et al., 2005). However, it was not known how college and career readiness teachers described their lived experiences as they guided fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students, from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore how college and career readiness teachers described their lived experiences as they guided their fourth- through eighth- grade students from a K-12 district in Phoenix, toward their postsecondary aspirations. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, this study's conclusions, implications, and recommendations are be presented based on the results found from the analysis of data collected through individual interviews with study participants. The purpose of the individual interviews was to answer one research question: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations?

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

This study hoped to answer one research question: How do college and career readiness teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations? After completing an inferential and non-statistical analysis, five themes emerged from the data: the structure

of the schedule influences relationships; the influence of school and district support in relation to the provided curriculum for the college and career readiness program; the socioeconomic status of the students had an influence on what they taught as well as their instructional outcomes; the importance of some form of postsecondary education to the future of the study participants' students; and parental influence in relation to student aspirations. Following a summary of the study findings based on each of these themes.

Theme #1. The idea that the structure of the schedule influences relationships was one major theme that surfaced throughout the interviews and the data analysis process. The way a school runs their schedule is usually dictated by the school principal and created based on a combination of the allocated staffing and number of students needing to be serviced. With the exception of two college and career readiness teachers, all of the study participants were placed half-time at two different schools servicing a combination of fourth- through eighth- grade elementary students. Although all of the college and career readiness teachers were certified counselors, none of them thought their position offered them the flexibility to counsel students actively or build relationships. This aligns with Cook et al.,(2012) where he found that postsecondary aspirations that students believed their counselors had for them varied by the type of school and affected whether they met with their counselor to obtain college information.

The two college and career readiness teachers who participated in the study and were only placed at one school on one campus also believed their schedules influenced the relationships they were able to build with their students. Having the ability to stay on one campus and not travel between two campuses everyday provided them the sense of

belonging and opened opportunities for building relationships. Participants that had been shared between two schools agreed.

All of the participants reflected on their experiences and reported a similar situation. They believed that because their schedules dictated how often and for how long they were able to service their students in a college and career readiness classroom, there was a direct influence on the relationships that they were able to build with their students. They thought that being at two different schools each day prevented them from building solid relationships.

Theme #2. The influence of school and district support in relation to the provided curriculum for the college and career readiness program was an underlying theme among the study participants. Roderick et al. (2009) stated that to connect college aspirations with attainment, both high schools and teachers needed to have a clear understanding of students' needs to be ready for college as well as a set of standards that could outline the process. Throughout the interviews with the study participants it was clear that there were a variety of different approaches to teaching college and career readiness and all of the study participants fluctuated what they were using based on the materials they had as well as the resources that they knew about and were provided.

Many of the study participants were unaware of the requirements that students needed to meet to attend some form of postsecondary education after high school. Through conversation, it was also identified that many study participants were unaware of the different options their students had in relation to signature programs that led to postsecondary education at the different high schools within their district. The

information shared during the college and career readiness course regarding these requirements and options was inconsistent across different schools.

The study participants agreed that the college and career readiness program would be more effective if all teachers were teaching the same curriculum or set of standards. All of the study participants mentioned that they would like to have an actual curriculum that they could use to teach college and career readiness to their students. The overall suggestion was to provide college and career readiness teachers with a set of objectives that should be taught at each grade level.

Theme #3. Students who lived in neighborhoods falling one standard deviation below the mean on the neighborhood disadvantage index have been found to be more than twice as likely to drop out of school as their peers who lived in average neighborhoods (South et al., 2003). This study aligns with another theme identified by several study participants. The study participants identified that the socioeconomic status of the students had an influence on what they taught as well as their instructional outcomes. Buchanan (2006) retested the results of Sewell and Hauser (1972) and found, socioeconomic status is still a strong predictor of a student's postsecondary attainment. The study participants stated that what they focused on and were able to teach at a Title I school varied from what they were able to do at a non-Title I school.

Stewart et al. (2007) stated that disadvantaged neighborhoods had a negative influence on student aspirations toward postsecondary education. Although the study participants' placement varied from teaching only at Title I schools, teaching only at non-Title I schools, and teaching at one Title I school and one non-Title I school the overall consensus was the same. What was taught in the college and career readiness class at a

Title I school was different than what was taught at a non-Title I school within the same district.

Theme #4. The importance of some form of postsecondary education to the future of the study participant's students was another identified theme. The status attainment model (Blau & Duncan 1967) emphasizes that where a person is located on the socioeconomic status matrix is directly related to the amount of education a person receives. All but one study participant agreed that it was important to their student's future for them to attain some form of postsecondary education.

There are always outliers in any scenario. However, Sciarra and Ambrosion (2011) stated that possibly because of a greater understanding of the different postsecondary options, expectations set by teachers might be more accurate compared to those established by parents and students. The study participants believed that it was important for their students to obtain some form of postsecondary education. However the importance was not always communicated to their students.

Theme #5. Parental influence in relation to student aspirations was the final theme identified through the interviews with study participants. Studies have shown that no matter what socioeconomic status or ethnicity high achieving students come from, they usually have parents who have provided them with motivation, expectations, and an environment conducive to learning in the home (Kim & Díaz, 2013). Regardless of whether the study participant was teaching at a Title I school or a non-Title I school, the study participants identified that the greatest influence on their students' aspirations toward postsecondary education was parental. This aligned directly with other studies that have shown that no matter what socioeconomic status or ethnicity high achieving

students come from, they usually have parents who have provided them with motivation, expectations, and an environment conducive to learning in the home (Kim & Díaz, 2013).

Studies have shown that no matter what socioeconomic status or ethnicity high achieving students come from, they usually have parents who have provided them with motivation, expectations, and an environment conducive to learning in the home (Kim & Díaz, 2013). Many of the study participants had experience working with both Title I as well as non-Title I students. The results from the interviews with the study participants identified that the students that were most successful and received the most from the college and career readiness class were those students who were influenced by the postsecondary aspirations that their parents had for them.

Implications

Focusing on fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students opened a new area of research. Previous research had a primary focus on high school students (Cook et al., 2012; Cooper, 2009; Geckova et al., 2011; King, 2012; Kirk et al., 2011; Kiyama, 2011; Salazar, 2013; Thomas, 2011). A few studies included middle school students (Bélanger et al., 2009). The results of this study have the potential to begin the development of a program that has some consistency among teachers, as well as additional interventions, resources, and information. The consistency as well as interventions, resources, and information can then provide students with the knowledge and support necessary to make a well-educated decision about their participation in postsecondary education.

Theoretical implications. The findings of this dissertation should not come as a surprise to scholars familiar with the literature on funds of knowledge theory, status attainment theory, and social capital theory (Coleman, 1988). Researchers Moll et al.

(1992) defined funds of knowledge as the body of knowledge and skills formed through generations as well as cultural traditions and beliefs. This study advances the funds of knowledge theory in the sense that it provides descriptions of the lived experiences of teachers who teach elementary students and the effect that families have on their students' postsecondary aspirations. Additionally, research participants stated that they needed to modify what they were teaching and/or how they were teaching at Title I schools versus non-Title I schools. This directly relates to researchers Rios-Aguilar et al., who used funds of knowledge to gather information from low-income families that resulted in teachers and schools using the information to make connections between the academic standards and the students' home life.

The status attainment theory was used by Sewell and Hauser (1972), who added factors associated with ability, aspirations, and the influence of relationships to the status attainment model (Sewell & Hauser, 1972; Sewell & Shah, 1968). Theme 1: The idea that the structure of the schedule influences relationships was one major theme that surfaced through the interviews and data analysis process. Several of the research participants stated that the schedule they were running combined with being placed on two different campuses everyday influenced the relationships they were able to build with their students consequently, influencing how effective they were with their students.

Coleman (1988) found that social capital theory was a way for students to gain insight, knowledge, beliefs, models, criteria, and opportunities related to education by the direct relationships they had with their family, friends, and others. The study results showed that relationships students had with their teachers as well as the relationships regarding their postsecondary aspirations with their families influenced the success that

the students had in the classroom. Study participants identified that their schedule as well as being shared between two schools influenced the relationships they had with their students resulting in a perceived less effectiveness in the classroom. It was also identified by student participants that several of the students they taught coming from Title I schools had parents who for a variety of reasons were not able or did not discuss postsecondary aspirations with their children resulting in a decreased desire to be successful in a college and career readiness classroom.

Practical implications. This study is only a small piece of a big and complex picture and it is an account of the lived experiences of only 10 college and career readiness teachers from one particular district. However, it is a study that shows college and career readiness preparation is possible at an elementary level. Despite the challenges that study participants were facing, they all expressed an interest in doing their best to provide students with instruction during their college and career readiness course. Several research studies (Conley, 2011; Guilfoyle, 2013; Kiyama, 2011; Medina-Astran, 1996) have been conducted supporting the need to provide students with a variety of resources that prepare them for postsecondary education as well as relationships with others who support aspirations toward postsecondary education. Perhaps, educational reform scholars should come together to develop a set of college and career readiness standards and objectives that should be taught to students at each specific grade level in elementary school or differentiated based on individual student needs and their background. This seems to be the primary conclusion from this particular study.

Future implications. Based on the new insights derived from this phenomenological study and the idea that some form of college and career readiness is

necessary in elementary school, future research is needed to continue to develop and improve the program that is already in place. The research has also identified that each student is different and enters the school system with a variety of needs. Johnston (2012) stated that programs developed to promote postsecondary attainment need to be inclusive of not only the student but also the family, community, and school culture in which the students spend their time. While collecting information through the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers as they guided elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations, the study participants acknowledged that they identified that different students had different needs and that they as teachers needed to differentiate instruction to meet those needs. However, study participants also acknowledged that they were not always sure how to differentiate instruction or what specific standards and objectives they should focus on with different groups of students. These results may influence future research as well as practice.

According to Giorgi (2009), a phenomenological study requires a qualitative approach to understand the lived experiences of study participants, and the data collection process attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular phenomenon. This study did not attempt to develop a new theory however was able to understand the perceptions and perspectives of college and career readiness teachers as they guided fourth- through eighth- grade students toward their postsecondary aspirations. Although a phenomenological study requires only a minimum of five study participants, the limited number of potential as well as actual study participants should be taken into consideration when interpreting the study results. However, given that at the time of this study the researcher was unable to find any literature related to elementary

students postsecondary aspirations, this study potentially opens the door to additional future research in the area.

Strengths and weaknesses. The greatest strength of this study was the focus on elementary college and career readiness teachers. By taking the focus down to the elementary level, the research has started a new body of research. Focusing on the elementary population rather than waiting until high school to provide college and career readiness skills allows students a greater depth of knowledge that can be used to determine what they want to do after high school.

The limitations of this study could also be seen as a weakness was the sample size. A small sample size was used because the researcher was constrained by the recruitment list sent by the district, which resulted in a smaller amount of descriptive data for analysis. The lack of access to college and career readiness teachers at the elementary level limited the scope of this study. The researcher was an employee of the participating district, had no prior relationship with the study participants, and had limited knowledge of the college and career readiness curriculum. These affiliations are being listed as a potential bias to the results. The researcher did not use bracketing to mitigate bias in the data analysis process.

Recommendations

The evolving field of postsecondary preparation has been pre-occupied with studies focusing on high school students. Focusing on fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students opens a new area of research. At the time of this dissertation, the researcher was not able to find any studies that have been focused on the postsecondary aspirations of elementary students. However, this area has been suggested as a need for

future research (Kiyama, 2011). According to Husserl (1983), people only know what they have had the opportunity to experience. The next section provides recommendations for future research as well as recommendations for future practice based on the results of this dissertation study.

Recommendations for future research. Focusing on the postsecondary aspirations of elementary students opens a new area of research that has not been recently explored. This leads the researcher to several recommendations. The recommendations focus on expanding the sample size, replication, looking at the relationship of the aspirations parents hold for their students, and focusing on students as the primary participants.

Time limitations minimized the focus of this study to the lived experiences of college and career readiness teachers. One question this research study could not fully answer because of the time limitations was: what are general education classroom teachers doing to guide their students toward their postsecondary education. This study focused specifically on college and career readiness teachers who teach the students for a very short period of time and not general education teacher who have the students all day, every day. It is recommended that further research using another phenomenological approach on how general education classroom teachers describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth- through eighth-grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations. This future research is highly recommended to identify what if anything regarding postsecondary options is being communicated to students throughout their school day.

This study reported the lived experiences of a small group of college and career readiness teachers as they guided their students toward their postsecondary aspirations. The study participants were from a particular district in Phoenix. While there is no reason to believe that there will be a significant difference in similarly conducted studies, the fact that this study was district-specific does support the need for a similar phenomenological or case study with a variety of public and nonpublic districts.

Parental influence in relation to student aspirations was one major theme this study's participants generated. Although study participants stated that the students who had parents who went to college were most likely going to college because their parents did, and that students who had parents who did not go to college most likely were not going to college, these were simply assumptions that they held. The need for a case study involving parental aspirations they have for their children's postsecondary options for both Title I and non-Title one students would be appropriate and informative.

With the exception of a student's family influencing his or her postsecondary aspirations, the study participants were unable to identify the specific postsecondary aspirations that students held and specific factors that influenced those aspirations. The need for a case study involving student's aspirations seems paramount and urgent. A possible follow up study could include a case study focusing on the students as the primary study participants and investigating the students' actual postsecondary aspirations and what influences those aspirations. This study could also be taken one step further to investigate the differences between the aspirations that Title I students held verses non-Title one students' aspirations.

Recommendations for future practice. Based on the results of this study, the responses of the study participants have generated some recommendations for future practice. According to Gonzalez et al. (2005), if the factors that influence student aspirations are identified early, information, interventions, and resources can be provided to students before high school, allowing them more time and information that can be used in their decision-making process. This study identified some of the factors that could influence student aspirations.

The study participants were clear that there were a variety of different approaches to teaching college and career readiness and all of the study participants fluctuated what they were using based on the materials they had as well as the resources that they knew about and were provided. It is recommended that the current college and career readiness program within the participating district be evaluated and reestablished to include a minimum of basic standards and objectives that should be taught at each grade level. Based on the study participants' responses that the socioeconomic status of the students had an influence on what they taught as well as their instructional outcomes, it may also be necessary to offer some differentiation suggestions among the basic standards and objectives that are established. This will benefit both the college and career readiness teachers who are teaching the course as well as the students who are participating in the course over potentially a five-year period.

Additionally, it is recommended that an evaluation of the schedule for college and career readiness teachers be conducted. The idea that the structure of the schedule influences relationships was one major theme that surfaced throughout the interviews and the data analysis process. Without prompting, most of the study participants suggested

throughout our conversations that if they were at one school they would have a better opportunity to build relationships with their students, which in turn could influence how effective they were in the classroom. Obviously, going from a half time position to a fulltime position at each school could potentially cause a financial burden for the district. However, it is suggested that given that all college and career readiness teachers are required to also be councilor certified, it would be beneficial to both students as well as their teachers to be a half time teacher and a half time councilor on one campus. Cook et al. (2012) found that postsecondary aspirations that students believed their counselors had for them varied by the type of school and affected whether they met with their counselor to obtain college information. If this suggestion will not work because of financial restrictions, another recommendation would be to possibly combine two half time positions and have one person do both positions on one campus. For example, the college and career readiness teacher could also be the librarian. This situation would allow individual teachers to be on one campus instead of split between two campuses. The benefits of this situation would be in establishing relationships with the students, families, and communities.

According to the United States Department of Labor (2015), more than half of all students graduating high school each year attend some form of postsecondary education. What is happening to the other half of all students? An effective school is a school that is consistently growing, changing, and improving with the intent to become better (Marzano et al., 2012). It is my hope that educators move beyond the initial fear of evaluation and change and advance to a stage where the focus becomes improving opportunities for the students. Providing education and interventions that have the ability to increase the

number of students who attend postsecondary education could decrease their financial hardship as well as the burden that is placed on society (Lopez, 2009).

References

- Alexandria, V. A. (2005). National Association for College Admission Counseling. *McKenzie, B.*(2013, March 20). *Texas will take a big leap backward if the legislature passes.*
- Almeida, R. K., & Silva Filho, E. C. (2012). Adsorption of an industrial anionic dye by modified-KSF-montmorillonite: Evaluation of the kinetic, thermodynamic and equilibrium data. *Chemical engineering journal*, 203, 259-268.
- Alva, S.A. (1991). Academic invulnerability among Mexican-American high school students: The importance of protective resources and appraisals. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 13, 18-34.
- Alvarez, D., & Mehan, H. (2006). Whole-school detracking: A strategy for equity and excellence. *Theory into Practice*, 45(1), 82-89. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4501_11
- Badger, E., Yale-Loehr, S. (2008). *Undocumented students and eligibility for enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities.* Retrieved from http://www.millermayer.com/files/all/undocumented_students_and_eligibility_for_enrollment_at_u_1.pdf
- Barnes, W., & Slate, J. R. (2013). College-readiness is not one-size-fits-all. *Current Issues in Education*, 16(1), 693-716.
- Beaudry, P., Green, D. (2005) Changes in U.S. wages, 1976-2000: Ongoing skill bias or major technological change? *Journal of Labor Economics* 23(3), 609-648.
- Bedsworth, W., Colby, S., & Doctor, J. (2006). *Reclaiming the American dream.* Boston, MA: Bridgespan.

- Behnke, A., Piercy, K., & Diversi, M. (2004). Educational and occupational aspirations of Latino youth and their parents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 26(1), Retrieved from <http://hjb.sagepub.com.library.gcu.edu:2048/content/26/1/16.full.pdf+html>
doi:10.1177/0739986303262329
- Bekhet, A. K., & Zauszniewski, J. A. (2012). Methodological triangulation: An approach to understanding data. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(2), 40-43.
- Bélangier, C. H., Akbari, F., & Madgett, P. J. (2009). Why some youths do not realize their postsecondary education aspirations. *Tertiary Education & Management*, 15(3), 209-225. doi:10.1080/13583880903072984
- Beltran, R. (2004). Undocumented students struggling for education. *La Prensa*. San Diego, CA. Retrieved from www.laprensa-sandiego.org/current/students.htm
- Berzin, S. (2011). Educational aspirations among low-income youths: Examining multiple conceptual models. *National Association of Social Workers*, 32(2), 112-124.
- Blackhurst, A., & Auger, R. (2008). Precursors to the gender gap in college enrollment: children's aspirations and expectations for their futures. *Professional School Counseling*, 11(3), 149-158. doi:1443000281
- Blau, P., & Duncan, O. (1967). *The American occupational structure*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Blume, G. (2011). Funding postsecondary education for undocumented students in the United States. *Evans School Review*, 1(1).

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. New York, NY: Pearson Education Group.
- Bohon, S., Johnson, M., & Gorman, B. (2006). College aspirations and expectations among Latino adolescents in the United States. *Social Problems, 53*(2) 207-225. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2006.53.2.207>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) The forms of capital. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York, NY: Greenwood Press.
- Bryan, J., & Griffin, D. (2010). A multidimensional study of school-family-community partnership involvement: School, school counselor, and training factors. *Professional School Counseling, 14*(1), 75-86.
- Bryan, J., Holcomb-McCoy, C., Moore-Thomas, C., & Day-Vines, N. (2009). Who sees the school counselor for college information? A national study. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(4), 280-291. doi:1683863801
- Buchanan, C. M. (2006). The impact of race and socioeconomic status on postsecondary achievement. *International Journal of Learning, 13*(4), 69-81.
- Bukodi, E., & Goldthorpe, J. H. (2012). Decomposing “social origins”: The effects of parents’ class, status, and education on the educational attainment of their children. *European Sociological Review, 29*(5), 1024-1039.
- Calderone, S., Johnson, J., & Hare, K. (2010). *Cost perceptions and college-going for low-income students*. Retrieved from www.ihep.org
- Carpenter, D. M., & Ramirez, A. (2012). Exploring the underachievement gap. *Christian Higher Education, 11*(2), 115-130.

- Chavez, M. L., Soriano, M., Oliverez, P. (2007). Undocumented students' access to college; the American dream denied. *Latino Studies*, 5, 254-263.
doi:10.1057/palgrave.1st.8600255
- Cham, H., Hughes, J. N., West, S. G., & Im, M. H. (2014). Assessment of adolescents' motivation for educational attainment. *Psychological Assessment*, 26(2), 642-659.
- Christofides, L., Hoy, M., Milla, J., & Stengos, T. (2015). Grades, aspirations, and postsecondary education outcomes. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 45(1), 48-82.
- Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120.
- Conforti, P.A. (2013). What is college and career readiness? *A summary of state definitions*. Pearson Education. Retrieved from <http://researchnetwork.pearson.com>
- Conley, D. T. (2011). Pathways to postsecondary and career readiness. *MIT Centre for Multiple Pathways National Symposium*. Retrieved from http://csmp.manukau.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/59558/Pathways-to-Postsecondary-and-Career-Readiness.pdf
- Cook, A., Pérusse, R., & Rojas, E. D. (2012). Increasing academic achievement and college-going rates for Latina/o English language learners: A survey of school counselor interventions. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 24-40.

- Cooper, M. (2009). Dreams deferred? The relationship between early and later postsecondary educational aspirations among racial/ethnic groups. *Educational Policy, 23*(4), 615-650. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Covarrubias, R., & Fryberg, S. A. (2015). Movin' on up (to college): First-generation college students' experiences with family achievement guilt. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 21*(3), 420-429.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches*. (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Croll, P. (2009). Educational participation post-16: A longitudinal analysis of interventions and outcomes. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 57*(4), 400-416. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8527.2009.00445.x
- Dalton, R., & St. John, E. P. (2017). *College for every student: A practitioner's guide to building college and career readiness*. New York: Routledge.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness : Developing a new paradigm. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*.
- Deil-Amen, R., & Turley, L. RN (2007): A review of the transition to college literature in sociology. *Teachers College Record, 109*(10), 2324-2366.
- Duncan, G., Brooks-Gunn, J., Yeung, J. W., & Smith, J. R. (1998). How much does childhood poverty affect the life chances of children? *American Sociological Review, 63*, 406-423.

- Dyce, C. M., Albold, C., & Long, D. (2013). Moving from college aspiration to attainment: learning from one college access program. *The High School Journal*, 96(2), 152-165.
- Federal Student Aid. (2013.). *Many non-U.S. citizens qualify for federal student aid*. Retrieved from <http://studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility/non-us-citizens>
- Feller, R. (2014). College and career readiness for learners of all ages. Helping learners become college and career ready. Retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ccrnca>
- French, M. T., Homer, J. F., Popovici, I., & Robins, P. K. (2014). What you do in high school matters: High school GPA, educational attainment, and labor market earnings as a young adult. *Eastern Economic Journal Eastern Econ J*, 41(3), 370-386.
- Froiland, J., Patterson, A., Davison, M. (2012). The long-term effects of early parent involvement and parent expectation in the USA. *School Psychology International*, 34(1), 33-50 doi:10.1177/014303431254361
- Gallup-Lumina Foundation (2015). Study of the American public's opinion on higher education postsecondary education aspirations and barriers. *Gallup-Lumina Foundation*, 1-21. Retrieved from <http://www.luminafoundation.org>
- Gasser, C. (2012). Career self-appraisals and educational aspirations of diverse first-year college students. *University of Baltimore College Student Journal*, 364-370.
- Geckova, A., Tavel, P., Van Dijk, J. P., Abel, T., & Reijneveld, S. A. (2011). Factors associated with educational aspirations among adolescents: Cues to counteract

socioeconomic differences? *BMC Public Health*, 10. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-154

Gill, M.J. (2014). The possibilities of phenomenology for organizational research.

Organizational Research Methods, 17(2), 118-137.

Giorgi, A. (2009). Phenomenological psychology: A brief history and its challenges.

Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 41(2), 145-179.

Gonzalez, K. P., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005) *Funds of knowledge: theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Routledge.

Gonzalez, L. M., Borders, L. D., Hines, E. M., Villalba, J. A., & Henderson, A. (2013).

Parental involvement in children's education: considerations for school counselors working with Latino immigrant families. *Professional School Counseling*, 16, 185-193.

Guilfoyle, C. (2013). For college and career success, start with preschool. *Association for*

Supervision and Curriculum Development, 19(4), winter. Retrieved February 14, 2014, from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/vol19>.

Hanson, S. L. (1994). Lost talent: unrealized educational aspirations and expectations

among U.S. youths. *Sociology of Education*, 67(3), 159-183. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2112789>

Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State

University of New York Press.

Hill, N. E., & Wang, M. (2015). From middle school to college: developing aspirations,

promoting engagement, and indirect pathways from parenting to post high school enrollment. *Developmental Psychology*, 51(2), 224-235.

- Holzer, H. (2008). America's forgotten middle-skill jobs: Education and training requirements in the next decade and beyond.
- Hooley, T., Marriott, J. & Sampson, J.P. (2011). Fostering college and career readiness: how career development activities in schools impact on graduation rates and students' life success. *Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby*.
- Hoyt, D. P. (2004). The Relationship between College Grades and Adult Achievement. A Review of the Literature.
- Hu, S., & Kuh, G. D. (2003). Diversity experiences and college student learning and personal development. *Journal of College Student Development, 44*(3), 320-334.
- Hurtado-Ortiz, M. T., & Gauvain, M. (2007). Postsecondary education among Mexican American youth: Contributions of parents, siblings, acculturation, and generational status. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 29*(2), 181-191.
doi:10.1177/0739986307299584
- Husserl, E. (1983). Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy. First book (F. Kersten, Trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
(Original work published 1913).
- Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. (2017), Pub. L. 104-208, 110 Stat. 309-672, codified as amended at 8 USC §16232017.
- Jacob, B., & Wilder, T. (2010). Educational expectations and attainment. *National Bureau of Economic Research*. Retrieved from: www.nber.org/papers/w15683
- Johnston J. H. (2012). The trouble with boys: Observations about boys' postsecondary aspirations, attendance, and success. *Education Partnerships, 1-9*.

- Jones, S. K. (2015). More than just parents: The importance of siblings as supportive others during the transition to college. 1-91.
- Kantrowitz, M. (2013). *Financial aid and scholarships for undocumented students*. Retrieved from <http://www.FinAid.org>
- Kena, G., Aud, S., & Johnson, F. (2014, May). The condition of education 2014. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010028>
- Kim, E., & Díaz, J. (2013). *Immigrant students and higher education*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- King, S. B. (2012). Increasing college-going rate, parent involvement, and community participation in rural communities. *Rural Educator, Winter*, 20-26.
- Kirk, C., Lewis-Moss, R. K., Nilsen, C., & Colvin, D. Q. (2011). The role of parent expectations on adolescent educational aspirations. *Educational Studies, 37*(1), 89-99. doi:10.1080/03055691003728965
- Kiyama, J. (2011). College aspirations and limitations the role of educational ideologies and funds of knowledge in Mexican American families. *American Educational Research Journal, 47*(2), 330-356. doi:10.3102/0002831209357468
- Klasik, D. (2011). The college application gauntlet: a systematic analysis of the steps to four-year college enrollment. *Research in Higher Education, 53*(5), 506-549.
- LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (1999). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research* (Ethnographer's toolkit, Vol. 1). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.

- Lee, K. A., Almonte, J. L., & Youn, M. (2013). What to do next: An exploratory study of the postsecondary decisions of American students. *Higher Education, 66*(1), 1-16.
- Lee, S., Daniels, M., Puig, A., Newgent, R., & Nam, S. (2008). A data-based model to predict postsecondary educational attainment of low-socioeconomic-status students. *Professional School Counseling, 11*(5), 306-316. Retrieved from Career and Technical Education. (Document ID: 1490316221).
- Lieber, C. (2009). Increasing college access through school-based models of postsecondary preparation, planning, and support. *Educators for Social Responsibility*. Retrieved from www.esrnational.org
- Lopez, D. (2009). *No excuses university*. China: Turn Around Schools Publications.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2012). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- Medina-Astran, A. (1996). *Social factors relating to a Hispanic student's pursuit of a higher education*. California State University, Long Beach, United States-California. Retrieved from Dissertations & Theses: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (Publication No. AAT 1383268).
- Merriam-Webster. (2014). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary* (14 ed.). New York, NY: Merriam-Webster.

- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Myers, S. M., & Myers, C. B. (2012). Are discussions about college between parents and their high school children a college-planning activity? Making the case and testing the predictors. *American Journal of Education*, 118(3), 281-308.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex of student: Selected years, 1976-77 through 2011-2012. *Digest of Education Statistics*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_322.20.asp
- Nebbergail, J., & Hamfrick, C. (2013). The condition of college & career readiness 2013: national-ACT. Retrieved from <http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/CCCR13-NationalReadinessRpt.pdf>
- Nora, A., & Crisp, G. (2012). Future research on Hispanic students: What have we yet to learn? and what new and diverse perspectives are needed to examine Latino success in higher education? *Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities*.
- Oliverez, P. M. (2006). *Ready but restricted: An examination of the challenges of college access and financial aid for college-ready undocumented students in the U.S.* Retrieved from <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15799coll127/id/168544>
- Olmedo, I. M. (1997). Challenging old assumptions: preparing teachers for inner city schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 13(3), 245-258

- Olson, L., & Rosenfield, R. A. (1984) Parents and the process of gaining access to student financial aid. *Journal of Higher Education*, 55(4), 455-480.
- Oreopoulos, P., & Petronijevic, U. (2013). Making college worth it: a review of research on the returns to higher education. *Future of Children*, 23(1), spring, 41-65.
- Orthner, D. K., Jones-Sanpei, H., Akos, P., & Rose, R. A. (2013). Improving middle school student engagement through career-relevant instruction in the core curriculum. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 106(1), 27-38.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perna, L. W. (2006). Studying college choice: a proposed conceptual model. *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*. 99-157. doi:10.1007/1-4020-4512-3_3
- Perna, L. W., & Titus, M. (2005). The relationship between parental involvement as social capital and college enrollment: an examination of racial/ethnic group differences. *Journal of Higher Education*, 76, 485-518.
- Pew Research Center. (2011). *Unauthorized immigrant population: national and state trends, 2010*. Retrieved from <http://pewhispanic.org/les/resprts/133.pdf>
- Portes, A. (2000). The two meanings of social capital. In *Sociological forum* (Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 1-12). Springer Netherlands.
- Puyosa, I. M. (2009). *Assessing the impact of academic preparation, finances and social capital on postsecondary education enrollment* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan).

- Radcliffe, R. A., & Bos, B. (2013). Strategies to prepare middle school and high school students for college and career readiness . *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 86(4), 136-141.
- Rios-Aguilar, C., Gravitt, Moll, & Kiyama, J. (2012). Funds of knowledge: an approach to studying Latina(o) students' transitions to college. *Journal of Latinos & Education*, 11(1), 2-16. doi:10.10080/15348431.2012.631430
- Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., & Coca, V. (2009). College readiness for all: The challenge for urban high school. *College readiness for all: The challenge for urban high school*. 19(1).
- Rothman, R. (2012). A common core of readiness. *Educational Leadership*, 69(7), 10-15.
- Russell, A. (2011). State policies regarding undocumented college students: a narrative of unresolved issues, ongoing debate and missed opportunities. *American Association of State Colleges and Universities*. 1-10.
- Salazar, A. (2013). *Latino elementary school students' college aspirations: attitudinal, normative, and perceived behavioral control precursors*. California State University, Fresno, United States-California. Retrieved from Dissertations & Theses: The Humanities and Social Sciences Collection. (Publication No. AAT 1486250).
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sciarra, D., & Ambrosino, K. (2011). Postsecondary expectations and educational attainment. *Professional School Counseling*, 14(3), 231-241. doi:2266726561

- Seidman, I., Rubin, H. J., Rubin, I. S., & DILLEY, P. (2004). Interviews and the philosophy of qualitative research. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(1), 127-132.
- Sewell, W. H., Hauser, R. M. (1972). Causes and consequences of higher education: models of the status attainment process. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 54(5), 851-861.
- Sewell, W. H., Shah, V. P. (1968). Social class, parental encouragement, and educational aspirations. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 73, 559-572.
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Sage.
- South, S., Baumer, E., & Lutz, A. (2003). Interpreting community effects on youth educational attainment. *Youth & Society*, 35(1), 3-36. doi:10.1177/0044118X03254560
- Stanton-Salazar, R. D. (2001). *Manufacturing hope and despair: The school and kin support networks of U.S. Mexican youth*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Stewart, E., Stewart, E., & Simons, R. (2007). The effect of neighborhood context on the college aspirations of African American adolescents. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44(4), 896-919. doi:10.3102/0002831207308637
- Swanson, J. L., & Schneider, M. (2013). Minnesota theory of work adjustment. *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work*, 29-53.
- The Pell Institute. (2005). *Indicators of opportunity in higher education: Status report*. Washington, DC: Author.

- Thomas, B. J. (2011). A qualitative study of socioeconomic status, postsecondary education plans, and educational aspirations of students from a Michigan public school. *Sociation Today*, 9(1), 1-27.
- Tolan, M., Hossain, R., & Krom, C. (2012). The impact of economic cycles on the career aspirations and values of college students. *Northeast Business & Economics Association Proceedings*, 213-214.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015) *Consolidated State Performance Reports*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/leadassout/consolidates/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015) *State ESEA Title I Participation Information for 2003-04*. Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). *College enrollment and work activity of 2014 high school graduates*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov>
- Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Velez-Ibanez, C. G., & Greenberg, J. B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 23(4), 313-335.
- Weiner, B., & Kukla, A. (1970). An attribution analysis of achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 15, 1-20.
- Wells, R., Seifert, T., Park S., Padgett R., Umbach P. (2011). Why do more women than men want to earn a four-year degree? exploring the effects of gender, social

origin, and social capital on educational expectations. *Journal of Higher Education* 82(1), 1-32.

Wertz, F. J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L. M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R., & McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Ziol-Guest, K. M.; Duncan, G. J., & Kalil, A. (2015). One-parent students leave school earlier: Educational attainment gap widens. *Education Next*, 15(2), 36-41. UC Irvine: 897644. Retrieved from: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9zh1w95r>

Appendix A.

IRB Approval Letter



GRAND CANYON
UNIVERSITY™

3300 West Camelback Road, Phoenix Arizona 85017 602.639.7500 Toll Free 800.800.9776 www.gcu.edu

DATE: October 20, 2016

TO: Jennifer Auch
FROM: Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [962512-1] The Lived Experiences of Faculty Who Work with Elementary Students as They Develop Their Post-secondary Aspirations: A Phenomenological Study

IRB REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # [7.1, 7.2]

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Grand Canyon University Institutional Review Board has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office.

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Henkel at 602-639-8010 or stephanie.henkel@gcu.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

cc:

Appendix B.

Informed Consent



Grand Canyon University
 College of Doctoral Studies
 3300 W. Camelback Road
 Phoenix, AZ 85017
 Phone: 602-639-7804
 Email: irb@gcu.edu

<p>Informed Consent Form (Social Behavioral)</p> <p>Minimal Risk</p>
<p>CONSENT FORM</p> <p>The Lived Experiences of Faculty Who Work with Elementary Students' as They Develop Their Postsecondary Aspirations: A Phenomenological Study</p>
<p>INTRODUCTION</p>
<p>The purposes of this form are to provide you (as a prospective research study participant) information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.</p>
<p>RESEARCH</p>
<p>Jennifer Auch, a doctoral student at Grand Canyon University has invited your participation in a research study.</p>
<p>STUDY PURPOSE</p>
<p>The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to explore how College and career readiness teachers, from a K-12 district in Phoenix describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations.</p>
<p>DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY</p>
<p>If you decide to participate, then as a study participant you will join a study involving research of the lived experiences of College and career readiness teachers as they work with elementary students to develop their postsecondary aspirations. Study participants will be interviewed individually in a face-to-face interview with the researcher and all interviews will be audio recorded for review and analysis. The interviews include several questions to start the conversation, and the researcher anticipates that each interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. None of the above listed activities will disrupt or occupy classroom instructional time for either students or teachers.</p> <p>If you say YES, then your participation will last for approximately 60 minutes and will be located at a location that is convenient for you. Approximately 10 people will be participating in this study locally.</p>

RISKS

There are no known risks from taking part in this study, but in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

BENEFITS

Although there may be no direct benefits to you, the possible benefits of your participation in the research are the results can be used to identify additional interventions that can be developed and used that will provide students with additional information that, in turn, may positively influence their decision to graduate high school and participate in postsecondary education.

NEW INFORMATION

If the researchers find new information during the study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will provide this information to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. The results of this research study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you. In order to maintain confidentiality of your records, Jennifer Auch will be coded all notes so each participant's identity will remain anonymous. To ensure confidentiality, the names of organizations and schools at which participants attend will not be disclosed. During the collection and analysis of data, all documents, recordings, and a flash drive with the researcher's work will be stored in a locked safe, only accessible by the researcher. All data collected through the process of this study will be analyzed only by the researcher herself. After analysis, all notes and data collection instruments will be stored in a secure area for a period of five years.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is ok for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time.

Your decision will not affect your relationship with Dysart Unified School District or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

Your participation is voluntary and that nonparticipation or withdrawal from the study will not affect your employment status.

If you chose to withdraw from the study, your tapes and/or data will not be included in the results and will be destroyed.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS

There is no payment for your participation in the study.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Jennifer Auch and she can be reached at [REDACTED]

If you have questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, through the College of Doctoral Studies at (602) 639-7804.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given (offered) to you.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in the above study.

Subject's Signature	Printed Name	Date
---------------------	--------------	------

Other Signature (if appropriate)	Printed Name	Date
-------------------------------------	--------------	------

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. These elements of Informed Consent conform to the Assurance given by Grand Canyon University to the Office for Human Research Protections to protect the rights of human subjects. I have provided (offered) the subject/participant a copy of this signed consent document."

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

Appendix C.

Copy of Instruments

(Three main questions will be asked during the interview. The questions that are bulleted will be used as follow up questions or to gain additional information if needed.)

- 1) Tell me about your experience as a college and career readiness teacher.
 - Why do students start receiving information and counseling related to postsecondary education in fourth grade?
 - Please feel free to explain anything more are provide any additional information that may related to the study.

- 2) How do you determine the interventions you use to guide students toward their postsecondary aspirations?
 - How do you get information to your students about different postsecondary options?
 - What type of information have you received from your school district regarding advising students about how to prepare for their postsecondary aspirations?
 - Is there any information that you would like to have or receive that you currently do not?
 - How familiar are you regarding admission requirements and placement policies for different postsecondary options? How do you get your information?
 - What type of interactions are there between college and career readiness teachers and representatives from postsecondary paths?
 - What curriculum do you use? Are their specific topics you make sure to cover with all students?
 - Please feel free to explain anything more are provide any additional information that may related to the study.

- 3) How do you identify assumptions students have that influence their aspirations toward postsecondary aspirations?
 - How important do you think it will be in the future for your students to have a degree or professional certificate beyond their high school diploma? Why?
 - What type of interactions do students have with teachers and staff about their postsecondary aspirations?
 - Do students at your school ask you about your own postsecondary experiences? If so, what do you tell them?
 - What do you think are the main reasons why some students attend college and others do not?
 - Why do students start receiving information and counseling related to postsecondary education in fourth grade?
 - Please feel free to explain anything more are provide any additional information that may related to the study.

Appendix D.

Recruitment Script



Grand Canyon University
College of Doctoral Studies
3300 W. Camelback Road
Phoenix, AZ 85017
Phone: 602-639-7804
Email: irb@gcu.edu

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Grand Canyon University. I am conducting a research study to explore how College and Career Readiness teachers, from a K-12 district in Phoenix describe their lived experiences as they guide fourth through eighth grade elementary students toward their postsecondary aspirations.

I am recruiting individuals to interview regarding their experience as a College and Career Readiness teacher which will take approximately 60-90 minutes. Interview will be audio recorded for data analysis by the researcher. During the collection and analysis of data, all documents, recordings, and a flash drive with the researcher's work will be stored in a locked safe, only accessible by the researcher. All data collected through the process of this study will be analyzed by the researcher herself. After analysis, all notes and data collection instruments will be stored in a secure area for a period of five years.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (██████████).

Appendix E.

Sample Transcribed Data Related to Themes

Schedule Influences Relationships	School Support in relationship to Curriculum	SES and Instructional Outcomes	How important	Parental Influence and Student Aspirations
<p>1 -I think that this position would be a lot more productive and we would get more from it if we focused on one school.</p> <p>If I am able to build relationships with my students it will make a big difference. At one school I feel like I have been able to find some time on my prep to build relationships. At the other school I feel like I am simply dealing with behavior and spending my extra time meeting with kids building relationship because of their behavior not because of CCR</p> <p>At one school I see my 4-5 for a whole week every other week and 6-8 grade I see them every other Monday. At my other school I see 5th-8th grade all week for a two week period.</p> <p>Being at two schools we see so many students. We do not have necessarily the time to build relationships with them and I feel that I am still struggling to remember names and faces. Being on one campus you can build those relationships and sort of focus on the one population versus having two different populations.</p>	<p>-I think that there needs to be a clarification to all teachers about what CCR actually does and is. We are not just a prep of babysitting for their kids.</p> <p>-AZCIS- The purpose of it is that it has a checklist for students for them to explore their interests' again and then future careers. It gives them interest inventory about that they possible want to do, their likes in the future and then they write down possible future goals. Like if they want to go to trade school or college what would that look like for them.</p> <p>- IPal-District created website to find resources and trainings.</p> <p>-ECAP there is not necessary a lesson plan involved. I have to go and kind of create my own lesson plan and use that AZCIS website as well as a guide but there is not. I feel that it could be more structured where it gives us a lot more information about where to go not just general topics.</p> <p>-CCR is definitely a work in progress because I am very new to the position. There are only a few lessons and it only gives me a general topic to focus on for a time frame. -Based on what the students feel like they want to be when they grow up, they exploring careers, jobs and the different possibilities that they have within those jobs and careers. I give them the flexibility of choosing a career that they're interested in and finding out</p>	<p>-At one school I feel like I am actually able to teach the students are more flexible and if I tell them to work they actually listen and engage in those instructions versus over at the other school I don't feel like they have a motivation. I feel like they don't have the interest at all. I spend my time sorting out discipline problems.</p> <p>-I feel like the difference is definitely the environment. The way that they were being raised. The things that they actually value.</p>	<p>- I think it is very important. It brings a lot more possibilities and I feel that as much as it brings more income it also opens a lot of doors within yourself. I feel that education is a way of opening yourself and view of the world in a different way versus not having an education.</p>	

Appendix F.

Sample Transcripts with Codes

Think about it why would this be important to you? So with them their first project was creating their community. If they could design their community, the school and the area around them. What would you build, what do you feel will be important for the area that we live in? So that was different because I had to get in the buy in to that I was there for them. So the best way for me to do that is to relate to their community. That took like a first month completely different on what we did. *Building Relationships*

Interviewer: Okay that makes sense, do you think that the relation, being able to build a relationship affected what you were able to do in the classroom?

Interviewee: Yes. I mean for the eighth graders, I think I connected with them more because they really took off with the project but for some of the younger kids. It was just a lot of me going back helping them, "hey what do you guys think here" but I didn't get to totally interact with them as personal as the eighth graders and get to know them well, why did you want that well because growing up they were more articulate and explain why they wanted specific things in their community and the importance and the younger ones were just like, "oh I want this" but they couldn't tell me where they needed help building their projects, so that was a little different than my the eighth graders who were like I got it. So with them those are the connections I made and I could remember who those kids were. It was harder for me to remember the younger kids because it was more all right and with the little time you have it was hard as well but and they want to present and they should present, they're proud of their work. So my eighth graders was more like a showcase, here's your stuff everyone go check it out what do you think and then they get positive and negatives fifth graders they all wanted to present up there so that was a little different as well. Yeah it was different and it was our first year doing it too. *Building Relationships*

Interviewer: There wasn't a lot of curriculum I think so. Do you think there was a difference between the importance of going to college, like the background the kids came to you with and their knowledge about post-secondary not just college but West Meck all of that at Thompson Ranch versus West Point?

Interviewee: Yeah I think here there were a lot of kids are really kind of have an idea of my parents are making us do this they want us to go somewhere blah, blah, blah. It's there I know we had that one discussion with a particular parent that thought I was just saying go to college and not everything else and we sat in on all of that and I remember even putting out the whole curriculum of what we were doing just trying to get him exposed over there if they do want their kids to go to college they just know how to get them there. Because the kids here they say that we know we have to do better and I will ask what does that mean you have to do better. And so they would say well they want us to go to high school but then more than high school. What does that mean do they want you to go to community college, do they want you to go to university, do they want you to go to trade school, so they knew that they need to continue but they don't know how to get there and some of their parents don't know how to get in there because it's generation, there's three or four generations. I mean I have cousins that go there as well and they're my cousins my age, they went to college but not the group above them. So there's something there, so they're trying to build it they just don't know how to get there. So that's where the difference is here you have that group that's gone through college, so the kids know it's an expectation you *Curriculum* *Difference between schools* *Parents want kids different schools*

Difference between title and non-title

Appendix G.**Site Authorization**

Site authorization is on file at Grand Canyon University.