

Hope as Strategy:  
The Effectiveness of an Innovation of the Mind.

by

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## ABSTRACT

Students may be situated within complex systems that are nested within each other. This complexity may also envelope institutional structures that lead to the socio-economic reification of student post-secondary opportunities by obscuring positive goals. This may be confounded by community misunderstandings about the changed world that students are entering. These changes include social and economic factors that impact personal and economic freedoms, our ability to live at peace, and the continuing trend of students graduating high school underprepared.

Building on previous cycles of action research, this multi-strand mixed-methods study examined the effects of the innovation of the I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR). The innovation was collaboratively developed and implemented over a 16-week period using a participatory action research approach. The situated context of this study was a new high school in the urban center of San Diego, California. The innovation included a student program administered during an advisory period and a parent education program.

Qualitative research used a critical ethnographic design that analyzed data from artifacts, journals, notes, and the interviews of students ( $n = 8$ ), parents ( $n = 6$ ), and teachers ( $n = 5$ ). Quantitative research included the analysis of data from surveys administered to inform the development of the innovation ( $n = 112$ ), to measure learning of parent workshop participants ( $n = 10$ ), and to measure learning, hope, and attitudinal disposition of student participants ( $n = 49$ ). Triangulation was used to answer the studies' four research questions. Triangulated findings were subjected to the method of crystallization to search for hidden meanings and multiple truths.

Findings included the importance of parent involvement, the influence of positive goals, relational implications of goal setting and pathway knowledge on agentic thinking, and that teacher implementation of the innovation may have influenced student hope levels. This study argued for a grounded theory situated within a theoretical framework based upon Snyder's Hope Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory. This argument asserted that influence on pathway and agency occurred at levels of high proximal process with the influence of goal setting occurring at levels of lower proximal process.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my immediate family, extended family, and my community of scholarly practitioners. To my fellow practitioners, let this serve as a work that is reflective of the beliefs and traditions that I have learned from each of you. While we might not all agree, in this dissertation I presented my current positions and views. These were based upon my own experiences and my understanding of the literature.

From the inspiration that I have derived from my grandparent's belief in the American dream to the glimmer of hope I have witness with each of my children, this work is for each of you. To my parents and extended family, from the examples you have set I have learned perseverance, hope, the power of education, and that a diversity of thought is our greatest strength. This work is dedicated to the countless lessons you have taught me, enumerable opportunities that you have provided me, and the unconditional love and support that I have had the privilege to receive from you. Here I memorialize the words of my late grandfather who asked me if I was "prepared to engage in the painful process of social change." I dedicate this dissertation, in part, to answer this question with the affirmation and resolve that I believe he expected of each of us.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife and children. You have all been an unwavering support over the last four years as I engaged in this endeavor. To my wife Theresa, this work is dedicated to you and our common desire to see the world be a better place for our children and our children's children. To my children, I dedicate this work to you as part of an ongoing promise that I made to you in my previous writings, *that we can and will make school a better place for you and all those that follow.*

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I believe that there is little in life that we do alone or without the support of many people. Here I summarized some of the many important people that are deserving of acknowledgement in supporting myself and advancing my scholarship. First, my thanks go to my students, teachers, faculty, staff, educational leaders, and members of the boards of trustees where these research studies occurred. Without your trust and personal investment of time this dissertation would not have been possible.

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My family has provided me with ongoing opportunities and supports. It is from them that I have gained strength through struggles, resolve to do what is right, and the perseverance to believe in a better tomorrow. To my wife Theresa, my eternal thanks for allowing me this opportunity to focus on learning and to be your partner in this life that we share. To my children, I thank each of you for your gift of time and inspiration.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed . . .*

—The Declaration of Independence (1776, p. 1)

*Don't patronize them with lowest-common-denominator blancmange masquerading as knowledge and learning; nor crush their love for learning through boring pedagogy.*

—John Hattie (2013, p. ix)

This is an action research dissertation. I speak in the first person because it accurately reflects my positionality to my research—I exist within it and it exists within me. Action research takes place in the real-world rather than a clinical setting (Creswell, 2015; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Ivankova, 2015). Therefore, action research must address the challenges of the real-world (Bradbury, 2015). A challenge that is part of my action research journey over the last three years has been a change in context and positionality. However, that change in context and positionality has not led me to abandon my topic of exploration nor the purpose of my research. Rather, it has strengthened my resolve and allowed me the privilege of understanding the areas we will explore in this study in more depth. It permitted me to better understand the complexity and interconnectivity of the problems that we face in urban education (Anyon, 2014, 2009).

Specifically, this is a participatory action research (PAR; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008) dissertation. By this, I mean I had involved the participants

of the study and I was positioned as an agent of change within my research context and community. PAR is born of the traditions of Kurt Lewin (Bradbury, 2015), Argyris and Schön (Friedman & Rodgers, 2008), and in educational settings is associated with Freire (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). PAR is philosophically aligned with critical inquiry (Crotty, 1988) and is an inductive process of creating social knowledge for emancipatory change (Bradbury, 2015; Brinton & Mallona, 2008). I argue that my selection of PAR was most appropriate based upon my selection of a topic pertaining to student achievement in a neoliberal globalized world.

While action research is not concerned with generalizability, it does propose something that may be more applicable to educational settings, that of *transferability* (Ivankova, 2015; Mills, 2011). Transferability is concerned with how the learning from one context can inform and be utilized in another context. It is dynamic and, unlike the ideas behind generalizability, there is not a duplication of process with anticipated identical and/or causal outcomes. Rather, there is an adaptation based upon the manifestation of a problem of practice as situated within a particular context. We then decide, based upon our knowledge, what might transfer and therefore be applicable to a different context (Ivankova, 2015; Mills, 2011). To this end, the problem of practice that I chose to engage with is one that exists, in varying levels, wherever there are differences in how our students arrive to us.

My dissertation involved the study of multiple organizations, spanned contextual settings, and used the action research principles of transferability from previous cycles of research. Through transferability, I am connected not only to the cycle of this study, but also to my previous formal action research studies and writings. In this way, this



dissertation becomes but a milestone of my ongoing journey to make a contribution to a more just and ardent educational system that prepares students for a future of their choosing—college and career ready. Therefore, this dissertation represented the continuance of the action research tradition of transferability based upon what I have learned in other contexts and cycles of research.

Action research is a cyclical and reflective process (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). This document contains trace elements of arriving to a point of publication and will represent a traced element moving forward into my future cycles and actions to be studied. For this study, I was situated between what I have learned thus far, what I have initially acted upon, my current cycle of research, and how I plan to move forward. I anticipate a career where the cycles of action research never end; they are passed on in a process of “re-solving” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160) complex social issues. That is why, as an action researcher, I was comfortable exercising transferability, as I feel that this study is but a point of intersectionality of all that I have been, I am, and the person I am becoming.

An important moment in my action research came during my Cycle 0, when interviewing an individual for whom I had formerly worked. The interview was structured in a way that allowed for the interviewee to reveal some of the private agendas, choices, and actions taken during our time together in another district regarding changes in graduation requirements. Those changes in graduation requirements were initiated as a means of setting systemic expectation levels for student achievement. At the end of the interview, the individual stated that “if the American educational system is going to fail, it is because educational leaders have fundamentally lacked the courage to speak the truth

to politicians and the public, or to simply do right by children.” The interviewee asked me if I had the courage it was going to take to engage in meaningful systems reform and speak the truth. The statements filled the room, even as we silently sat. We chose to go to lunch, as actions, not words, provide answers to such a question.

Developing this dissertation has been an intense time of study and growth that I have used to challenge many of my own assumptions, convictions, and beliefs. In my explorations and reflections, I have debated among the many perspectives I hold (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). This, in some ways, has been a process that intended to start to answer my former mentor’s question. This dissertation is now, and upon reflection has been, my next steps in engaging in meaningful systems reform and learning to articulately speak the truth as I conceive it. For me, the power of action research is that of transformation. This reflexive research process has provided me a bridge between the two definitions of *ontology*, that of *being* (Crotty, 1998) and *becoming* (Gray, 2013). I argue that it is through action research that we may begin by accepting our current state as *being* in order to move us to a praxis (Freire, 2014; 2011) of the *becoming*.

### **Purpose and Topic of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the introduction of an innovation that intended to advance student achievement through the development of a school system’s expectations for student academic, social, and personal achievement in preparation for a successful transition from high school to post-secondary environments. The topic of my action research dissertation began with a research topic to explore possible misalignments of policy, organizational practice, expectations, and school site practice when compared to what is required for students to be successful in post-secondary environments. I started

by embarking upon several cycles of inquiry that will be reviewed in Chapter 2.

Throughout these cycles, I worked through a dynamic and reflexive process (Ivankova, 2015).

As I explored my action research topic, I reflected critically upon several questions that I wanted to explore in the literature and through my cycles of action research. The first question was, what does it mean for current high school graduates to be prepared for post-secondary life in our globalized neo-liberal economy? I followed this with, how might our collective aspirations and expectations for post-secondary life be articulated in our founding national documents, such as the U.S. Constitution, and our educational legal frameworks, such as state education code, charters, policies, regulations, and procedures? Then, how do schools and school districts interpret their obligations to students based upon their knowledge and understanding(s) of educational policy and what they believe is required for post-secondary success? Next, what are some of the problems of practice that I have observed within my immediate control, that I can act upon or influence? Finally, how might the actions that I take to address a problem of practice support raising our students' hope of being prepared for the post-secondary environments they will be subject to upon graduating from our schools?

Here I explore my situated context, my personal context, present my problem of practice, introduce my innovation, state my research questions, and summarize my opening thoughts. The purpose of presenting the situated and personal context was to demonstrate how the problem of practice was nested within the larger contextual setting. In Chapter 2, I will present information that supports that educational problems are complex and exhibit the features of what are called “wicked problems” (Rittel & Webber,

1973), discuss my systems and change theory, present my theoretical model, examine the literature on factors that may contribute to the problem of practice, and present a summary of previous cycles of my action research. In Chapter 3, I presented my study's philosophical alignment, my method for answering my research questions, and the timetable for the introduction of the innovation.

### **Situated Context**

This study encompassed multiple cycles of AR that occurred over different areas of the megaregion of Southern California. The Southern California megaregion has been defined as consisting of the greater Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas (Regional Planning Association, 2005). This economically based grouping has been described as one of “the most economically, socially, and geographically diverse urban regions in the world” (Regional Planning Association, 2005, p. 4). The estimated land space of 53,000 square miles equates to about 1.5% of the land in the United States, contains about 7% of the overall population, and is responsible for about 7% of the nation's GDP (Regional Planning Association, 2005). The first part of this study took place in the Inland Empire area of the greater Los Angeles region. The second part of this study took place in the metropolitan, urban center of downtown San Diego.

The northern part of the Southern California megaregion is an economically, socially, and geographically diverse area. Comprised of cities from the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, and Riverside. The greater Los Angeles region is comprised of over 18 million residents and is second in the United States (U.S.) in size only to the greater New York region (American Community Survey, 2012). The

counties of Riverside and San Bernardino make up a part of this region known as the *Inland Empire* (IE).

The IE was located in the valleys to the southeast of Los Angeles County and east of Orange County. The IE straddled the barrier hills and mountains to the north, west, and east. Over the past two decades, the IE had steadily moved away from an agricultural economy, with city sizes increasing (American Community Survey, 2012), urban renewal in city centers, and large-scale suburban housing developments evident to those traveling through the area. The district that I studied in this context served over 19,000 students a year. The student make-up was 78.1% Hispanic/Latino, 11.1% White, 4.9% Asian, 4% African American, 0.4% Pacific Islander, and 0.3% American Indian. For the 2015-2016 school year, 78.6% of students qualified for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, 41.3% of students were identified as English Learners, and 10.5% of students were identified as having disabilities (Dataquest, 2015).

The southern part of the Southern California megaregion was made up of the cities and communities of the greater San Diego metropolitan area. The estimated population size of this region was 3.3 million people (U.S. Census, 2018a), not including the city of Tijuana which was on the southern board of the region and could be seen from downtown San Diego. The diversity of the region was estimated to be 46% White, 33.5% Hispanic/Latina/o, 12.2% Asian, 5.5% African American, 4.4% two or more races, 1.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.6% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. About 23% of the population is foreign born. The San Diego metropolitan region had a strong military tradition with multiple Navy and Marine bases including, but not limited to, the Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in the north, Marine Corps Air

Station Miramar, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Naval Base Point Loma, Naval Air and Sea Base North Island, the Navy Broadway Complex, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, and Navy Base San Diego. In addition to the military personnel in San Diego, there were about 230,000 veterans living there as well (U.S. Census, 2018a). There were an estimated 1.1 million households in the region with the median housing price in 2016 being \$454,600 and the median household income was about \$66,529. Of the regional population, 86.4% had a high school diploma and 36.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher. About 37.5% of the population spoke a language other than English.

Within the San Diego metropolitan area, the largest city was San Diego. The city of San Diego served as the context of this study and had an estimated population of about 1.4 million people. The median price of a home was \$488,000 in 2016 with a median household income of about \$68,117. Of the population, 87.5% reported they had graduated from high school with 43.6% stating they had a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census, 2018b).

However, San Diego was not simply the context of this study; it was a place that I was deeply tied to. San Diego is where my father and his brothers grew up, where I and my wife grew up. It is the city where three of my four children were born. It is a place where I have served as a teacher, school principal, educational administrator, school systems leader, and community advocate. I had lived in different parts of the city including Clairemont, Downtown/Cortez Hill, Little Italy, Point Loma, and during this study lived with my family in a home in the northernmost section of the city near the city limits. From this vantage point my family and I saw the Independence Day fireworks far off in the distance over the bay during the summer of my data analysis for this study.

I had not always lived in San Diego. I had lived in Europe, Canada, and on the east coast of the U.S. However, I had always had a strong affinity for San Diego as my home, my city. A few years before entering my doctoral program, I stood on one of the bridges near the old Naval Training Center in Point Loma and reflected on how I had once stood in that same location as a boy watching the Olympic Torch pass by on its way to the Los Angeles Games of 1984. In this reflection, I looked at the downtown area across the bay and marveled at how it had grown from a few sparse tall buildings with the Cortez tower on the hill, to a place dominated by high rises for commercial and residential use. I wondered that day, as an educator, how the changing economics of the downtown area may impact the school systems that serve the students who lived there. I wondered if I might ever have the opportunity to lead a school or school system in the center of the city, and quietly hoped that I one day would.

### **Personal Context**

As with my situated context, my personal context during this study changed. However, each of these contexts has had striking similarities and themes associated with urbanization. During previous cycles of research, I was an executive director of a school district located about 100 miles north of my current personal context. As the executive director, I worked to implement educational innovations and develop schools on equity models for 23 schools. My studies and experiences from my previous cycles of action research were extraordinarily valuable to the development of this cycle of research. As part of my research studies, I sought additional information and ideas on my topic and conducted one of my cycles of research in the current situated context.

For this cycle of research, my personal context is that of an inner-city T/K-12 public charter school system. My positionality was that of the chief executive officer of a charter school organization and principal with a focus on developing a new high school. The school was founded in 2008 and had two locations in the downtown area of a large urban city in the southwest of the United States. The charter school group was expanding and during the course of this study I had acquired new parcels of land to begin the process of building two new schools and a community center.

Founded in 2008, as a single site K-8 system, a second location was opened in 2016 with the purpose of piloting a high school founded on the practices of design thinking (UDA, 2016). Design thinking is a process of thinking that comes from the action research tradition (Romme, 2004) and is sometimes grouped into three methodologies. The opening of our new campus to house the new schools and community center was branded the design thinking education center for our focus on design thinking methodology. For this study, the operational definition of design thinking adopted the model of the Stanford Design School and IDEO (UDA, 2017a). In this model there are five cyclical processes in this model of design thinking, those of empathy, problem identification, ideate, prototype, and test.

The mission of the school system was “to develop community-minded students who are active, creative, empathetic, confident, and ready to lead our global society” (UDA, 2017a, p. 3). As a school system in an urban, central downtown location, the vision for student success is “to graduate innovative leaders empowered to address the biggest issues facing our community” (UDA, 2017a, p.3). The school system served 613 students with a total waitlist of 571 students. While the school was located downtown,



43% of students resided downtown and the remaining 57% commuted to the school. As the school system was in the center of the city, some students accompanied their parents to work while others took public transportation. Student demographics of the T/K-12 school system from the 2016-2017 school year reflect the student population was 46.8% White, 35.5% Hispanic/Latina/o, 7.8% Multi-Racial, 5.8% African American, 2.3% Asian (non-Filipino), 0.8% Declined to Specify/Unknown, 0.6% Filipino, and 0.4% Pacific Islander. In that same year students were classified as being 28% Economically Disadvantaged, 8% English Learners, 8% Students with Disabilities, and 0.6% Homeless Youth (UDA, 2017a).

However, these breakdowns are not reflective of the school system's new pilot high school. From my review of the student information systems I found that our student demographics are 58.8% Hispanic/Latina/o, 27.5% White, 6.3% African American, 3.8% Multi-Racial, 2.5% Asian, and 1.3% Declined to Specify/Unknown (UDA SIS, 2018). Further review of student information systems found that 26.3% of students were classified as being Students with Disabilities and 28% were English Learners. In discussions with staff members they felt that metric indicators of Economically Disadvantaged and Homeless Youth were inaccurate and should be disregarded. Their logic for disregarding this information was that most families did not return requested information forms or declined to state status when asked by school officials.

The new high school used design thinking as the methodology for starting the school. The school opened at its current location in the 2017-2018 school year and was prototyped in a single room at the first location with 22 students in the 2016-2017 school year. In late 2017, I began discussions with UDA about joining them and becoming the

principal of Ideate High Academy (IHA). The position description was of great interest and used language that spoke to me as they sought to find a “servant leader . . . focus on cause before self” (UDA, 2017b). After meeting with the staff members, and members of the governing Board of Trustees, we came to a tentative agreement which was communicated to students, staff, and parents. Two months into this study I was asked to be the interim chief executive of the charter organization and subsequently offered the position of chief executive officer while remaining at the developing high school.

IHA was located on the west side of downtown and eight blocks from the harbor at the time of this study. IHA was designed to be a small personalized high school. The enrollment at the time of this study was 82 students as part of the design thinking prototype plan. The school was projected to grow in each year until enrollment is capped at 480 students (UDA, 2016).

The single-story building that housed the school was a former community education center. As a single-story building, it was being renovated for use by the school with about 40% of the facility being utilized. As an inner-city school located downtown, it was surrounded by commercial and residential high-rise buildings. The city jail was located two blocks south of the school and the business residing next door to the school was a 24-hour bail bonds company. The downtown, urban location was part of the school’s identity and students went on weekly explorations of the urban environment and took walking tours of the city. The staff ( $n = 10$ ) of the school was comprised of a close-knit group of individuals who were dedicated and provided an outstanding educational experience for students. As this was an inner-city location, the staff had a standing discussion, and at times arguments, about who would arrive when to secure one of the

four parking spaces available on site. Those not getting to park on site were relegated to finding a metered two-hour parking space or a paid space in a local parking lot/garage.

During my transition to the new school system I held extensive meetings with the Board of Trustees, administrators, students, staff, and parents. There were several immediate needs to be addressed that centered on systems for communication, goal setting, and building a school culture of respect and accountability. To establish a forum for gathering community voice and in promoting the design thinking theme of the school, I opened a series of Community Design Sessions (CDS), the first of which was with parents. Our first CDS was attended by board members ( $n = 2$ ), administrators ( $n = 3$ ), and parents ( $n = 27$ ). The meeting space was intended to hold 18 people in our conference room, but we opened the doors and made space.

In my opening CDS I was asked to articulate my priority goals based upon my transition time. From my contemporaneous analytic memos, there were five priorities discussed. However, I noted that there was one priority that we would be addressing over the course of the fall semester that pertained to a problem of practice that had been identified in my conversations with students, teachers, parents, board members, and the administration. This problem also pertained to multiple cycles of action research that I had conducted and felt were fully consistent and transferable to the local personal context.

### **The Problem of Practice**

*The problem of practice was that systems complexity may lead to socio-economic reification of our students' educational and post-secondary opportunities through institutional structures that spanned ecological systems. This complexity obscured setting*

*relevant positive goals for high school graduation, college attainment, and career success.* Graduation requirements for the school system were based, in part, upon California School Board Association (CSBA; CSBA BP 6146, 2015) standards with a stated goal of having students meet UC ‘a-g’ baseline requirements (UDA, 2017a). However, these requirements do not meet the post-secondary needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Stephens, Warren, Harner, & Owen, 2015; OECD, 2013; Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2012; OECD, 2012; Daggett, 2012; Zhao, 2012; American Management Association, 2010; Wagner, 2010), nor do they align with the newly-implemented California State College/Career Indicators accountability standards (CA Accountability Model, 2017). Furthermore, these graduation requirements do not meet the intentions of the school systems’ mission, vision, guiding philosophies, or educational goals (UDA, 2017a). As a newly formed high school component of a K-12 school system, there were no formal College and Career planning documents, staff professional development, student services, or parent training programs in place.

**The changed world that students are entering.** My problem of practice was based in the complexity that is a defining feature of a wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973). I have asserted in my problem of practice that this complexity spans ecological systems and may be institutionalized. The setting of goals may be based upon perceptions of the lines of normality that are situationally based in a complexity that spans generations and be based upon the positionality of the child in their community (Lee & Brown, 2002). This complexity may be compounded when local communities do not understand the rapidly changing world that our students are entering upon graduating from our educational institutions.

In Chapter 2, I present recent literature that suggests that American high school students may face greater political, oppresional, and educational challenges than previous generations. For example, Miller, Kim, Roberts, Kiley, and Whiting (2016) found that there has been a continuing trend of a reduction of economic freedom for Americans. The Institute for Economics and Peace (2015) ranked the U.S. 94<sup>th</sup> in the world on their Global Peace Index. Students graduating in the U.S. are more likely to be imprisoned than their peers in other parts of the world (Kaeble, Glaze, Tsoutis, & Minton, 2015).

I argued that there is a need for higher educational and graduation expectation levels for students as they enter this changed world. For example, there is a growing body of literature that suggests that U.S. students are not reaching the same educational attainment levels in secondary schools when compared with other industrialized countries (Miller et al., 2016; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015; Kaeble et al., 2015; Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013). There have also been indications that students are not prepared with the skill sets they need to be a success in the collaborative environments that current careers require (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2012; Zhao, 2012; American Management Association, 2010; Wagner, 2010). Therefore, given the educational, socio-relational, political, and economic challenges that students will face in a neoliberal globalized marketplace, I argued that we must support increased expectations for students graduating high school.

**Implications of high school completion and course offerings.** Graduating from high school is one measure of success that may be tied to individuals' economic standing. In 2012, individuals who did not have a high school education in the U.S. had an annual

median income of about \$25,000, translating to a lifetime loss of about \$670,000 when compared to high school graduates (Stark & Noel, 2015). In addition, reports such as those by the American Management Association (2010) have concluded that employers are finding that new employees are not well equipped for the new job market and are lacking skills that fall outside of the focus of school graduation requirements. They surveyed executives ( $n = 2115$ ) and found that “critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication” (p. 1) were the top ranked areas for skills that they needed in their future workforce.

### **The Innovation**

An innovation is the introduction of a process, practice, technology, or idea that is new to an individual, entity, or organization (Christensen, Anthony, & Roth, 2004; Rogers, 2003; Drucker, 1998). Therefore, an innovation does not need to be a material thing. It can be a practice or way of thinking that addresses the culture of an organization (Rogers, 2003; Drucker, 1998). *In this way, we can have an innovation of the mind*—an intentionally designed disruption to the way we think as a person, community, or organization, with new ideas that change our perception of what is possible.

There are a variety of theories of innovations and how they are used within organizations (Pascale, Sternin, & Sternin, 2010; Meadows, 2008; Christensen et al., 2004; Rogers, 2003; Drucker, 1998). Innovations take a myriad of forms and can be sophisticated and technologically advanced or simple, low cost, and practical (Christensen et al., 2004). An innovation that is low cost and can radically change the way a context works has been called a disruptive innovation (Christensen et al., 2004). Disruptive innovations change how and what we do. To this end, I have reflected on how

an innovation of the mind, something that changes the way we think about our context and those within it, may be the most disruptive innovation of them all.

The implementation and adoption of an innovation is a complex change process that requires careful consideration (Hall & Hord, 2015; Rogers, 2003). It is also a process of learning and knowing (Wenger, 1999). The adoption of an innovation is partially reliant upon the abilities of the implementing facilitator (Hall & Hord, 2015) or change agent (Rogers, 2003). The complexity of an innovation, how it fits into or extends current belief systems, and how strongly it is championed by organizational and community leaders are just a few considerations that may ultimately determine the adoption or rejection of an innovation (Rogers, 2003).

My concurrent mixed-methods action research study examined the implementation and results of the I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR). The iCCR was a collaboratively designed system utilizing a PAR (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Ivankova, 2015) structure that (a) provided staff and stakeholder professional development on a graduation profile that identify post-secondary needs for all students, (b) collaboratively set positive goals and expectations for all students in our schools to be ready for 21<sup>st</sup> century post-secondary environments, (c) developed and implemented college and career ready advisory period curriculum and supporting experiences, (d) provided parent workshops to increase parent knowledge of college and career readiness standards being expected of students, and (e) provided ongoing professional development sessions for the implementation of iCCR curriculum with advisors in their advisory period. The iCCR was developed and implemented over a 16-week period in the April semester of 2018. The participants ( $n = 112$ ) of this innovation

were Students ( $n = 65$ ), parents ( $n = 35$ ), staff ( $n = 9$ ), and community advisory/board members ( $n = 3$ ).

### **Research Question**

My research on the implementation of the innovation was focused on four research questions. These questions aimed to expand my knowledge about the effectiveness of the innovation as it pertains to my problem of practice, the development of community and parental understanding, staff levels of implementation, student attitudinal measurements of understanding of their pathway process for college and career readiness and hope levels. My research questions were:

RQ1. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR parent/community development plans increase parent/community understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready?

RQ2. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of iCCR support the school site in setting positive goals for students?

RQ3. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR student pathway and agency plan increase students' understanding of what they need to accomplish to be college and career ready?

RQ4. How, and to what extent, will the implementation level of iCCR support student levels of hope for their future?

### **Summary**

In this chapter we opened with a discussion of action research and PAR which are important to understanding the framework of this study. I reviewed the emancipatory characteristic of PAR. Then I briefly traced the history of PAR to situate it within the



Freirean traditions of educational research. The action research concept of transferability was discussed and how it applies to my study. I argued that transferability was applicable across similar context through multiple cycles of action research. I then presented some of my early reflections of a previous cycle of research and how action research has supported my Praxis. Specifically, action research advanced my Praxis by reconciling the two definitions of ontology, that of *being* and *becoming*.

The purpose of my study was to examine the introduction of a school site innovation to advance student achievement. The goal of my innovation was to better prepare students for a successful transition from high school to post-secondary environments including college and career. The topic of my study was to explore possible misalignments of policy, organizational intentions, expectations, and school site practice in preparing students for post-secondary environments. I presented a series of framing questions that I used to increase my understanding of the educational requirements for students and guided my review of the literature which will be presented in Chapter 2.

The context of my study was the southernmost metropolitan region of the Southern California megaregion. Specifically, my study took place in the urban center of the City of San Diego. My personal context for this study was that of a newly formed urban, small inner-city high school in downtown San Diego founded on the tenants of design thinking. I presented an operational definition for design thinking, the mission and vision of the school, and stated my positionality as the chief executive officer of the charter school organization. I reviewed the transition process that I had with the school and the results of my opening meetings with board members, the administration, staff, students, and parents. From these meetings, I was able to establish priority goals for the

site and identified a problem of practice that was reflective of the transferability of knowledge acquired in previous cycles of action research.

The problem of practice was presented as being *that systems complexity may lead to socio-economic reification of our students' educational and post-secondary opportunities through institutional structures that spanned ecological systems. This complexity obscured setting relevant positive goals for high school graduation, college attainment, and career success.* I found that as a newly formed high school component of a K-12 school system, there were no formal college and career planning documents, staff professional development, student services, or parent training programs currently in place. I argued that based upon the literature, students needed higher levels of graduation expectations. This was required to prepare them for the neoliberal globalized marketplace and extenuating circumstances that current students will face upon graduating from high school. In support of this argument, I presented evidence from research on the financial, personal, and political implications of not being prepared to compete in a global society.

My study examined four research questions that sought to further my understanding of the effectiveness of this innovation of the mind. The four topics of these research questions were (a) parent/community understanding of college and career readiness; (b) the impacts of the implementation level of the innovation; (c) if student knowledge of pathway and agency plans increase for college and career readiness; and (d) if the implementation of the innovation will increase the levels of students' hope for their future. In Chapter 2, I explored the complexity within my problem of practice, its implications to research design, the theoretical system that may govern my problem of practice, how hope may be used as a strategy in navigating this system, and then present

my theoretical model for social change as it relates to educational institutions. Then, I will review the literature on educational challenges for post-secondary student preparedness and review my findings from previous cycles of action research that influenced the selection of my innovation for this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH GUIDING THE PROJECT

*. . . Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government . . .”*

—The Declaration of Independence (1776, p. 1)

*The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true.*

—Robert K. Merton (1948, p. 195)

Student achievement may be tied to many circumstances. For example, the impacts of socioeconomic status on student achievement have been well established in national studies (Stark & Noel, 2015; Sirin, 2005). Early childhood developmental factors such as access to high quality preschool (MacEwan, 2015; Gormley, Gayer, Phillips & Dawson, 2005) or early onset childhood obesity (Sijtsma, Koller, Sauer, & Corpeleijn, 2015; Burdette & Whitaker, 2005) have been shown to have long-term impacts on student academic success. Educational policies and their local interpretations (Carlson & Planty, 2012; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Lipsky, 1980), school structure, and culture (Ravitz, 2010; Main, 2009) have been found to play roles. Some scholars argue that the interdependencies among these and other factors make it difficult or impossible to untangle their individual effects (Lee, 2010; Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1977). In like manner, enumerable factors that jointly contribute to a disconnection between school-based achievement levels and what is required in a student's post-secondary world may be found (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012; Daggett, 2012; American Management Association, 2010). Thus, the complex problem of making progress on

reducing or eliminating this disconnection presents a considerable challenge for any action researcher, stakeholder, or administrator. It may, therefore, be useful to consider the nature of the problem through the lens of wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

When problems exude complexity, they may reach a dual state of being both a problem and a symptom of other problems. Having a problem that may also be a symptom of another problem and has innumerable causes are two essential criteria for framing issues as a *wicked problem* (Camillus, 2008; Rittel & Webber, 1973). Rittel and Webber (1973) examined social problems through the lens of wicked problems. In their framework of wicked problems, there are ten criteria. While Rittel and Webber did not define how many corresponding criteria may qualify a problem as being wicked, Camillus (2008) suggested that you truly have a wicked problem when meeting half of the criteria. Jordan, Kleinsasser, and Roe (2014) suggested that the concepts of “wickedity” are fully applicable to education and may warrant “a broader understanding and a much broader inclusion in current educational decision-making” (p. 415).

A review of my topic as it pertains to student achievement may exhibit the following wicked problem criteria (Rittel & Webber, 1973): it lacks boundaries or stopping rules; it is tied to time and context and, therefore, is a “one-shot operation” (p. 163); it is without enumerable solutions; it is interdependent and a symptom of another problem; and it is without the ability for the planner to be wrong. For example, preparing students for successful entry into post-secondary environment may lack boundaries, may be tied to time and context, and may be a symptom of another problem because it appears to be cyclical in nature and may be a symptom of issues relating to poverty (Anyon, 2014; Carter & Welner, 2013; Anyon, 2009). Recall that IHA is an inner-city urban

school that draws our student population from a diverse set of communities including those that have high needs (UDA, 2017a).

The issue of student achievement may be without enumerable solutions and may be without the ability for the planner to be wrong. For example, in reviewing student preparation and graduation requirements, there are listings of possible solutions that are ever expanding. The planners may not have the ability to be wrong as the definitions of student achievement are not fixed, change over time and context, and have no universally agreed upon meaning. This would leave a planner without clear parameters as to what outcome criteria would be available to be measured as being right.

Levin, Cashore, Bernstein, and Auld (2012) extended wicked problems theory with their concept of *super wicked problems*. In their model, the topic of student achievement may also qualify as a super wicked problem under their additional criteria: (a) it is a problem for which time is running out, (b) there is no central authority, (c) the persons trying to solve the problem are also causing it, and (d) policies that address it discount the future (p. 127-128). For example, from the perspective student their time in school is time bound with critical path implications for future plans—without clear guidance and expectations their time is running out to make course corrections. There is no central authority to define what college and career readiness means as we are addressing a future state of preparation that is not fully known. In this way, we may also be discounting the future as being a variable beyond our control. As we work to develop educational innovations, we may also be causing increases in educational divides that we seek to alleviate. For example, through our own educational decrees, policies, and interventions we may have reinstated school segregation (Rosiek & Kinslow, 2015;

Reardon & Owens, 2014; Reardon, Grewal, Kalogrides, & Greenberg, 2012) and increased the student opportunity gap (Musu-Gillette, de Brey, McFarland, Hussar, Sonnenberg, & Wilkinson-Ficker, 2017).

Framing my topic as a wicked problem had implications for my theoretical framework and research design. First, my topic was approached as being complex and cyclical in nature. By this, I mean that the problem of student preparedness itself is embedded in social cycles and cultural attributes. Second, it meant that there may be implications for a change of practice as the next cycle of “re-solving” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160) that would have to deal with the unintended consequences of current treatments or innovations. Finally, the nature of wicked problems called for a participative process to address the topic and the problem of practices associated with it. These features suggested that participatory action research may have been the most appropriate vehicle for my study.

Action research is cyclical, action oriented, bound to context, and may be of mixed-methods design (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). The cyclical nature of action research may fit with the concept of “re-solving” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160) within wicked problems theory. For example, the cyclical attributes of action research position it well to the application of continuous improvement for social issues. The action orientation of action research may have provided a positive driver for change based upon the understanding of the local context to guide those improvements (Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). Action research often uses a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2015; Ivankova, 2015). The utilization of a mixed-methods approach may be of benefit when dealing with a wicked problem (Mertens, 2015). Action research can involve the

participants through a process of democratic and catalytic validity (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Action research finds direction through both empirical knowledge of a problem of practice within the local context while situating it within a theoretical framework and the literature (Mertler, 2014). The positionality of the researcher, as being within the context, coupled with the theoretical frameworks and literature, are used to guide the selection and application of an innovation. This is critical as practitioners may find theory not to be applicable due to the complexity of their contextual setting and tasks (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). The use of theory in practice may be advanced through action research with Mertler (2014) asserting that “action research provides one possible solution to bridging this gap by creating a two-way flow of information” (p. 23).

Here, I first review Ecological Systems Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1994) as a psychological-based systems theory of human development that informs my work. I then review Hope Theory (HT; Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2005; Snyder, 2002) as a change theory and a strategic approach to student success. I will then present my theoretical framework of how HT may be used to advance student opportunity and achievement across the levels of EST. Next, I will review the literature as it pertains to preparing students for their future as part of my argument for positive goal setting and higher expectations for students graduating high school. Finally, I will review previous cycles of action research that inform this work and how they have been synthesized into the problem of practice being addressed by this study.



## Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological System Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1977) was first introduced in the 1970's and has evolved over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). EST was founded as a psychological theory of human development and has been applied in many settings. For example, EST has been used to examine adolescent issues such as the influence of political consumerism on students (Wicks & Warren, 2014), the antecedents and consequences of adolescents' use of alcohol (Chun, Devall, & Sandau-Beckler, 2013; Scalco, Trucco, & Colder, 2015), and the role of academic expectations on minority students (Trask-Tate, Cunningham, & Francois, 2014). It has also been used to examine complex social issues such as child labor (Liao & Hong, 2011), cycles of aggression in national conflict (Boxer, Rowell Huesmann, Dubow, Landau, Gvirsman, Shikaki, & Ginges, 2013), and working with immigrant families (Paat, 2013). EST has also been used in the analysis of how research is conducted, interacts with the literature, and is framed (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013).

There are two defining properties of EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1994). The first is that human development takes place over time through a progressively more complex set of interactions in a person's immediate environment. This is known as the *proximal process*. Within the proximal process, the person interacts with other people, objects, and symbols within the environment. The second defining property has three characteristics whereby,

Form, power, content, and direction of the proximal process affecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment--both immediate and more

remote--in which the processes are taking place; and the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 38).

Both defining properties interact in EST with special considerations being placed on the environmental systems.

### **The Five Environmental Systems of EST**

In EST, the environments are said to be ecologically-based through a set of five nested structures. From innermost to outermost, those systems are the *microsystems*, *mesosystems*, *exosystems*, *macrosystems*, and *chronosystems*. In EST, the first four environmental systems interact with each other over the course of the fifth, which is bound by time periods. Each system has a role to play in a person's development.

Through these environments, developmental factors are taken into consideration from the standpoint that, while an individual may not be directly involved in a system, that system may hold influence over the individual through social constructs.

The *microsystems* are those that take place daily through direct contact with our immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In this way, the classroom, work, and home settings may be regarded as three separate microsystems. At the microsystem level, it has been found that influence on student learning and behaviors is significant as proximal influence of the interacting agents is high (Tynan, Somers, Gleason, Markman, & Yoon, 2014; Wicks & Warren, 2014). Bronfenbrenner (1977) suggested that this may be because the interacting agents are involved in frequent contacts and activities that make up the process that shapes behaviors. For example, Wicks and Warren (2014) found that family, classrooms, and peers had significant influence on student behaviors at the

microsystems level. Tynan et al. (2014) suggested that there was microsystem level influence to mitigate student risk-taking behaviors.

The *mesosystems* reflect the interactions of the various microsystems that are present in our lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In this way, school, work, and home environments are three distinctive areas that may not directly interact, or have limited interactions, with each other, but may interact through the individual. In this way, school itself works as a mesosystem. For example, schools are comprised of various individuals and peers who interact in classrooms and professional spaces at a microsystem level. However, they may not interact with each other directly over the course of a day. Wicks and Warren (2014) and Tynan et al. (2014) found that classroom and peer groups acted as microsystems within the framework of the mesosystem of school itself.

The *exosystem* joins the systems in which an individual is an active participant with those where they have only indirect contact (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In this way, an external system that one may not have a direct interaction with may have an impact on a mesosystem or microsystem experience. Therefore, a person may be an active participant in her/his own school and work environments and may share a home environment with someone else, where they are not a participant in that person's school and work environment. For example, school board policies for student achievement may evolve and be codified; while students do not have a direct role in this interaction, it does impact their school experiences.

The *macrosystem* system represents the cultural context in which a person is situated (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It is at this level that community and cultural beliefs exist. For example, school board policies for student achievement may be situated at the

exosystems level; however, they are voted on by board members who are elected from the community. As elected officials, they may represent the cultural context and belief systems of the community. For example, Wicks and Warren (2014) suggested that community culture may lead to the adoption of a compulsory education system—a democratic system to govern them—with the culture reifying itself within the policies that become the practices of the schools and classrooms with them.

The *chronosystem* represents the major events during one's life and changes that occur over time spans (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This time system acknowledges the importance of time to both the person and the environment. A chronosystem event is one that marks a significant time period or event in someone's life that includes direct implications. In this way, chronosystem events may be reflective of the culture and community of the microsystem, governed in the institutions of the exosystems, manifest themselves to the individual in their mesosystem, and become part of their ongoing experience in their microsystem environments. A student's time in school, as marked by milestone progressions, such as high school graduation, may be an example of a chronosystem event for a student as it pertains to this study.

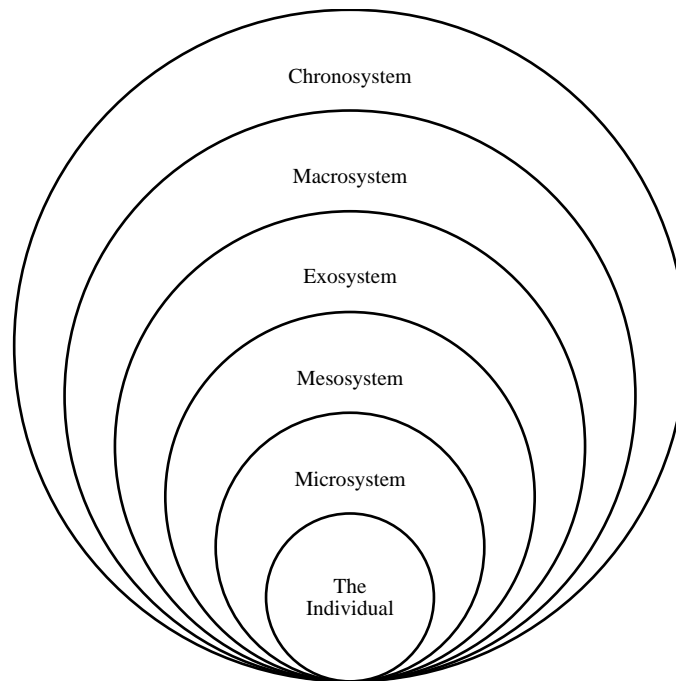
### **EST in School Practice**

As a model of child and human development, EST is applicable to the environment of school (Burns, Warmbold, & Zaslofsky, 2015; Tynan et al., 2014; Wicks & Warren, 2014; Brendtro, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1994;). Brendtro (2006) suggested that EST supported questions that pertained to how a student had transactions with family, school, and peers, and how those might create circles of influence on students. There are direct implications of the application of EST to schools. Burns et al. (2015) found there to

be a need for an EST approach that would look at the complicated interactions of home, school, the community, and culture aligning to the environmental systems of EST. However, in a review of the literature, Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, and Karnik (2009) examined 25 studies of EST in schools and found little examination of how the environmental systems interact. Tudge et al. (2009) also found that studies conducted at schools rarely addressed all five of the environmental systems. Thus, EST may address classroom interactions, situate schools within a broader ecological context, identify how a district's policies emerge as school and classroom practice, and how community culture may influence educational chronosystem events such as school expectations of student preparedness upon graduating from high school. In this way, EST may have direct and far-reaching implications for my problem of practice that require multiple cycles of research to address the various systems' levels and their interconnectivity.

EST suggests that students' lives, even at the school level, are complex. For example, while school has been cited as being a microsystems environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), consider the secondary school environment. Within the construct of a school day, there may be busing, before school activities, a six-period day with different teachers and rules, lunch activities, after school interactions, and evening social events. These structures may appear similar to elements of fast-paced mesosystems and exosystems where the power and influences in one area of school lives carry over to others. We might consider family dynamics in our students' lives that may regard work as a situated exosystem, the macrosystem that the family is nested in, or chronosystems events such as changes in employment or career field (Figure 1). In these complex and dynamic systems, finding a positive influence to act as a cytosure to navigate through

EST may be found in the idea of hope and its operationalization through Hope Theory (Snyder et al., 2005; Snyder, 2002).



*Figure 1.* Nested diagram of the five EST environmental systems

### **Hope and Hope Theory**

Hope has been described as an ontological requirement in supporting educators who work in communities stricken with poverty (Freire, 2014). Hope has been recognized as an important aspect in student development and has been measured through established instruments such as the Children’s Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, & Stahl, 1997) and through the Gallup Student Poll on Engagement (Lopez & Calderon, 2011). There is a growing body of literature in support of the importance of hope in education (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Lopez, 2013; Webb, 2013; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Duncan-Andrade, 2009). For example, hope has been found to be a critical psychological attribute and determinate

in the ability of inner-city youth to find personal and academic success (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Valle, Huebner, & Suldo, 2006). Hope may play a pivotal role in breaking cycles of oppressions with Yosso (2005) noting that, “aspirational capital is the ability to hold onto hope in the face of structured inequality” (p. 77). Webb (2013) described hope as “the cardinal theme of human existence” (p. 397).

When operationalized, hope has been used as a change agent strategy that may lead to gains in student academic achievement (Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Duncan-Andrade, 2009). In addressing the diminished levels of hope in low-income youth, Sheehan and Rall (2011) found that given an environment that fosters hope, students can meet high levels of academic expectations. They found that, alternatively, low levels of academic expectation became self-fulfilling paradigms for students. Duncan-Andrade (2009) contended that hope is critical to the success of inner-city youth but suggested that the type of hope strategy was important. For example, Duncan-Andrade argues that the use of *Socratic hope* may hold particular promise for inner-city youth. In Socratic hope, the educator must meet students on their terms, make the academic journey with them, while keeping high levels of academic outcome expectations (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). Such ideas are reflective in Webb’s (2013) analysis of pedagogies to support hope. Webb found that hope was reflective of an ontological journey supported in the teaching process whereby hope could have patient, critical, sound, resolute, and transformative dispositions.

## **Hope Theory: The Operationalization of Hope**

Snyder (2002) presented an operational framework of hope whereby hope is defined as “the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways” (p. 249). In this way, HT connects the elements of *goals*, *pathway*, and *agency* through social context. HT is characterized as a positive psychology theory (p. 257) with similarities to *Optimism* (Seligman, 2011; Scheier & Carver, 1985), *Self-Efficacy* (Bandura, 1997), and *Goal-directed Behavior* (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). However, HT differs from these models in some definitions and in how goals, pathway, and agency interact with each other. There have been suggested extensions of HT, notably from Bernardo (2010) and the addition of the locus-of-hope scale. This addition to HT was based upon Bernardo’s examination of goal setting of university students and situated goal setting as an individual activity. This study incorporates EST and situates goal setting as an activity that takes place at multiple environmental levels and is a joint activity. Therefore, for the purpose of this study HT is being operationally defined as originally called for by Snyder (2002).

**Tenets of Hope Theory: Goals, Pathway, and Agency Thinking.** *Goal* setting is a central focus of HT (Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Snyder et al., 2005; Snyder, 2002). Within HT, goals are mental targets of an expected future state of being (Webb, 2013). In HT, there are two major types of goal outcomes: positive goal outcomes and negative goal outcomes (Snyder, 2002). Positive goal outcomes are broken down into three subsections: (a) envisioning a new goal for the first time, (b) sustaining a current goal, or (c) advancing a current goal where progress has been made. Negative goal outcomes are



broken down into two subsections: (a) delaying an impact or effect indefinitely and (b) delaying an impact or effect to another time.

Goal and expectation setting are a critical element of HT with implications for student outcomes. When a positive goal does not derive the anticipated improved future state upon the completion of the associated pathway tasks, we may be setting a standard for “*hope deferred*” (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p. 184), which is exhibited by the key characteristic of setting low expectations, particularly for students in poverty. This may lead to students encountering a *double bind* experience (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956), whereby students encounter feelings of helplessness and find themselves without a sense of direction. Negative goal setting may lead to issues similar to what was revealed in Merton’s (1948) *self-fulfilling prophecy theory*. In Merton’s model, misunderstanding that which is possible leads to alteration of goal setting that makes the misunderstanding a reality. Recent research has found that goal setting, as expressed by expectations being set for students by teachers, is important in student outcomes. For example, Hattie (2013) conducted a review of over 800 meta-analyses on various influences on student achievement and found that *student expectations* may be the single most important factor for student achievement (p. 266).

*Pathway* is the act of making plans for how to reach a goal (Snyder et al., 2005; Snyder, 2002) and committing to a decisive route on how to get there. Pathway is what sets HT apart from many positive psychological theories. In HT, setting high expectations through goals and creating motivated thinking about what is possible must be enacted upon by establishing a path. Pathway consists of both planning and time elements.

Pathway thinking is a structure where the view of the future is influenced by present thoughts.

Pathway thinking is ongoing and in constant renegotiation during the course of goal attainment (Snyder, 2002). Students with high levels of hope will commit themselves to a pathway and have alternatives to that pathway available should they encounter setbacks. McCoy and Bowen (2015) found that clarifying pathways for student success was an important factor for students, especially those at risk. For example, clarifying a pathway can be accomplished by breaking down complex activities required for long-term success into manageable, smaller steps that can allow for students to have a sense of forward movement toward accomplishing their goals while affirming agency thinking. Marques, Lopez, Fontaine, Coimbra, and Mitchell (2015) found that having multiple pathways was a common characteristic for students with extremely high hope and may support agency and willpower to achieve goals.

*Agency* is how one directs energies toward a goal or toward the motivational factors to reach one's goal (Snyder et al., 2005; Snyder, 2002, p. 251). Agency interacts with pathway during the process of goal pursuit. Snyder found agency thinking to be critical in overcoming obstacles and in pathway adjustment. In this way, agency thinking cannot be disconnected from pathway thinking. Snyder suggests that pathway and agency thinking are connected to each other in such a way that “pathways and agency thought feed each other” (Snyder, 2002, p. 252).

Agency thinking has been linked to academic achievement and student success. For example, in a quantitative study using multiple regression analysis, Adelabu (2008) found that agency was positively related to academic achievement for students in both

urban and rural students. Sheehan and Rall (2011) found that building agency and pathway were more important to students' success than infusing technology in instruction. Marques et al. (2015) found that, while agency was important, it needed to be replenished during the pursuit of goal attainment. I present an example of the interactions of goals, pathway and agency in Figure 2.



*Figure 2.* The interactions of Goal, Pathway, and Agency in HT.

### **Hope Theory within Ecological Systems Theory**

The problem of student achievement may be a wicked problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973) that spans multiple institutions (Anyon, 2014; Carter & Welner, 2013; Anyon, 2009) and has implications at each of the EST environmental levels. Hope has been shown to be an important factor for student achievement (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Lopez, 2013; Webb, 2013; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Lopez, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2009). HT is the operationalization of hope (Snyder et al., 2005; Snyder, 2002) that has emerged as a promising practice (Webb, 2013; Sheehan

& Rall, 2011; Duncan-Andrade, 2009) and has been situated within EST (Gerard & Booth, 2015). There may be considerations for how goals, pathway, and agency interact with the chronosystem, macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and microsystem as they pertain to students.

Goal formation may occur and interact with each of the five environmental systems. For example, chronosystem-level events represent the passage of major life events (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). A chronosystem-level event for students, as it pertains to my problem of practice, may be graduation itself. As it pertains to graduation, expectations may be set at the macrosystem level which is comprised of “belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options” (p. 40). It may be at this level where the community expectation of graduating from high school or seeking continuation to university may be formed. As members of boards of education are elected as constituents from this level, there may be policy documents that solidify this into formal policies for schools (Wicks & Warren, 2013).

The exosystem links the macrosystem to the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1994) noted that schools exist at this level in students’ lives. Goal formation at this level might take the form of selections from the course of study. These course choices may have implications at the chronosystem level that are not known to students or their families (Liou, Martinez, & Rotheram-Fuller, 2016; Kanno & Kangas, 2014). This may be particularly true when policy documents (California Department of Education, 2016; CSBA BP 6146, 2015) are disconnected from the requirements for postsecondary success (UC ‘a-g’ Guide, 2015; Daggett, 2012; American Management Association, 2010). As

mesosystems are comprised of various microsystems involved in the student's life, it may be here where goals regarding grade point averages and unit accrual are set.

The microsystem may be comprised of the classes students take, their peer relations, and the individual components of a student's life. Gerard and Booth (2015) found that supportive educational environments have far-reaching impacts for youth hopefulness and high educational aspirations. Lopez (2013, 2010) suggested that teachers could infuse hope into the classroom that would result in increases in student attendance and improved academic outcomes through the setting of meaningful goals. Webb (2012) identified pedagogical practices to support hope in the classroom.

**Theoretical Model of HT within EST.** Snyder (2002) argued that pathway and agency thinking were intertwined and work with each other. Pathway and agency thinking may allow for students to navigate and transcend the various environmental systems. In a similar way to goal formation, pathway and agency may be extended across the EST environmental systems. According to HT, the first division of goal attainment is that between positive and negative goals. Within positive goal formation, goals can be new or renegotiated as goal pursuit occurs over time. In this way pathway and agency too would need to be renegotiated to support goal selection and development. A theoretical model for this process may work as it pertains to being prepared for postsecondary success and is presented in Table 1.

My problem of practice, HT, and EST finds points of intersection on goal setting, pathway, and agency thinking across the ecological systems. Based upon my problem of practice, the review of the importance of goal setting, and how graduating from high school may be considered a chronosystem event within EST, a question arises. What does

the literature reflect about the world that students are entering upon graduating from high school? Having presented my theoretical framework here, I will now review the literature as to how our students as individuals enter a local context which may be nested within global factors. Then, I will review my previous cycles of action research that are guiding my work.

Table 1

*My Theoretical EST and HT Model*

Proximal Process	Environmental System	Goal Formation	Pathway/Agency Thinking
Lowest	Chronosystem K-12 Education	High School Graduation	Graduating Knowing What Is Next, Belief in a Better Future
Low	Macrosystem Community Influence	College and/or Career	Knowing the Difference, Commitment to Positive Goal Attainment
Medium	Exosystem District Systems	District Graduation Requirements, School Expectations	Course of Study, Graduation Rates
High	Mesosystem School	Unit Accrual, Grade Point Average	Course Choice, Commitment to School Work
Highest	Microsystem Classes	High Scores for Assignments	Skills to Complete Assignments, Motivation to Do Well

**Preparing Students for Their Futures**

In my first chapter, I briefly explained that students may enter into post-secondary environments in the U.S. that may place them at a disadvantage when compared to students in other countries (Miller et al., 2016; Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015;

Kaebler, Glaze, Tsoutis, & Minton, 2015; Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013). To further elaborate on this argument, I will review the literature, present my findings from previous cycles of action research that explored my topic, and synthesize how the problem of practice may be served by HT with EST. This review is structured through the lens of considering social problems as wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) and the interconnectedness of nested systems outlined in my theoretical framework.

### **World and National Views of Education**

It has been estimated that at least 90% of children around the world spend some time enrolled in formal education (Stephens et al., 2015). The western model of mass education is an *enterprise* that is reflective of the modern nation-state model that seeks social order as a primary goal (Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 2015). This western model focuses on the socialization of the individual, to extend membership, progress a secular idea of action, increase the standardization of curriculum, and link educational development within a social construct that is tied to the overarching progress of the nation state (Meyer et al., 2015). This takes place in the forms of primary (grades P/K-5), secondary (grades 6-12), and postsecondary schools. Much of the spread of the western model of mass education throughout the world occurred in the 20th century, with a particularly strong growth after World War I (Meyer et al., 2015). Within the framework of globalization, education has become a core component of the nation-state's infrastructure that can be tied to its economic health. However, there may be disconnections between what may be required of students in the 21st century and what is provided by our schools (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2012; Zhao, 2012; American Management Association, 2010; Wagner, 2010).

A comparison of developed nations may provide a starting point in my review of how the United States of America (U.S.) stands with other economically developed trade partners and competitors. The Group of 20 (G-20) is comprised of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, México, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, United States of America, and European Union. The G-20 represents over 85% of the world's economy, with the U.S. representing the single largest economic force (Stephens et al., 2015). While the standard of living in the U.S., as measured by median wage, has recently declined, it remains strong in comparison to other countries (Kochhar, 2014). Yet, the U.S. hosts the greatest per-capita population in prison or under correctional monitoring with over 6,851,000 on record in 2014 (Kaeble et al., 2015).

There have been multiple studies of the U.S. that do not consider it as the world leader in areas that may be codependent. For this review of the literature, these areas include, but are limited to, the per-capita number of those within the borders of the U.S. that are incarcerated (Kaeble et al., 2015), the ability to live in peace (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015), and the ability to produce a well-educated populace (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD 2013). Here, I will explore some of the indicators of our national health as a means of understanding what our students may be confronted with upon graduating from our high schools.

### **Economic Freedom and Constitutional Rights**

One external view of national health is that of economic freedom (EF). The Heritage Foundation's annual report from their *Institute for Economic Freedom and Opportunity* (Miller et al., 2016) found that the U.S. was ranked in 11th place in EF as of



2016, a sustained declining trend. They define EF as “an individual’s natural right to own the value of what he or she creates” (Miller, et al., 2016, p. vii). EF has five categories: free, mostly free, moderately free, mostly unfree, and repressed. Miller and Kim (2016) reported that the U.S. had moved from an index score of 81.2 in 2007 to 75.4 in 2016. As of 2010, the U.S. has moved from being considered *free* to *mostly free* in this rating system. If this trend were to continue, our status may move from *mostly free* to *moderately free* in the foreseeable future.

While the U.S. Constitution states that no citizen shall be “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” (U.S. Const. amend. V), these reports (Miller et al., 2016; Miller & Kim, 2016) found that there had been a 10-percentage-point decline in *property rights* between 2007 and 2016. As of 2016, there were 19 countries that ranked higher on property rights than the U.S. (Miller & Kim, 2016). These reports did not consider individuals who are undocumented and reside within the U.S., which may have additional implications to my context as I am situated in the southwest portion of the U.S. These reports specifically found that the U.S. was the only nation to have recorded sustained losses in EF (Miller & Kim, 2016, p. 2).

With the Fifth Amendment specifically calling out property rights, additional degradations of Constitutional conceptual rights may warrant our consideration for national health as outlined in other studies. The Constitution opens by framing several specific concepts (U.S. Const. preamble):

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the*

*common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.*

Within this paragraph, the ideas of *justice, tranquility, welfare, and liberty* may be aligned to, or be reliant upon, the concept of peace. A second external view of national health may be found in the annual *Global Peace Index* (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015). Violence, in terms of the primary and secondary effects of homicide, violent crimes, and violent internal conflicts, is estimated to cost 13.4% of the world's gross domestic product (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015, p. 3). On their index of peace, the U.S. ranked 94<sup>th</sup> out of the 162 countries reviewed in 2015. This represented an increase from the previous year's 96th place ranking (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015, p. 11).

### **Educational Indicators for Post-Secondary Success**

As an indicator of a nation's ability to produce a well-educated competitive workforce, another consideration of national health may be found within the rankings of the educational systems. The demands of the world's economy have increased educational requirements for livable wage employment (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2012; Zhao, 2012; Wagner, 2010), particularly in the field of literacy (Daggett, 2012). Stark and Noel (2016) found that between 1972 and 2012, attainment of a high school degree or equivalent had steadily increased over time. Yet, educational attainment rates in the U.S. are lower when compared to others within the G-20 (Stephens et al., 2015). Average high school graduation rates in the U.S. were at 77% in 2011 (p. vii). In that same year, the graduation rates in Japan were 96%, the Republic of Korea and the United Kingdom were 93%, and Germany was 92%. This does not consider the fact that graduation

requirements in the U.S. are generally lower when compared to other G-20 nations and vary by state. Furthermore, within the context of a global economy, students in the U.S. consistently fall short on academic performance when compared to other industrialized countries (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012).

Another measure of examining national health through educational indicators may be college enrollment. The top four countries with postsecondary educational attainment rates in 2011 were North Korea, Japan, Canada, and the Russian Federation (OECD, 2012). The U.S. was 14<sup>th</sup> of ranked countries. The same report found that the U.S. ranked 26 out of all countries surveyed for first generation college students (OECD, 2012).

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner, 1983) may have been intended as a forewarning of America's economic vulnerability. Gardner (1983) found that, while the general population was better educated collectively due to greater access to education, the individual achievement levels of high school and/or college graduates were lower than they had been 25-35 years before. Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, secondary school reform has been ongoing within the U.S. (Leithwood & Hallinger, 2012). It has been observed that the current model of secondary education in the U.S. is widening an educational divide, both for students within the U.S. and between students in the U.S. and those from other countries (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012; Zhao, 2012; Wagner, 2010). The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has called for revising the methodology of advancing students, including endorsing the principles of competency-based learning (NASSP, 2015) and raising the compulsory school attendance age (NASSP, 2014). Such revisions aim to decrease the number of students who remediate in postsecondary environments and increase the

number of high school graduates. However, graduating without a meaningful educational experience may not be enough.

To summarize, the literature suggests that upon graduating from our U.S. education institutions students find themselves in a globally competitive marketplace with several disadvantages. Their degree of EF is less than citizens in other developed countries and continues to decline (Miller et al., 2016). This may impact the constitutionally outlined area of property rights, where their degree of EF has experienced a sustained decline (Miller & Kim, 2016). They will be entering the workforce in a country that ranks relatively low in terms of conditions needed for self-actualization (Maslow, 1999), such as peace and safety (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015). They are more likely to be imprisoned than in any other country (Kaeble et al., 2015). They have lower levels of educational expectations, attainment rates, and performance indicators when compared to other industrialized countries (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012). Therefore, my problem of practice must address setting higher levels of chronosystem goals for students who have been labeled high needs in order to meet the demands of the world that they are entering.

### **Initial Cycles of Action Research Guiding this Study**

Action research has been identified as a dynamic process (Ivankova, 2015). It often is characterized as having multiple cycles and actions (Creswell, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015; Mills, 2011). Leading to this action research dissertation, I completed a cycle of reconnaissance (Creswell 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011) or initial explorations of my topic. I conducted multiple cycles of action research that have expanded my understanding of the topic of this study. Those cycles evolved my

thinking and have been part of the formation of the current problem of practice. Here I will review the findings of those initial cycles of research which led me to my selection of the innovation being studied in this cycle of research.

### **Reconnaissance: Document Analysis**

To better understand my research topic, I conducted a document analysis. This began by comparing local documents of the school district, existing state laws, university entrance requirements, and documents from politically influential organizations. School district documents included internal memos, public records, board policies, and administrative regulations. The focus of this reconnaissance was a critical examination of what we overtly state that we seek for students, such as college and career readiness or preparing them for upward mobility in life after high school, and what we may provide students at the macrosystem and exosystem levels.

**Chronosystem goal: State graduation requirements.** *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner, 1983) presented findings of our national education system and predictions on the implications for our national health and vitality. I have presented multiple views of national health through the lens of comparisons to other G-20 countries, EF, our World Peace Index standing, and educational indicators including college and high school graduation rates, in relation to other economically developed countries. The review of these standings was intended to address what types of goals we may need to establish for students in an economically-globalized community, what environments students may be living in and may find themselves in as adults, and where we are currently situated as compared to other nations. In response to *A Nation at Risk* (Gardner, 1983), many states implemented state-mandated minimum high school graduation requirements or revised

existing ones (Stark & Noel, 2015). To date, 48 states have implemented graduation requirements (Carlson & Planty, 2012). Graduation requirements are set to establish minimum standards for receiving a high school diploma.

In California, state graduation requirements were implemented beginning in the 1986-1987 school year (California Department of Education, 2016). California (CA) Education Code (EDC) section 51225.3 (CA EDC §51225.3, 2015) calls upon students to complete the following minimum requirements for a course of study in grades 9-12: three years of English; two years of mathematics including one year of Algebra I (CA EDC §51224.5, 2015); two years of science, including biological and physical sciences; three years of social studies, including United States history and geography, world history and geography, a one-semester course in American government and civics, and a one-semester course in economics; one year in visual or performing arts, foreign language (including American Sign Language), or career technical education; and two years of physical education, unless the pupil has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of CA EDC section 51225.3; *or* other coursework adopted by the local governing board of the local education agency (LEA).

CA EDC section 51225.3 further defines that:

*The local governing board of the LEA with the active involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, and pupils, shall adopt alternative means for pupils to complete the prescribed course of study, which may include:*

- *Practical demonstration of skills and competencies*
- *Supervised work experience or other outside school experience*
- *Career technical education classes offered in high schools*

- *Courses offered by regional occupational centers or programs*
- *Interdisciplinary study*
- *Independent study*
- *Credit earned at a postsecondary institution*

While this section of CA EDC defines the primary and alternative means of graduating high school, it also gives the local education agency (LEA), better known in the U.S. as the *school district*, the authority to “supplement the state minimum requirements at the local level” (CA EDC §51225.3, 2015). In some cases, specific course topics are called out; in others, they are not. All coursework in California must conform to the state-adopted standards and framework models published by the California Department of Education (2016). However, these standards and frameworks may not meet the needs for student success in post-secondary environments such as universities or the workforce.

**Chronosystem goal: State university entry requirements.** With the State of California having outlined their minimum standards for graduation from high school, the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems have outlined their own sets of minimum qualifications to enter their respective university systems; this is commonly known in California as the UC ‘a-g’ requirements. The UC system lists their entrance requirements as being ‘a-g’ with each letter referencing an assigned curriculum subject and coursework that is specifically approved by the University. Listed here are those requirements and their corresponding letter, subject, and minimum number of years of coursework (UC ‘a-g’ Guide, 2015): (a) three years of history/social sciences; (b) four years of English language arts; (c) three years of

mathematics; (d) two years of laboratory sciences, three years preferred; (e) two years of world language; (f) one yearlong course of visual and/or performing arts; and (g) one year of a college-prep elective. This is a total-credit equivalent for my district of 140 units of coursework that has been approved by the UC/CSU system. The approved coursework is an important distinction to this course of study as a student can be enrolled in a mathematics course that counts towards high school graduation requirements but does not count for university entrance requirements. For example, a business or high school exit exam course in mathematics counts towards graduation requirements in my district but does not count towards college entrance requirements.

**Chronosystem goal: District graduation requirements.** Situated between state minimum requirements, UC ‘a-g’ requirements, and needs for a student’s successful participation in the workforce, economy, citizenship, and life upon graduating from high school, reside the LEA graduation requirements. As outlined in CA EDC §51225.3, each LEA may set their own graduation requirements if they exceed those of the state. The California School Board Association (CSBA) has over 1,000 member districts and makes policy recommendations to ensure that districts remain legally compliant (CSBA, 2016). As of 2017, CSBA continues to recommend that districts remain legally compliant by adopting their sample Board Policy 6146.1 (CSBA BP 6146, 2015). This sample policy is reflective of the state minimum graduation requirements, plus one additional English class.

This situates districts with a question about whether state requirements or CSBA recommendations meet the needs for students to be successful upon graduation from high school. A growing trend in California has been for districts to adopt the UC ‘a-g’



requirements as their own graduation requirements. For example, San Diego Unified, Los Angeles Unified, Oakland Unified, San Jose Unified, and San Francisco Unified Districts all have adopted UC ‘a-g’ as their default graduation requirements. This has not been without controversy, as the UC ‘a-g’ requirements were designed as an exclusionary means for narrowing the number of students who qualified for university entrance, and the attainment of high school education has been linked to an individual’s socioeconomic status (Stark & Noel, 2015). In part, districts that adopt UC ‘a-g’ requirements cite concerns of social justice and preparing students for a changed workforce where students must acquire literacy levels (as represented in Lexile scores of 1,300-1,400) for success in entry level work (Daggett, 2012).

**Chronosystem goal: Contextual graduation requirements.** The district graduation requirements are not clearly defined or consistent based upon a review of multiple sources (UDA, 2017a; UDA, 2016) and an examination of practice (UDA 2018). By law, the minimum graduation requirements must conform to state standards. However, in certain documents there has been an explicit calling out of UC ‘a-g’ minimum entrance requirements (UDA 2017a). A second source cites graduation requirements that exceed UC ‘a-g’ requirements (UDA, 2016). For the purpose of this study, I am operationally defining the minimum requirements as this study seeks to clarify the requirements and desired end results for students. Therefore, baseline graduation requirements are presented here as being:

English Language Arts, 8 Credits; Modern World History, 2 Credits; Economics, 1 Credit; American Government, 1 Credit; Mathematics, 6 Credits; Life Science, 2

Credits; Health, 1 Credit; Visual/Performing Arts or Foreign Language, 2 Credits; and Electives, 13 Credits.

This is a total of 44 credits with 22 that may qualify for UC ‘a-g’ requirements status.

Recall that UC ‘a-g’ called for 28 academic units (UC ‘a-g’ Guide, 2015). However, the school charter sets an expectation of creating a higher standard in mathematics (UDA 2017a) as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

*Subject Area to Credits Comparison of IHA and UC ‘a-g’*

Subject Area	IHA Credits	UC ‘a-g’ Credits
Social Sciences	4	4
English	8	8
Mathematics	8 <sup>+</sup>	6 (8*)
Science	4	4 (6*)
Foreign Language	4	4 (6*)
College Prep Electives	8-12	2

Notes: <sup>+</sup> = area where UC ‘a-g’ requirements are exceeded; \* = areas where UC ‘a-g’ has a higher preferred amount of course credits and this preference is not met by IHA.

**Cycle 0: Qualitative Explorations**

In my Cycle 0, I focused on exploring a phenomenon around adult perceptions within my school district. The purpose of this cycle was to examine possible misalignment between intent of strategic planning for student success, district policies, school site practice, and graduation requirements. As Cycle 0 was to involve human subjects and determine my initial actions for Cycle 1, I applied and received permission for this study with the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) to ensure compliance with ethical considerations. In this qualitative cycle, I conducted semi-structured interviews with school and district leaders ( $n = 4$ ). My

research question was *what are the perceptions of post-secondary student preparedness as expressed through graduation requirements?*

Qualitative analysis of the interview data used a constructivist grounded theory approach (Saldaña, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). The questions centered on systems alignment for student success, expectations setting, coursework provided to students, university entrance preparation, and students staying on track for graduating high school and being prepared for life after high school. As a semi-structured interview, the questions (Appendix B) were used as a guide and a method of probing was utilized (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and member-checked during the interview process.

Data analysis generated 84 initial gerund codes (Charmaz, 2014). The development of analytic memos was used in grouping codes into categories (Saldaña, 2016). Six categories emerged around the topics of: *acknowledged disconnections, belief systems, coursework, known issues, policy and operations, and school site culture*. From these categories and additional reviews of the data, three themes emerged: (a) *current graduation requirements neither align to the intent of the strategic plan of the district nor do they systematically support student post-secondary success; (b) district systems and policies can support raising adult school site expectations, but are not a requirement for doing so; and (c) the knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential*. Additional information about the development of codes, categories, and themes can be found in Appendices C and D.

## Cycle 1: Initial Actions to Clarify Pathway

The purpose of my Cycle 1 of action research was to introduce an innovation to help clarify pathway. The purpose in focusing on pathway was based upon my findings in Cycle 0 that graduation requirements did not meet the need for post-secondary success. Based upon my role in my previous district, I sought to implement an innovation under my immediate control and authority. Having conducted document analysis of district systems, I sought to make recommendations to the Superintendent and Board of Education on revising the Course of Study (CoS). The CoS is the official course offerings made by a school district to students through their school sites. My research question for C1 was *how and to what extent was the CoS a barrier to establishing pathway?*

The innovation I introduced to the district was that of a *Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC)*. This group was formed for auditing, reviewing, and revising the district CoS with the purpose of clarifying pathway. This CAC ( $n = 10$ ) used a PAR approach to systematically work on clarifying pathway elements in the CoS. Initial analysis of the student information system provided insights to guide the actions of the CAC by eliminating all inactive courses that still resided in the system and CoS. The findings of this analysis are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

### *Course Frequency Analysis: Active Versus Inactive*

Course Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Active	987	56.4	56.4
Inactive	138	63.6	100.0
Total	1750	100.0	-

Next, data for the remaining courses ( $n = 987$ ) was analyzed to look at courses in which students had not been enrolled over the last five years (see Table 4). These courses were examined by a sub-committee and were recommended for removal from the SIS and CoS.

Table 4

*Course Frequency Analysis: Courses Not Enrolled in for the Last Five Years*

Course Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Enrollment	615	62.3	62.3
No Enrolment	372	38.7	100.0
Total	987	100.0	-

In addressing the research question, I found that the CoS may have been a barrier to establishing pathway due to systems complexity. These opening actions recommended the removal of a total of 1,124 course numbers, representing a reduction of 64.8%. The remaining enrolled active courses ( $n = 615$ ) were analyzed in SPSS for duplicative course names ( $n = 78$ ) and sorted into courses within the grade span 9-12 ( $n = 427$ ). These courses were sorted for college preparatory status ( $n = 196$ ) and then sent for future review by curriculum area specialists. The remaining non-college preparatory course numbers ( $n = 231$ ) were slated for review at a future date as part of the ongoing work of the committee and the curriculum subject matter experts.

**Cycle 2: The Development of a Grounded Theory**

In my previous cycle of action research, I acted on pathway. However, I continued to examine my reconnaissance and my Cycle 1 findings if district systems and policies can support raising adult school site expectations, but are not a requirement for doing so, and if the knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to

setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential. To explore this aspect of my topic of study, in my Cycle 2, I left my previous district context with the purpose of exploring how urban educational leaders in another district may formulate expectation levels for students. In this cycle of research, I took a qualitative critical inquiry approach. My problem of practice being explored in this cycle was that *students who were labeled high need were not thought of as being able to reach high levels of academic achievement.*

The context of this study was a large urban school district in the southwest of the U.S. with over 200 schools. As this study was involving human subjects and in new context, I sought out approval for a new study with the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E) to ensure compliance with ethical considerations. There was no majority population of students with the largest classification of students served being Hispanic/Latina/o. Over 25% of the students in the district were labeled English Learners, more than 55% eligible for free and reduced lunch, and about 12% qualified as being special education. The educational leaders in this study have served students with higher populations of concentrated poverty. For my study, I purposefully selected a high school principal and a member of the governing board based upon pre-established criteria of having (a) led reforms; (b) displayed a critical stance towards education; and (c) received media attention for their position(s) or action(s). Interviews utilized a semi-structured interview process (see Appendix F) to address two research questions:

RQ1. How do urban educational leaders describe the learning potential of students labeled high need?

RQ2. How do urban educational leaders describe their responsibility to students labeled high need?

Data generated from participants ( $n = 2$ ) interviews was analyzed using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2017; Saldaña, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). My analysis generated 320 gerund open codes, 29 axial codes (see Appendix G), 8 selected codes, and 4 assertions (see Appendix H) that aligned to my research questions (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Cycle 2 Assertion Alignment to the Research Questions*

Assertion	RQ1	RQ2
1 The learning potential of students labeled high need is perceived by educational leaders as a result of the interactions of school and community environmental factors.	How do urban educational leaders describe the learning potential of students labeled high need?	-
2 The learning potential of students labeled high need is perceived by educational leaders as being driven by educators who join students in the community struggles the students are engaged in.	-	-
3 Educational leaders feel they have a responsibility to grow and support learning environments where students who are labeled high needs have the same positive goals established as students not labeled high needs.	-	How do urban educational leaders describe their responsibility to students labeled high need?
4 Educational leaders feel they have a responsibility to invest resources allocations of additional staff, finance, and capital investments in our schools and communities where students are labeled high needs.	-	-

Notes: RQ = Research Questions.

To increase the validity of my findings I conducted an open process of memoing that included the use of a critical friend and member checking through follow-up questions. I generated 12 analytic memos that represented over 100 pages of explorations of my data

during the development of my grounded theory. My grounded theory was that *when urban educational leaders set positive ecological systems goals, actively engage in the struggles students face, create clear expectations and supports for school staff, and engage in equity-based resourcing, students labeled high needs are more likely to find success*. This grounded theory may support my model of active engagement of the various aspects of EST (1977; 1994) and the use of HT (Snyder, 2002) as a means of navigating it.

### **Dynamic Process and Reflexive Analysis**

Having completed my initial cycles of action research, I began a reflexive process (Rossman & Rallis, 2017; Charmaz, 2014) to narrow my scope to a specific problem of practice to be addressed in my current context. During my opening month at IHA, I interviewed students, teachers, administrators, parents, and board members. I kept field notes and conducted document analysis of the district charter (UDA, 2016) and accreditation reports (UDA, 2017a). Revising the multiple cycles of previous research including the establishment of a grounded theory that is within the context of my personal setting, a problem of practice was selected that focused of the organization.

As the problem of practice has been established as being a newly formed high school component of a K-12 school system, there are no formal college and career planning documents, staff professional development, student services, or parent training programs currently in place. The question of what innovation to introduce was based upon a review of my grounded theory, previous cycles of research, and my theoretical model. In the development of the innovation, I conducted a re-reading of my selected literature and recalled that Bronfenbrenner (1994) had encouraged close attention to the



interaction of the ecological systems while Tudge et al. (2009) found innovations at school sites that had been studied did not often address most of those systems. Therefore, the I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR) was developed to address the chronosystem goals, by the model of positive goal setting from HT, while developing pathway that spanned EST and school support structures to replenish agency thinking at the school and classroom levels. However, to address the macrosystems influence for students, the parent workshops were developed to support community influence on students. In this way, from the lowest to the highest levels of proximal process across the ecological systems, the innovation was developed in alignment with my theoretical model, informed by theory, and formulated through my review of the literature, and informed by previous cycles of my research.

### **Summary**

Student preparedness for postsecondary success is a complicated matter and may be both a problem and a symptom of other societal issues. A review of my topic of study found that it may meet the criteria to be considered a wicked (Camillus, 2008; Rittel & Webber, 1973) or super wicked problem (Levin et al., 2012). Wicked problems thinking may need a more prevalent role in educational decision making (Jordan et al., 2014). Action research (Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011) has attributes that may position it to be a vehicle for addressing wicked problems within a local context (Mertens, 2015). Action research creates a two-way dynamic between theory and practice that may advance school improvement (Mertler, 2014).

EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; 1994) has evolved as a theory of human development and has been used in several fields of research (Scalco et al., 2015; Boxer et

al., 2013; Chun et al., 2013; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013). There are two defining properties of EST, those of proximal process and environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Proximal process relates to how humans develop over time in relation to more complex interactions with other people, objects, and symbols within the environment. The five environmental systems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. EST has implications for school practice (Burns et al., 2015; Tynan et al., 2014; Wicks & Warren, 2014; Bronfenbrenner, 1994). EST suggests that students' lives are complex and are influenced through the interactions of the environmental systems and proximal processes.

There is a growing body of research on the importance of hope in education (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Lopez, 2013; Webb, 2013; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Lopez, 2011; Lopez, 2010; Duncan-Andrade, 2009). Hope was operationalized as theory by Snyder (2002). HT has been categorized as a branch of positive psychology (Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Valle et al., 2006; Snyder et al., 2005). HT has three operational elements—goal formation, pathway thinking, and agency thinking—which interact with social context such as student life at school. Pathway and agency interact with each other and undergo modifications over time as goals are renegotiated on an ongoing basis. HT has been situated within EST (Gerard & Booth, 2015) as the elements of positive goal setting; pathway and agency thinking may support transcending the EST environmental systems to advance student achievement. I have developed a theoretical model whereby HT is utilized as a change agent theory to span the environmental systems of EST.

To consider what students might need to be prepared for in a globalized economy, I conducted a review of the literature. I found that students will be entering a society with the following attributes: (a) a lower level of economic freedom (Miller & Kim, 2016; Miller et al., 2016); (b) a comparatively lower level of peace and safety (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015); (c) a higher rate of being imprisoned than those in other countries (Kaeble et al., 2015); and (d) lower levels of educational expectations, attainment rates, and performance indicators when compared to students in other industrialized countries (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012). My previous cycles of action research included document analysis, exploratory interviews, systems revisions and actions, and a round of critical inquiry. These cycles led to the development of initial qualitative findings, an action taken to clarify pathways, and the development of a grounded theory.

In developing my current problem of practice, I used a cyclical and reflective approach. I conducted interviews of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and board members and revised previous findings. The development of the innovation of the iCCR was conducted using my theoretical model, guided by my review of the literature, and informed by my previous cycles of action research. In Chapter 3, I will present my theoretical alignment and research design, participants, discuss the implementation of the innovating, review my methods for data collection and analysis, and review the ethical considerations that I took into consideration.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

*. . . it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed . . .*

—The Declaration of Independence (1776, p. 1)

*We become freemen and women through education not because we have privileged information but because tyranny in any form can be overcome only by invoking the grace of great things.*

—Parker J. Palmer (1998, p. 111)

Action research is a dynamic, reflexive, and cyclical process (Bradbury, 2015; Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Reasoner & Bradbury, 2008). Previous cycles of research have been comprised of document analysis, observations, interviews, action cycles to clarify pathway, and reflexive interviews outside of my context to generate ideas about how others face their problems of practice. Guided by my previous cycle of action research, topic of study, review of the literature, and my theoretical framework I have worked with students, parents, and administration on identifying a problem of practice to my situated context. The problem of practice was *that systems complexity may lead to socio-economic reification of our students' educational and post-secondary opportunities through institutional structures that spanned ecological systems. This complexity obscured setting relevant positive goals for high school graduation, college attainment, and career success.* To address this problem of practice, I have developed an innovation to be introduced to my research site.

The purpose of this study was to examine the introduction of the innovation of the I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR). For this study, I have composed four research questions:

RQ1. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR parent/community development plans increase parent/community understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready?

RQ2. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of iCCR support the school site in setting positive goals for students?

RQ3. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR student pathway and agency plan increase students' understanding of what they need to accomplish to be college and career ready?

RQ4. How, and to what extent, will the implementation level of iCCR support student levels of hope for their future?

I will present my theoretical alignment of my research design, discuss my setting and participants, elaborate on my innovation, present the instruments utilized and data collection strategies, introduce my data analysis techniques, and review the ethical considerations I made during the study.

### **Theoretical Alignment and Research Design**

In the previous chapter, I presented my philosophical backgrounds, theoretical framework, and literature guiding my study. Scholars have stated that the philosophical dispositions have impacts to the selection and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2015; Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009; Gutek, 2004; Crotty, 1998). With my ontology situated in idealism, epistemology in subjectivism, and theoretical

perspective of critical inquiry my methodology is that of participatory action research (PAR; Creswell, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). PAR aligned with my philosophical dispositions in support of the introduction of the innovation and the research questions of my study. First, PAR seeks to shape a more ideal future (Bradbury, 2015; Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Kemmis, 2008). Next, the methodology of PAR was used as a model for organizational development and transformation (Bradbury, Mirvis, Neilsen, & Pasmore, 2008). I have summarized my theoretical alignment of my research in Table 6.

Table 6

*Theoretical Alignment of my Research*

Ontology	Epistemology	Theoretical Perspective	Methodology	Method
Idealism	Subjectivism	Critical Inquiry	Participatory Action Research	Interviews Document Analysis Field Notes Research Journal Surveys

I used a multi-strand mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2015; Ivankova, 2015; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2014). A multi-strand mixed-methods action research study is characterized by multiple implementations of qualitative and quantitative data to inform the study and answer the research questions (Ivankova, 2015). For my qualitative strand, I conducted student interviews ( $n = 8$ ), parent/guardian interviews ( $n = 6$ ), and student advisory teacher interviews ( $n = 5$ ). To inform the study, and shape the direction of the innovation, I used the qualitative method of critical ethnographic design. In a critical ethnographic design, the researcher seeks to advance the emancipation of marginalized

groups while studying their beliefs and shared patterns of behavior (Creswell, 2015; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015).

Quantitative data was collected from five sources. First, student records from the Student Information System provided a means for transcript analysis and to develop descriptive statistics. Next, the Levels of Use (LoU; Hall & Hord, 2015) interviews were designed to transfer to quantitative data rating of the implementation of the innovation. Then, I used four instruments that were administered before and after the innovation with the intent of measuring community, parent, staff, and student knowledge of iCCR concepts, student dispositions towards school, and student levels of hope.

### **Setting and Participants**

**Setting.** This study took place during the 2017-18 spring semester in a new high school component of a TK/K-12 charter school system in San Diego, CA. The school was located in the urban downtown area of San Diego. The school was based on design thinking and was being developed using the design thinking method of prototyping. The school was being prototyped with a population of 81 students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and opened at the location where the study was conducted in the 2017-2018 school year.

Using a small school model (DiMartino & Wolk, 2010) with a future target enrollment of 480 (UDA, 2016), the school had a goal of personalizing the learning experience of each student (DiMartino & Clarke, 2008). While Ideate High Academy (IHA) was an extension of the UDA T/K-8 school system, it served a significantly different student population. Recall from Chapter 1 that I previously outlined that UDA and ISHA have a different ethnic and socio-economic student body. At ISHA, it was estimated that over 50% of students may qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. Only

about 25% of former UDA 8<sup>th</sup> graders attended IHA. This may have been in part because of the prototyping approach being utilized. It may also have been due to IHA being in a different part of the city from UDA.

There have been several iterations of the Course of Study for all IHA students that at times conflicted with each other. Therefore, there were disconnections that iCCR was intended to address. Specifically, as a new school, not all courses, nor their intended outcomes, had been developed. For example, course names were used as placeholders for course development, but their specific learning outcomes or certifications had not been developed. Internships were a desired component of the school, but there was not a system in place to develop student preparedness for an internship, nor was there an operational definition of what an internship was to be. The iCCR sought to clarify positive goals at the new school, create operational definitions for them, develop planning for it, and implement those plans for students and parents.

**Participants.** There were two iterations of participants in this study that drew from the same sample. As the participants were contextually bound to my research study, and research site, they were considered purposefully sampled which is common in action research designs (Creswell, 2015; Ivankova, 2015). My first group of participants helped to inform the development of the innovation by participation in the School Community Survey on College and Career Readiness. In this iteration participants ( $n = 112$ ) included students, ( $n = 65$ ), parents ( $n = 35$ ), staff ( $n = 9$ ), and community advisers/board members ( $n = 3$ ).

To measure the effectiveness of the innovation I conducted a second iteration of data collection. From my participants in the iCCR parent workshop ( $n = 17$ ), there was a



subset that consented to pre- and post-surveys ( $n = 10$ ), data collection and interviews ( $n = 6$ ). Staff participants in the prototype of iCCR ( $n = 5$ ) were invited to participate in this study. Participants included those that consented to be interviewed ( $n = 5$ ) for the Level of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) and a subset ( $n = 4$ ) that took part in the subsequent advisory teacher interviews. From the students that took part in the iCCR advisory program ( $n = 67$ ) there was a subset that was identified ( $n = 49$ ) as having been present in all essential iCCR program activities. From this group there was a subset identified through teacher selection to participate in an interview ( $n = 10$ ). From this group parental consent and student assented to be interview resulted in my interview participants ( $n = 8$ ).

**Role of the Researcher.** In this cycle of PAR, my role was that of the chief executive officer of the charter school system and the developmental principal of IHA. In this role, I was responsible for all aspects of the school, including operations, programs, services, and academics. In this study, I was an active participant in the implementation of the innovation in several ways. First, I was responsible for leading meetings with the staff, students, parents, administration, board, and community advisors on the development and implementation of iCCR. Next, to better inform the implementation practices of iCCR, I worked with students as an additional advisory mentor for several weeks before turning the period over to a team of intern teachers, and I personally conducted the parent workshops.

I was responsible for the collection of all data including observations, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and surveys. This had implications for data collection and interpretation, including threats of ecological validity of Hawthorne, novelty, and experimenter effects (Smith & Glass, 1987). In the Hawthorne effect, the

desired outcome would be impacted not by the innovation being introduced, but by being the subject being studied and feeling special. To minimize Hawthorne effect, the innovation took place as part of planned regular school site operations rather than a separate study or event.

Novelty effects may occur when new programs and/or services are implemented at a school and may not sustain or be transferable across the enterprise. The problem of practice being addressed is a known issue to school administrators and teachers. To address novelty effects, the innovation design and implementation involved a PAR model whereby stakeholder groups considered transferability and sustainability of the iCCR curriculum and programs. Experiment effects are those that occur by nature of the perceived influence the experimenter has over the group being studied and influences that outcome rather than the innovation being studied. To monitor for experimenter effects, I collected ongoing qualitative data in my field notes, journals, and interviews. In addition, with multiple staff members implementing the innovation, I conducted analysis on innovations levels of use and gathering student feedback through my instruments.

### **Instruments and Data Collection**

This was a mixed-methods study. Quantitative data was generated using existing student records in the student information system, instruments that intended to measure the effectiveness of interventions to support college and career ready knowledge, an instrument that I developed to measure student hope levels, and an established attitudinal instrument used by the school. Qualitative data was gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews which occurred at the conclusion of the study. Structured interviews using the Levels of Use Branching Interview (Hall & Hord, 2015) were utilized to

examine the depth at which the innovation is being adopted by participating advisors. Next, I present the details of data collected, descriptions of the instruments, and methods analysis.

### **Quantitative Instruments and Collection.**

**Student Information Systems (SIS).** Existing records from the SIS were gathered and summarized using descriptive statistics. The information from the SIS was used throughout this study. The school used two separate systems with student data. I chose to use the SIS of PowerSchool which contained a variety of data sources and metric dashboards available (PowerSchool, 2016). Student grades and general demographic information were used as points of reflection in my research and to better inform the reader of the students involved in this study for consideration of transferability to the reader's local context.

**School Community Survey on College and Career Readiness.** The purpose of this instrument was to measure a broad range of topics around college and career readiness knowledge. This instrument was used in three different ways. First, it was used as a school-wide survey for parents, community members, and teachers as a formative assessment to determine iCCR parent workshop plans and teacher professional development plans. Next, it was used as a formative assessment of student knowledge to support the development of the iCCR student advisory program. Finally, this instrument was utilized as a pre and post-assessment for the participants in the iCCR parent workshop. As a pre and post-assessment of parent workshop participants, this instrument was used to support answering the first research questions.

In measuring respondents' understanding about college readiness participants were asked questions such as "the SAT and ACT are commonly administered tests that are required by" and asked to select all applicable institutions that may require them as an entrance requirement. As this study took place in California, additional questions focus on the University of California and California State University entrance requirements (UC 'a-g' requirements). Parents were asked to select from a matrix that compared course subjects with the number of years required in those areas. Additional questions sought to measure understanding of preferred entrance requirements such as "what three subjects does the University of California system say they would prefer students to take an extra year of?"

In considering career readiness this instrument had several questions that sought to gain an understanding of a participant's awareness of current educational research and labor market trends. An example of a question that was designed to measure this was "the level of reading required for today's workforce is" with five selection choices that compare today's reading requirements to those of 20 years ago (Daggett, 2012). Additional demographic information was collected at the end of the instrument to examine if factors such as educational attainment may be a factor in the responses from participants. This instrument is listed in Appendix I.

**The iCCR Student Survey on Graduation and College Readiness.** This instrument was based upon a selection of questions from the School Community Survey on College and Career Readiness that directly addressed student curriculum units in iCCR. Similar to the school community survey, the purpose of this instrument was to measure a change in awareness in the areas being addressed through the implementation

of iCCR. For data analysis, pre-test scores were based upon the initial implementation of the School Community Survey of College and Career Readiness, with a selection of the same questions being used that directly aligned to the topics implemented in the iCCR student advisory program. Therefore, both pre and post-test administration of the survey to students utilized the same questions with the post-test analysis focusing only on those topics' students utilized in the iCCR advisory program. The data gathered from this survey supported answering my second, third, and fourth research questions.

The sub-constructs of my instrument were on graduation and college readiness. For graduation readiness there were a series of questions to measure knowledge on course requirements, certification, and grade point averages/grading policies. For example, in seeking out student understanding about graduation requirements students were asked to identify the number of years of each subject matter that they would need to graduate high school. Students were also asked to identify the definition of receiving certification as an aspect of our graduation requirements. Finally, students were asked a question that intended to review their understanding of our grade point requirements and that only a grade of C or higher was passing.

For career readiness there were a series of questions that included graduation UC 'a-g' preferred courses and grade point averages, SAT administration, articulated credits, and financial aid awareness. A sample question on courses being accepted by universities was "The UC system must approve courses before they will count for their entrance requirements in which of the following subject areas" with students having a course listing that was multiple select. In seeking student understanding about the SAT, a question asked, "The SAT and ACT are commonly administered tests that are required

by” and students were asked to choose from a multiple select listing of types of colleges. My constructed revised instrument can be found in Appendix J of this study.

**In-School Student Hope Scale.** There are several well-tested and administered instruments to measure hope (Lopez & Calderon, 2011; Snyder, Hoza, Pelham, Rapoff, Ware, Danovsky, & Stahl, 1997). However, I did not find an instrument that explicitly called out the sub-constructs of Hope Theory (HT, Snyder, 2002) that my research was examining. Therefore, upon reviewing the literature on HT and instruments available, I chose to develop my own instrument. The Students’ Hope Scale (SHS; Appendix K) was comprised of four sections and 23 multiple-choice questions. Data gathered from the SHS will be used to help answer my second and fourth research questions.

The first three sections represented the sub-constructs of HT, with each sub-construct being addressed by six questions. For example, a question from the first construct relating to positive goal setting is “I plan to take an advanced placement course during high school.” In the second sub-construct, a question asked to measure agency is “with hard work, I can achieve my goals.” From the third sub-construct, a question that is asked about pathway is “I know what courses I need to take to graduate from high school.”

This instrument utilized a 6-point Likert scale without a midpoint. The rating scale is as follows: strongly agree = 6, agree = 5, slightly agree = 4, slightly disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. The final section had five questions and collects demographic and descriptive data about the students. In the three sub-constructs, I used a 6-point Likert scale with no mid-point. Values were codified to each of the selection choices of the instrument.

**School system student survey data.** The school system has implemented a self-developed instrument for gathering student input grades 3-10. The school system survey had 34 questions that had two versions with slightly different language for age appropriateness of elementary and secondary students. I chose to use questions from this survey as students were accustomed to taking it during the school year. I added the administration of the iCCR instruments and the SHS as part of the annual cycle of taking the school system student survey.

In reviewing this instrument, I selected 14 questions that aligned with two sub-constructs. My sub-constructs were *student perception of self* and *school/community supports*. The instrument used a 4-point Likert Scale where 4 = strongly agreed, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. Demographic information was collected using the same questions from the SHS. This supported a continuity in recording data and participant identifiers. This instrument was used to support triangulated findings for my second research question.

Within the sub-construct of student perception of self, there were seven questions. Each question was prefaced with the statement “when I am at school, I feel” followed by topics for the student to rate. There were questions that pertained to student feelings about themselves such as “I belong” or “I am safe.” Other questions related to how students felt they were doing in school such as “I am a good student. Finally, there were questions about expectations for student behavior and grades.

Within the sub-construct of school/community supports, there were seven questions. Each of these questions were also prefaced with the statement “when I am at school, I feel” followed by topics for the student to rate. There was one question that

related to if “my family believes I can do well in school.” The other questions were either about teacher, principal, or teacher and principal belief systems. For example, there was a topic that asked if a student felt that “my teacher(s) care(s) about me.” A related question asked if “my principal cares about me.” An example of a teacher and principal question was “my teacher(s) and principal have high expectations for me.”

The demographic information that was collected for this instrument was taken from the SHS rather than the school system survey so that there would be continuity in reporting. The 14 questions of my constructed revised instrument from the school system survey can be found in Appendix J of this study.

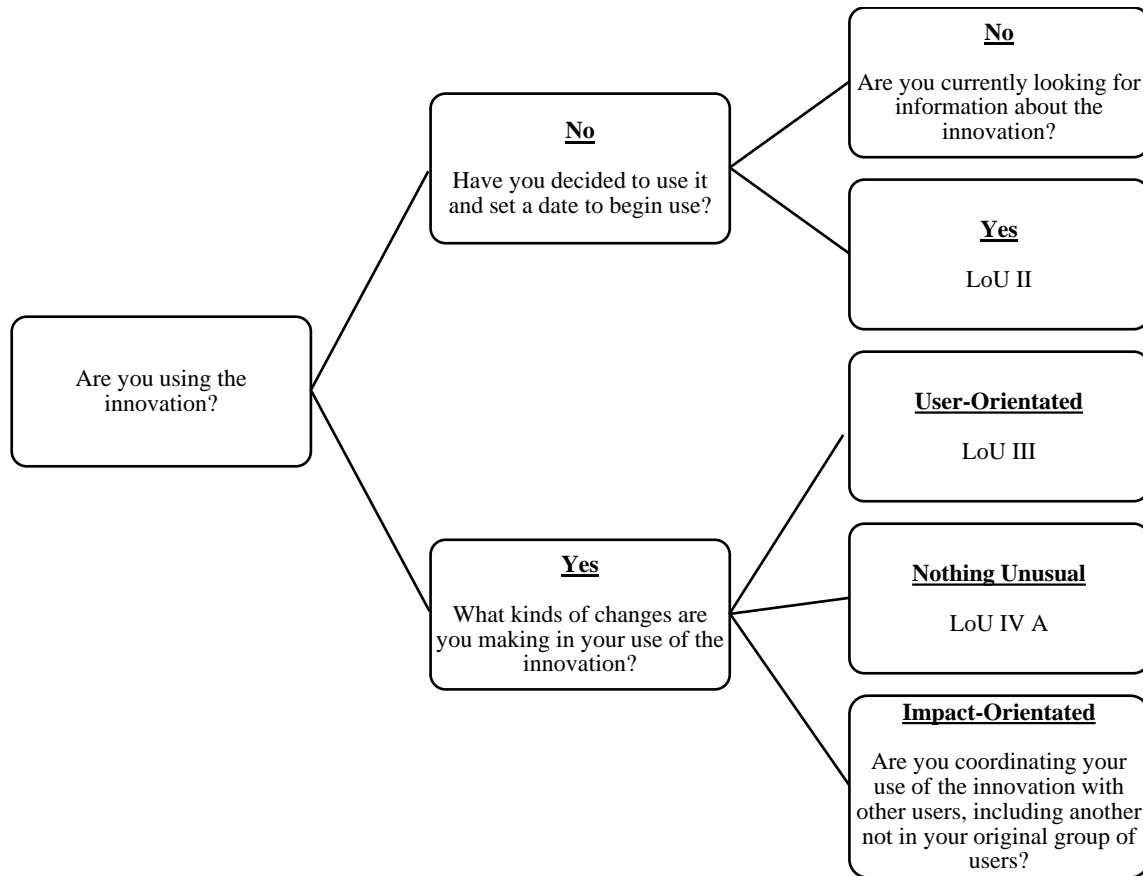
### **Qualitative Data Collection**

**Levels of Use Branching Interviews.** Hall and Hord (2015) established a Levels of Use Branching Interview (LoU) technique to create operational definitions to allow for a change facilitator to monitor the adoption of an innovation. Data collected from the LoU will support answering my fourth research question. In the LoU model there were eight classifications: *non-use, orientation, preparation, mechanical use, routine, refinement, integrations, and renewal*. The first three classifications of non-use, orientation, and preparation represented no classroom use of the innovation (Hall & Hord, 2015). The remaining classification represented the degree to which an innovation was being used in the classroom.

The branching interview technique used a series of questions to allow for the change facilitator to ascertain where the intended adopter of an innovation is so that the facilitator can determine a supporting strategy for the adopter. The branching interview used a series of questions and, based upon the answers, a new question is selected until



the interviewer reaches an ending point that ascertains which of the eight levels the adopter currently falls within. Figure 3 provides a brief overview of the initial steps of this data collection method. A full map of the Levels of Use Branching Interview matrix can be found in Appendix N.



*Figure 3.* Example of the opening matrix of the Levels of Use Branching Interview. From Hall and Hord (2015, p. 115), reprinted with permission of Pearson Education, Inc. (see Appendix M).

**Advisory teacher interviews.** One-on-one interviews were conducted at the end of the study. The purpose of the interviews was to reflect on the implementation of the innovation and how it may have impacted three areas: (a) the advisors’ professional practice in setting goals with students; (b) how the advisor felt the innovation impacted student goal setting and thinking about their future; and (c) future directions that the

advisory teacher believed we could improve in preparing students for college and career. For example, one question asked, “tell me about how you feel the implementation of iCCR has influenced students?” Another question sought to clarify student goal setting and asks, “do you believe that the implementation of iCCR has supported students in setting future goals?” There were eight questions during my interviews which can be reviewed in Appendix O. Data gathered in these interviews will be used to answer my second and fourth research questions.

**Student interviews.** One-on-one interviews with students were conducted at the end of the study. The purpose of these interviews was to assess how students may have perceived they were being supported on the aspects of positive goal setting within HT (Snyder, 2002). Adult-to-student interactions were represented in the SHS instrument on question six of the sub-construct of goals. However, the types of interactions regarding positive goal setting are not addressed in the instrument.

Student interviews sought to understand what perceived changes may have occurred since the implementation of the innovation from the perspective of the student. These may have included general dispositions of students towards goal setting procedures and courses scheduled for future student enrollment. For example, one question asked, “now that you have completed the iCCR, do you feel you better understand what you need to do to graduate?” Another question considered aspects of support for agency thinking and asks, “who do you go to when you feel you cannot reach your goals?” There were six questions that were based upon chronosystem goal setting, student perceptions of adults’ beliefs in them, goal formation, and ways the iCCR could be improved (see

Appendix P). Data gathered in these interviews supports answering my second, third, and fourth research questions.

**Semi-structured interview.** To gather data from parents/community members, I conducted semi-structured interviews. For participants who have completed the parent workshops, I used an open ended three-question format (see Appendix Q). The parent questions centered on their experience in the workshop and how it related to their understanding of supports for their student. The purpose of having three questions was to engage in the technique of mining for data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2105). In this way, the responses to the broader questions allowed me to probe for additional information. Data gathered in these focus groups will support answering my first research question.

**Journals, Friday reflections, and additional artifacts.** During my research, I gathered additional sources of data by my research journal, field notes, memos, emails, and other qualitative artifact data. The purpose of my research journal was to record my observations about the school and the implementation of the innovation. The purpose of my Friday reflection was to summarize my weekly thoughts and share them with staff. Memos and emails are part of regular site communications and may provide data that is value-laden. Additional qualitative artifact data including the school charter renewal documents, student/parent handbooks, and communications were gathered. Data gathered from journals, Friday reflections, and additional artifacts support answering all of my research questions and were important to the data analysis process of crystallization (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011; Ellingson, 2009).

## **Data Analysis**

In concurrent mixed-methods designs, data analysis normally occurs at the same time (Creswell, 2015; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). However, based upon the qualitative methodology employed here, the first set of quantitative data was analyzed immediately after the first administration of the instruments to make any adjustments required for the development of the iCCR curriculum and programs. The LoU and qualitative data were analyzed at the end of the study, but before conducting a final quantitative analysis, with enough time for member checking to occur. The validity of qualitative data is increased in the process of member checking (Rossman & Rallis, 2016; Saldaña, 2016; Creswell, 2015; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). I have my data analysis process relating to the research question in Table 7.

Table 7

*Sources for Triangulated Data and Analyses Aligned with the Research Questions*

Research Questions	Sources and Analysis								
	SIS	CCR	GCR	SHS	SSS	LoU	TI	SI	PI
1. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR parent/community development plans increase parent/community understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready?	<i>GTA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	<i>GTA</i>
2. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of iCCR support the school site in setting positive goals for students?	<i>DSA</i> <i>GTA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	-	<i>GTA</i>	<i>GTA</i>	-
3: How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR student pathway and agency plan increase students' understanding of what they need to accomplish to be college and career ready?	<i>GTA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	-	-	<i>GTA</i>	<i>GTA</i>	-
4. How, and to what extent, will the implementation level of iCCR support student levels of hope for their future?	<i>DSA</i> <i>GTA</i>	<i>DSA</i>	-	<i>DSA</i>	-	<i>OWA</i>	<i>GTA</i>	<i>GTA</i>	-

*Notes.* Sources of Triangulated Data: SIS = Student Information Systems Data; CCR = School Community Survey on College and Career Readiness; GCR = The iCCR Student Survey on Graduation and College Readiness; SHS = In-School Student Hope Survey; SSS = School system student survey; LoU = Level of Use; TI = Teacher Interviews; SI = Student Interviews; and PI = Parent Interviews. Triangulated Data Analysis: *DSA* = Descriptive Statistical Analysis, *GTA* = Grounded Theory Analysis; *OWA* = One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

**Qualitative Analysis.** My methodology of data interpretation utilized a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2017; Saldaña, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). It has been suggested that a constructivist grounded theory approach is appropriate and may even advance critical inquiry (Charmaz, 2017). I conducted, recorded, transcribed the interviews, and revised the data during a series of member checks to increase the validity of my qualitative findings. To immerse myself in that data in first person, I conducted a verbatim transcription (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). To assist

in my transcriptions, I used the software application HyperRESEARCH. First, I conducted line-by-line coding using gerunds. After my first round of coding, I am proposing to develop analytic memos to generate possible groupings, themes, and assertions for triangulation with quantitative findings.

I conducted multiple layers of qualitative data analysis as part of a reflexive process consistent with PAR. This included examining my research questions and the initial groupings from coded and engaged in a second set of memos examining themes, then returning with my groupings to the interviews and organizing the initial codes into groups. After this examination, I returned to produce additional analytic memos to develop themes and assertions that pertain to my research questions. The final step of this process was to develop assertions and a grounded theory through triangulation and crystallization.

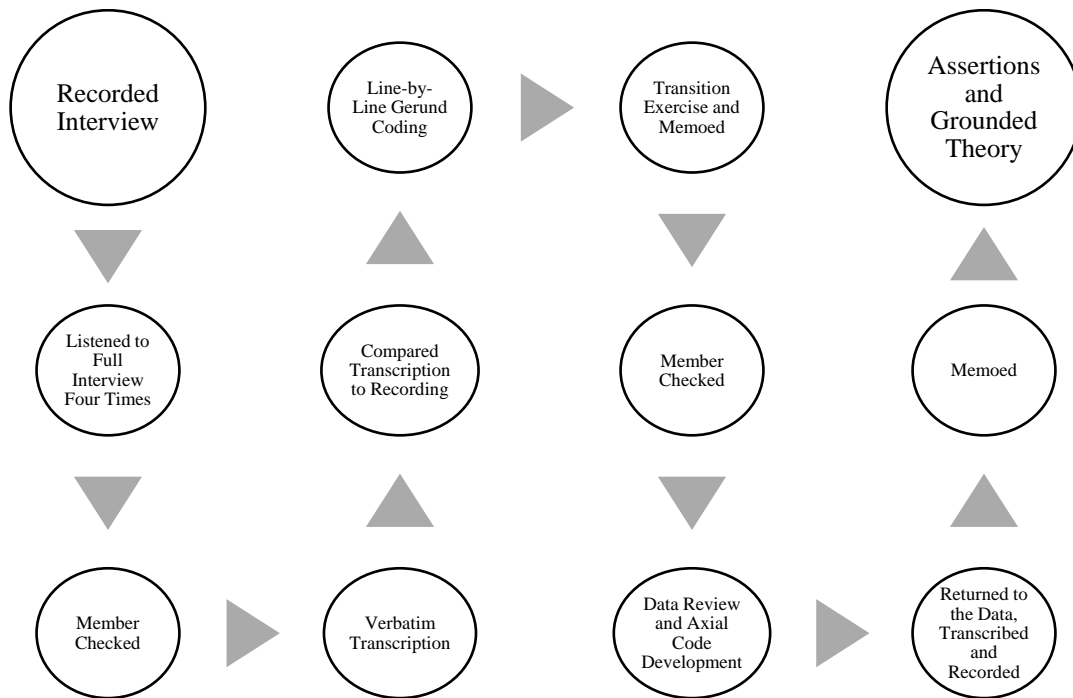


Figure 4. Process map of developing qualitative data.

**Quantitative Analysis.** Information from the SIS was used to develop descriptive statistics, and transcript analysis in the form of pre- and post-data *t*-tests on student grades. For all survey data, I tested reliability by conducting analyses based upon Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) in SPSS, version 24. Cronbach's alpha is an internal test of consistency that results in a coefficient (Creswell, 2015; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005; Smith & Glass, 1987). There are a series of commonly accepted cut-off points that have been established to estimate the reliability of an instrument. It has been suggested that scores over .70 indicate reliable internal consistency for self-developed instruments (Smith & Glass, 1987; Nunnally, 1978). After establishing reliability, I used pre and post *t*-tests to explore the research questions topic of student levels of hope. Finally, the LoU data was used as a qualitative technique to generate a quantitative variable to conduct my Analysis of Variances (ANOVAs) to explore how the innovation implementation may play a role in student experience of the formation of goals as it pertains to hope.

**Triangulation and Crystallization Analysis.** In multi-strand, mixed-methods approach, triangulation is a process whereby the results of each method are considered and compared to each other for a confirmation of findings (Creswell, 2015; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). In this way, findings from one method are confirmed via weighing against the evidence from the other. Crystallization (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011; Ellingson, 2009) is a qualitative process that proposes a similar method to triangulation, but rather than confirmation of data, it is an inductive method used to build on the knowledge of layered data analysis and presents the possibilities of multiple truths (Denzin, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, &

Hayes, 2009). My process of moving from data gathering, triangulation analysis, toward crystallization is represented in Figure 5.

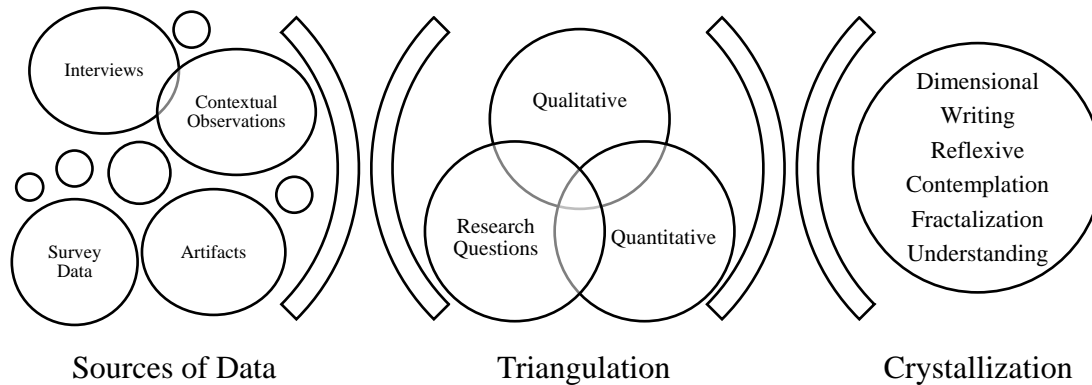


Figure 5. Representation of my Triangulation/Crystallization process.

**Validity.** Validity has been defined as the presentation of evidence that the instruments, measures, and methods align to the relevant purpose of a study (Creswell, 2015). Messick (1995) identified validity as a type of social value within educational research. Herr & Anderson (2015) argued that in action research there are five facets of validity including dialogical and process validity, outcome validity, catalytic validity, democratic validity, and process validity. Here, I will discuss several of the strategies that I used to increase the validity of my findings.

Action research is primarily focused on improving the local context (Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). In this way, action research should pay careful attention to all aspects of validity, but careful attention to the aspect of democratic validity (Herr & Anderson, 2015) which is defined as the relevance to the local context. In the development and selection of qualitative instruments, I have developed instruments that are specific to the innovation, based on my theoretical model, and those that are valid and have longitudinal



data associated with them. In this way, my design is intentional and seeks to increase the level of democratic validity.

***Rigor inaction research design.*** By selecting PAR, I engaged in a framework that was rigorous and specifically designed to increase democratic engagement in my study. In this way, the strategy of member checks will be implemented on a continuous basis as part of an inductive means of knowledge production. Member checking is a process whereby researchers check their findings with the study participants to ensure accuracy of findings (Creswell, 2015). During my study, I utilized the strategy of independent critical friends (Herr & Anderson, 2015). One purpose of having critical friends within a study is to increase validity by having other individuals review your work so that they can help explore areas that I may not have considered or challenge my thinking that may be based on my own hidden assumptions.

During the study I attempted to engage in the technique of bracketing. Bracketing (Rossman & Rallis, 2016) is a qualitative technique that allows for researchers to examine their assumptions and worldview. However, given the critical inquiry stance I adopted for the study, with an overtly stated aim to engage in a process of Praxis (Freire, 2011; 1970), I questioned the effectiveness of my bracketing. However, I continued to engage in bracketing and found it useful in questioning my assumptions during the triangulation and crystallization processes. I found that for me, bracketing supported that I was interpreting data in a way that supports my political positionality within my research setting or the aims of my Praxis. Rather, bracketing was able to be used as a means of ensuring that my findings would be valid and reliable in support of the accuracy

of reporting for transferability and ongoing future action research cycle in support of my Praxis.

### **The Innovation**

For this action research cycle, I developed an innovation that may increase student hope by addressing the elements of HT goal formation, pathway thinking, and agency thinking. The central phenomenon of HT is goal setting that can take the shape of *positive or negative goals*. Negative goal setting does not need to be a purposeful or malicious act; it can be unconscious and lead to rationalized diminished expectations and create outcomes that did not need to occur (Merton, 1948). Hattie's (2008) meta-analysis found that the generation of expectations was the single largest factor in student academic success. This innovation is intended to address each component of HT and level of Ecological System Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; 1977). The desired emancipatory outcome of this innovation is to implement a system that will better prepare students for post-secondary life.

The innovation being implemented was the iCCR curriculum and experiences administered during advisory period and parent workshops. Recall from Chapter 1, that the iCCR was a collaboratively developed plan using a PAR format that has four implementation steps. In the first step of implementation, there was a staff and stakeholder professional development. In the second step, positive goals for our future graduates were set to ensure they are prepared for post-secondary environments. In the third step, pathway planning documents and experiences were developed and were implemented for students in their advisory class. Finally, parent workshops were held to ensure parents understand post-secondary requirements addressed in the iCCR. This was

conducted so parents can provide support structures for students as a means of increasing influence over students through multiple levels of EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; 1977). In Chapter 2, I reviewed that the development of this innovation was conducted using my theoretical framework whereby the iCCR utilizes the HT framework in its implementation structure while seeking the influence of all five environments of EST.

The iCCR was implemented over a 20-week period of the second semester of the 2017-2018 school. The duration of the implementation of the innovation included community engagement, professional development, planning documents, introduction to the research site, and data collection. The community engagement phase of my study sought to increase democratic social engagement in setting positive goals for student expectations upon graduating from high school. The professional development phase sought to operationalize positive goals into actionable plans for a clear pathway. The introduction to the research site phase engaged students in their advisory period and parents through workshops to the iCCR pathway document while affirming agentic thinking by developing in school and community support structures. Data gathering was conducted to inform the multi-strand study (Ivankova, 2015) and provide data for analysis of the effectiveness of the innovation. In this way, the innovation was constructed on my theoretical framework through the implementation of HT (Snyder 2002) while spanning the various environments of EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1994).

**Timeline and procedures.** A summary of my timeline and procedures can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

*Timeline and Procedures of the Study and Innovation*

Month	Actions Intensified	Procedures Taken
Month 1	Contact prospective participants Receive SIS data for initial analysis Initiate the development of the iCCR Initiate CCR surveys Administer the GCR, and SHS to students Initiate the development of the iCCR Professional development for staff on the development and implantation of iCCR Administer the SHS and SSS to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacted staff, parents, community members, and students about study participation</li> <li>• Received access to SIS</li> <li>• Met with community advisory committee.</li> <li>• Administered surveys</li> <li>• Designed innovation professional development sessions</li> <li>• Implemented collaborative design sessions for iCCR advisory program for students.</li> </ul>
Month 2	Student advisory period implementation of iCCR Continue professional development and staff collaboration for implementing iCCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented the first cycle of iCCR for students</li> <li>• Provide professional development for advisory teachers</li> <li>• Gathered teacher feedback on implementation of iCCR</li> </ul>
Month 3	Continue student advisory period implementation of iCCR Continue professional development and staff collaboration for implementing iCCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of revisions of iCCR</li> <li>• Conducted first college visits for students</li> <li>• Conducted student job shadows and professional interviews</li> <li>• Gathered CCR parent surveys</li> </ul>
Month 4	Continue student advisory period implementation of iCCR Parent workshop for iCCR Conduct LoU interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued implementing the innovation</li> <li>• Conducted second college visits for students</li> <li>• Provided iCCR parent workshops</li> <li>• Gathered parent pre and post CCR surveys</li> <li>• Started LoU interviews</li> </ul>
Month 5-10	Administration of SHS, SSS, and GRC Conduct teacher interviews Conduct student interviews Conduct parent interviews Conduct data analysis, member checks, and write findings and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted final student surveys</li> <li>• Finished LoU interviews</li> <li>• Conducted interviews</li> <li>• Conducted verbatim transcription</li> <li>• Member checks</li> <li>• Qualitative Analysis</li> <li>• Reviewed with critical friends</li> <li>• Developed assertions</li> <li>• Quantitative analysis</li> <li>• Conducted triangulation</li> <li>• Conducted crystallization sessions</li> <li>• Developed grounded theory</li> <li>• Prepared findings</li> </ul>

*Notes.* SIS = Student Information Systems Data; iCCR = I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program; CCR = School Community Survey on College and Career Readiness; SHS = In-School Student Hope Survey; SSS = School system student survey; LoU = Level of Use; GRC = The iCCR Student Survey on Graduation and College Readiness.

My timeline had three distinct phases. The first phase occurred in the first two months and consisted of gaining permissions, access, consent, and preparing for the study. The second phase occurred over a three-month period, during which time the innovation is administered and studied. The final phase is reflective and involves analysis and procedures to increase the validity of findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

There were several common ethical considerations for my research (Creswell, 2015; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015). The overarching ethical considerations of all researchers are clearly outlined within the five principles of the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects, 1978). These are (a) beneficence and non-maleficence, (b) fidelity and responsibility, (c) integrity, (d) justice, and (e) respect for people's rights and dignity. To ensure my study met ethical standards, I submitted each cycle of my research to the Arizona State University (ASU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Office of Knowledge Enterprise Development. My dissertation cycle was submitted and approved by the ASU IRB (see Appendix R).

However, action research may pose additional ethical consideration given the positionality of the researcher (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014, Mills, 2011) that extends further than those considerations conducted by an IRB. For example, Mills (2011) suggested that action researchers should consider the American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychologist and Code of Conduct*. My positionality was a consideration in this study, as I was the head of the school system that was the research site. This was complicated by the implementation of iCCR, which is an activity that was approved by the TK-12 school system board of trustees. However, while those

participating in the iCCR implementation may be students or staff of the school site, their participation in the interviews and the study was completely voluntary as were their involvement in both the development and implementation of the iCCR for parents/community members.

Informed consent for student data collection occurs as part of the school site operations and students assent to participate in online survey data collection. Students are not required to take part in survey data collection. Data from this study utilized de-identified student data that was presented at board meetings and is available online, through public records, and as part of the school system report and accountability structures. Informed consent occurred for all qualitative interviews, including student assent of my research with those that participated being able to leave the study at any time or decline to answer any and/or all questions associated with this study.

This study used a PAR approach which is rooted in the Freirean approaches of critical inquiry (Crotty, 1998) and emancipatory practices (Bradbury, 2015, Creswell 2015). Critical inquiry is political (Denzin, 2017; Rossman & Rallis, 2016; Crotty, 1998) and seeks action to address perceived social injustices (Denzin, 2017; Gutek, 2004; Crotty, 1998). It sets into motion cycles of praxis that seek to liberate the oppressed and develop a more just existence for humanity (Freire, 2011; 1970). I structured at least thirty minutes each Friday during the study to consider the implications of my critical inquiry and who and or how it may influence the participants of my study given my positionality. For this active reflection I used elements from Stone (2012) who suggested a framework for framing politics of considering the paradoxical choices that one should consider when taking community actions. Stone suggested considering how we make our

choice for implementing social actions that may be applicable to emancipatory practices, such as the “dimensions of equality” (p. 42). These dimensions include a political distribution model to which she suggests one should consider *membership, merit, rank, group-based distribution, need, and value*.

There were several considerations that I took to minimizing risks associated with confidentiality and anonymity. All personal identifiers from surveys were coded and stored separately in a password protected file. Personal identifiers can take the form of IP addresses, names, email addresses, or other information that might be collected purposefully or inadvertently and can later be used to locate an exact individual. Careful precautions were used to ensure that all survey data was de-identified.

Electronic documents were stored in a secure location with password encryption. Paper documents were secured in locked files and stored at secure locations. Sound recording files were secured and stored offline. No cloud-based accounts were knowingly used to store any confidential or anonymous information associated with this study. All materials will be secured and stored at a secure location for a period of five years and then destroyed.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I outlined the methods utilized to study the effectiveness of my innovation and answer my four research questions. In alignment with my philosophical disposition, I have presented PAR as an appropriate methodology for change and organizational development (Bradbury, 2015; Bradbury et al., 2008; Kemmis, 2008). Action research is often conducted using mixed-methods (Creswell, 2015; Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). I have chosen a multi-strand mixed-methods design

(Creswell, 2015; Ivankova, 2015; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2014) to answer my four research questions.

The context for the study was a high school that is being prototyped on design thinking. The location of the school was in the urban downtown area of San Diego, CA. Study participants were students ( $n = 65$ ), parents ( $n = 35$ ), staff ( $n = 9$ ), and community advisers/board members ( $n = 3$ ). As the researcher, my positionality was that of the chief executive officer of the school system and the developmental principal of the school site that hosted the research. I was situated as an active participant and a board-sanctioned change agent for the school system. Therefore, the research took place as a normal part of my job duties and assignments.

Quantitative data collection used existing student records from the SIS, pre- and post-tests on college and career readiness knowledge, the use of my SHS instrument, and elements of the attitudinal measures of a pre-existing school-based survey and instrument. Qualitative data collection occurred before, during, and after the innovation. Qualitative data was gathered through LoU interviews, advisory teacher interviews, student interviews, semi-structured interviews, my researcher's journal, Friday reflections, communications, and additional artifacts that presented themselves during the study.

Qualitative data was analyzed for themes and assertions using a Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2017; Saldaña, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). Charmaz has argued that a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach may advance critical inquiry (Charmaz, 2017). As a means of immersing myself in the data, I conducted all transcriptions and subjected the data to member checks to increase the validity of my findings. Quantitative



data analysis used descriptive statistics, pre/post *t*-tests and ANOVAs. As a concurrent mixed-methods study, I used a process of triangulation and crystallization (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011; Ellingson, 2009). This methodology philosophically aligned with PAR and the nature of the study. The research questions were answered through the data sources as listed in Table 7 of this chapter.

The innovation of the iCCR was developed to address aspects of HT as a means of spanning the environments of EST and increasing student preparedness for post-secondary environments. The introduction of the innovation involved phases to address community engagement, professional development, planning documents to clarify pathway, the introduction of the innovation to the research setting, and data collection. The innovation took place on a 20-week timeline during the Spring semester of the 2017-2018 school year. My timeline and procedures for the administration of the innovation and study are summarized in Table 8 of this chapter.

There are ethical considerations for all research. In this chapter, I have reviewed how my study conformed to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report. This study was subject to objective review of the ASU IRB and was approved by the school system where the study took place. I reflected the additional ethical considerations and strategies that I used that were applicable to action research, critical inquiry, and my positionality within my research. Finally, I presented my plan I used to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of my research participants. This included electronic document consideration, the ongoing storage of records and files, the securing of identifiers, and the timeline for the destruction of source material from this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

*. . . Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed . . .*

—The Declaration of Independence (1776, p. 1)

*A paradigm governs, in the first instance, not a subject matter but rather a group of practitioners. Any study of paradigm-directed, or of paradigm-shattering, research must begin by locating the responsible group or groups.*

—Thomas S. Kuhn (2012, p. 179)

The purpose of my study was to examine the innovation of the I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR). To study the effectiveness of this innovation I studied four research questions. My research questions were:

RQ1. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR parent/community development plans increase parent/community understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready?

RQ2. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR support the school site in setting positive goals for students?

RQ3. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR student pathway and agency plan increase students' understanding of what they need to accomplish to be college and career ready?

RQ4. How, and to what extent, will the implementation level of iCCR support student levels of hope for their future?

The results of this study report data collected and analyzed from students ( $n = 67$ ), parents ( $n = 35$ ), staff ( $n = 9$ ), and advisory/board members ( $n = 3$ ). Qualitative findings

involved a rigorous process to develop a thick description (Rossman & Rallis, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). My analysis included examination of qualitative findings within my theoretical framework for my process of crystallization in Chapter 5 and the development of assertions by data. The qualitative interview method of Levels of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) was used to provide quantitative data that could be used to measure variation in student hope levels when compared to advisory teacher adoption of I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR).

Quantitative data were gathered in multiple-strands of the research. In the first strand, quantitative data was the primary source that guided the development of the iCCR through my college and career readiness test. Next, quantitative data were used to support measuring the effectiveness of the implementation of iCCR. Finally, by triangulating my qualitative and quantitative data, I answered my research questions. Here I present my qualitative and quantitative findings before using triangulation to answer the research questions.

### **Results for Analysis of Qualitative Data**

Gathering of qualitative data involved student interviews ( $n = 8$ ), teacher interviews ( $n = 4$ ), parent interviews ( $n = 6$ ), reading through my weekly reflections with faculty and staff, my researcher journal notes, the school system charter renewal documents, and additional artifact data such as the Local Education Agency policies and school specific documents such as the Parent/Student Handbook (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Description of Qualitative Sources*

Data Source	Word Count
Student Interviews	20,697
Teacher Interviews	14,552
Parent Interviews	25,573
Weekly Reflections	14,856
Researcher Journal Notes	5,218
School System Charter Renewal	39,051
Additional Artifact Data (Policies, Site Documents)	13,698
Total Word Count	144,040

*Notes.* Additional Artifact Data = Student Parent Handbook 2017-2018, Employee Handbook 2017-2018, and school system policies on file regarding graduation requirements, math placement, student discipline, and community/school relations.

In addition, I conducted extensive memoing during my qualitative process (see Table 10).

Within my memoing, I also began the process of crystallization and the formation of my grounded theory which I will present in Chapter 5.

Table 10

*Interview Memos and Word Counts*

Data Source	Word Count
Student Interview Memos	21,175
Teacher Interviews Memos	16,032
Parent Interview Memos	24,981
Total Word Count	62,188

Next, I will review my qualitative process of interpreting the data.

**Rigorous qualitative process.** All interviews were held in my office at the school site. Interviews were recorded using a recording feature on my smartphone. Interviews were later subject to verbatim transcriptions, that I conducted, and member checked to answer some of my questions. After this, the data were subjected to extensive memoing

through transition exercises, member checks, and the subsequent development of axial codes.

In my first transition process, I started by memoing on in vivo codes as they represented an unfiltered summary of the views of participants. In reflecting upon the in vivo codes, I would compare them to the original data and conduct additional exercises. For example, in the teacher interview memos, I ordered the in vivo codes to reconstruct the school year chronologically and then formed a two-paragraph reflective statement that was member checked.

In a second exercise, I reflected on the opening word of the open gerund code. By conducting this exercise, I sought to explore how these words may have impacted how I viewed the statements being made. In my third exercise, I conducted a metric review of code counts. I conducted this process as a way of bracketing frequency counts to meaning. In my notes, I found that as I informally saw code counts in HyperRESEARCH, it might help me to review them and move past them.

In my fourth transition exercise, I developed word clouds (Saldaña, 2016) by code and by total words used. For word clouds by code, I used the export feature in HyperRESEARCH. For world clouds by total words used, I utilized the online free service at [www.wordclouds.com](http://www.wordclouds.com). In the online program, I was able to use the zoom in and out function to explore different level views of the word cloud for my reflection (see Figure 6).



Table 11

*Summary of Theoretical Framework Analysis of all Open Gerund Code*

Proximal Process	Environmental System	Goal			Pathway			Agency		
		<u>Formation</u>			<u>Thinking</u>			<u>Thinking</u>		
		P	M	N	P	M	N	P	M	N
Lowest	Chronosystem	157	17	12	22	6	-	3	2	3
Low	Macrosystem	17	6	6	10	13	6	27	27	24
Medium	Exosystem	28	5	2	20	16	7	29	7	19
High	Mesosystem	65	22	10	95	49	22	180	33	40
Highest	Microsystem	30	11	8	82	44	25	121	57	59

*Notes.* P = Positive, M = Maintenance, N = Negative.

After my member checks and a review with a critical friend, I moved into my process of axial code development. I began this process by conducting a tabletop exercise (Saldaña, 2016) whereby I started a grouping process. After reflecting upon various groupings and emergent themes I conducted between three to five rounds of axial code development by placing the codes into a spreadsheet and sorting through codes. Between each step I returned to the source data and the open gerund codes. Finally, I conducted a final review of my axial to open gerund code alignment (see Appendices V, W, and X) and reflected upon them in the development of the assertions in support of answering my research questions.

**Student interviews.** The sampling of students was conducted by their advisory teacher. Teachers were directed to select two students that represented typical advisory students for the semester. There were 10 students who were invited to be interviewed, with 8 participating (see Table 12). Students were interviewed after I received written consent from the parents and written assent from the student. On average, each interview was about 20 minutes in length.

Table 12

*Characteristics of Student Interview Participants*

Student	Age	Grade	Gender Identification	Race/ Ethnicity	FRPL	Home Language	GPA
Jenny	14	9	F	White	Y	English	1.33
Opal	15	9	F	Filipino	N	English	3.33
Juan	14	9	M	Hispanic	N	Spanish	3.40
Michael	14	9	M	Hispanic	N	Spanish	3.73
Tobi	15	10	M	White	N	English	2.61
Ron	16	10	M	White	N	English	4.00
Ginger	15	10	F	White	N	English	3.33
Keith	15	10	M	Hispanic	Y	English	2.00

*Notes.* FRPL = Free or Reduced-Price Meals, GPA = end of year cumulative Grade Point Average, F = identifies a female, M = identifies as male, Y = yes, N = no. Student names are pseudonyms.

Each student was an active participant in the interview and revealed important information about how he or she related to the iCCR program and some of the questions. For example, Jenny revealed her family had decided to move to another county where housing was more affordable. She revealed that her primary source of talking about goals was her brother, but that “we have him Saturday to Monday” and that the rest of the time he we lived with his other family about 20 miles away. She was nervous about moving, as this was going to increase the distance she was living from her brother. Jenny’s parents did not participate in the parent workshop.

Opal shared that she liked participating in the iCCR program in advisory. However, she found the concepts of pathway too limiting to her personality.

*I think everybody says that this is a way to live life. You grow up. You go to college. You get a job. You raise your kids. And then you retire. And then that's it. And I don't want to follow a pathway that is already written.*



She thought of herself as an existentialist who believed in “saving the earth before we save the humans.” She sought a life adventure where she would “always be learning” about new things. Opal’s parents did not participate in the parent workshop.

During my interview with Juan, he shared that during the iCCR implementation he had developed goals that he had not previously shared with others. He also made statements that he did not plan for the future, even when having a written plan developed in iCCR. For example, when asked about sharing his goals about what he wanted to do when he graduated high school, he stated, “I don’t think so” and then later revealed that he had shared his goals with teachers. Juan’s parents did not participate in the parent workshop.

Michael’s parents came from another country and he and his parents were learning about college entrance requirements from iCCR program. He shared that for him the job interviews were an important component of iCCR to gain understanding. For example, Michael shared that the job interview made him “feel like I have been getting better at expressing myself” as he now understood that communication was essential in the world of work. Michael’s parents did attend the iCCR parent workshop and they were interviewed as part of my study.

Tobi’s interview was personal and focused on his struggles with getting through the year. What iCCR had revealed to him was that if he wanted to get into a University of California (UC) he needed to be reaching for high goals. Tobi had struggled in his language course during the year and viewed it as blocking his pathway forward. He had trouble relating his pathway problems to his parents and responded to questions at home about his grades by saying “I’m passing all of my classes, they say what about Spanish,

and I am like ‘it doesn’t count.’” Tobi’s parents did attend the iCCR parent workshop and his mother was interviewed as part of my study.

Ron’s interview was fast paced. He shared that the iCCR component of job interview and shadow days had been an important part of his year. In his job shadow day, Ron went to a music studio where he found it interesting that there were “two ladies there making a Christmas music album in the middle of summer because it takes the whole summer to make it and when it is done it is Christmas time.” He noted how different things looked in the workplace versus what he thought they would be like based upon seeing them online, on television, or in the movies. Ron’s mother attended the iCCR parent workshops and was interviewed as part of my study.

Ginger found the iCCR program to have helped her understand some of the basics that she had been missing around college and career. For example, she stated that she now understood that “whatever college you are applying to there is a minimum GPA and you need to meet it.” She also stated that previously she had been told “you should go to college” but she had never been told that “this is what you need” to get into a college. Ginger’s parents did not attend the iCCR parent workshop.

Keith shared that during the iCCR process, he felt that not all students got the same kind of positive experiences. For example, he stated that he thought that visiting a community college as one of his college visits might be a statement about what we thought of him and his advisory class. He stated, “we see them going to big schools, where our advisor is like oh yeah ‘community college is a good choice’.” Keith’s family was not able to attend an iCCR parent workshop. However, his mother and I did have a

meeting to discuss all of the information provided at the workshops earlier in the school year.

**Student assertions.** Student interviews were analyzed using my previously described reflexive process and extensive memoing. From the open gerund codes ( $n = 456$ ), I was able to generate a listing of axial codes ( $n = 18$ ). My finalized listing of open gerund to axial codes can be reviewed in Appendix S. From those axial codes, I reviewed the research questions and revisited the data. I went through a process of memoing, arranging, and going back to the data to develop the following three student assertions.

*Student assertion 1. Students feel like most teachers believe that they can be successful in high school and should go on to college.* Axial codes that supported this assertion were: *becoming responsible, believing in self, caring for others, communicating needs, imagining the future, knowing yourself, reflecting, and setting goals.* There was evidence that all students interviewed had multiple teachers that believed in them on campus. Teachers expressed their belief systems through words, actions, and providing alternative opportunities for students.

When asked about teacher beliefs, Jenny stated that “I think that all my teachers believe in me” and followed that up with “they have said it before, and they all think I’m a good student.” When pressed on this topic and how it related to her GPA, Jenny made statements about her grades not matching how well she could do if she applied herself. She asserted that teachers still believed in her even though “I have been slacking towards the end of the year.”

Michael reflected on teacher beliefs as being important to him. He spoke about his teachers as being respectful and supportive. He felt that his teachers were “always trying

to get all of their students to bring the better self in them.” Tobi provided examples of how teacher beliefs manifested themselves in how he felt about his grades. Tobi said that “I mean, that's why I am disappointed when I get don't get good grades in her classes” and followed that with “she has such high expectations for me.”

Ginger presented that teacher beliefs also helped in their credibility with students. She said that her advisory teacher “thinks I can do really well in classes and that I have the ability to do.” But this also lent to a level of credibility when the advisory teacher needed to support a corrective action for student performance. Juan stated that teachers demonstrated their beliefs through parent communications. For example, he stated that “she has told my Mom that I am good” and was then able to name teachers that had made supportive phone calls home.

Opal found that while her teachers did believe in her, she needed to go to different teachers for different supports. Opal cited going to her advisory teacher for “personal goals” and a second teacher for “academic goals.” From her advisory teacher, she stated that “I have a kind of connection because she is my advisor.” Whereas, Opal would go to another teacher for academic goals because they “kind of have an iron fist when it comes to those things.”

***Student assertion 2.*** *Students thought that the iCCR was meaningful and improved their understanding of college and career readiness.* Axial codes that supported this assertion were: *being accountable, caring for others, communicating needs, creating community, developing strategies, facing challenges, learning a pathway, replenishing agency, and setting goals.* In the interviews, students expressed that they learned about college and career readiness through iCCR. They felt that they better understood

graduation requirements, college entrance requirements, and skills they would need to be successful in a career.

Opal presented that she did not understand any of the requirements before iCCR.

*. . . at the beginning of the year I had no idea about anything, especially about high school classes or college classes. Now in advisory we have the 'a-g' requirements . . . so it was advisory that helped me.*

As a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, Juan found the iCCR program to be helpful in setting his goals and expectations. He stated that it “helped me understand what I need to do to graduate and to get into a university.”

To Michael, iCCR was supporting his goal formation and his daily actions. He stated that “I feel like I've been getting to know more about college and the things I need to do every single day.” Michael also felt that he was engaging in improvement with iCCR. He stated that he was recognizing that “I am missing some things” and that “I've been getting better thanks to you and the teacher in our advisory.”

As a sophomore, Max explained that he felt he had been missing a plan before taking part in the iCCR. He described his understanding arising from the experiential portions of iCCR, such as job shadows and college visits. He stated that

*I feel like this has prepared me, I didn't really know anything, that much, before this advisory semester. I knew, kind of what you do, like past high school. But I didn't know, minimum GPA - like things required, amount of years for subject, so advisory taught me all that.*

Ginger was a sophomore who described a similar process. She stated that “we went through a lot of like a lot of college prep, and we talked about the a-g requirements, and I

didn't know that before." She felt that her advisory teacher had a way of presenting the information in a way that made sense to her. Ginger said that "she's very straight forward with the assignment, like for the job shadow."

***Student assertion 3.** Students felt that the information from iCCR should be presented earlier and that their new knowledge left some students feeling off track. Axial codes that supported this assertion were: avoiding conflict, communicating needs, facing challenges, imagining the future, knowing yourself, reflecting, seeking alternatives, and sharing goals.* During the interviews, students expressed that much of what was learned was important to understand either before high school or as part of an induction process to high school. So, students felt that they might now be off track and that they did not understand what graduation or college entrance requirements were before iCCR.

Jenny stated that, at the beginning of the year, they "set a lot more goals" but they were about getting assignments turned in. Her observations were echoed by the voices of other students who felt that the structures that they required to look at their future were not in place. Max stated that "I have seen it help other students, the problem is you-you can't make it an option." This was in reference to the restructuring of the advisory period mid-year to conform to the developed iCCR process.

Keith felt that as a sophomore he had missed out on not getting this information sooner. Because of his new understanding of the requirements, he felt he might be looking to a community college rather than a four-year university. For example, Keith stated that now he understood that:

*I know that you have to-there is a certain number of classes that I need to pass to get into college. Also, that there's different colleges that I can*

*attend depending upon my GPA grade. There are also other options like community college that I could go into, if-if I wanted to go that route.*

For Keith, this statement was made against the backdrop of having a primary disconnection between wanting to become an engineer and having failing math grades.

For Tobi, this realization came during a late year intervention where he contemplated dropping his foreign language class to focus on other courses. However, Tobi's new understanding complicated his plans to attend a UC school as he was taking his first foreign language class in his sophomore year. Tobi stated that "I also figured out I wasn't allowed to drop Spanish, I mean the UC minimum requirements are two but apparently it is recommended that you have three years of foreign language."

Furthermore, Tobi provided evidence that the level of implementation of iCCR may be important. Tobi changed advisories at the end of the year and observed that "moving to Jessie's advisory for the end of this year I was like 'wow, I wish I was here a lot sooner because' it's taken a lot more seriously."

Opal felt that iCCR advisory would help in providing interest and reasons for why students were in school. She felt that those things had to happen earlier in her freshman year. She stated that the process of engaging in iCCR was "nicer to have than just somebody telling me 'do this, do this.'" It helped her gain a sense of why she was there, and she noted that "Because if I don't really have a reason for something, I kind of shut down."

**Teacher interviews.** Teachers were interviewed after giving written consent. There were five teachers who were invited to interview. Four teachers agreed to participate in the interview process (see Table 13). Teachers were interviewed after

giving written consent. All of the teachers had taken part in the development of the iCCR process, activities, and curriculum.

Table 13

*Characteristics of Advisory Teacher Interview Participants*

Advisory Teacher	Years Teaching	Education Level	Gender Identification	Race/Ethnicity	UC 'a-g'	GCA
Lance	10-15	Masters Plus	M	White	N	N
Nellie	1-5	Masters Plus	F	White	N	N
Megan	1-5	Bachelors	F	White	N	N
Jessie	10-15	Masters Plus	F	White	N	N

*Notes.* UC 'a-g' = Attended a University of California or California State University systems or other university that had 'a-g' requirements, GCA = Graduated from a high school within California. Advisory teacher names are pseudonyms.

A common theme that arose from the interviews was that most teachers were from different state or national systems. For example, Jessie was not from the United States and attended undergraduate and graduate school abroad. While Jessie did attend a graduate program in the United States for one of her degrees, college entrance requirements for a four-year university were not something that she had experienced. Lance was from a different state system and found that the UC 'a-g' system was something that he needed to get used to. For example, Lance stated that “back east, we have things like the Regent’s Exam” and that iCCR was the first time that he had been presented with the UC 'a-g' system.

Megan also found that she was learning much of the UC 'a-g' requirements. For example, she stated that:

*If I'm being honest, I didn't really know what a-g requirements was until you came. So, I kind of want to know more and make sure that I have*



*everything prepped so that when I go to the students it's not me scrambling and saying "hey can someone help me really quick"*

Of the advisory teacher participants, only Nellie had gone to high school and undergraduate school in California. She had attended a private four-year university where UC 'a-g' was not a requirement for attendance. Nellie felt that understanding a variety of college entrance requirements in iCCR would help students "changed their perspective because they saw that they needed to still have good grades and GPA."

**Teacher assertion development.** Teacher interviews were analyzed using my previously described reflexive process and extensive memoing. From the open gerund codes ( $n = 342$ ) I was able to generate a listing of axial codes ( $n = 17$ ). I conducted multiple levels of review of the open gerund to axial code alignment before generating a finalized listing (see Appendix T). From those axial codes I review the research questions and developed the following three assertions.

**Teacher assertion 1.** *The iCCR program provided new information for students that facilitated discussions about goal setting, pathway development, and engaging in agency thinking. Axial codes that supported this assertion included: creating community, developing strategies, identifying student needs, knowing yourself, learning a pathway, learning about failure, replenish agency, setting goals, and using an advisory strategy.* Each of the teachers interviewed provided statements and examples that the iCCR experience had supported the coordination of experiences and discussions with students. These included ongoing discussion on grades, assignments, career ambitions, study skills, and what is required to get into a college.

Nellie felt that students “understand it much better in the sense that they see how important grades are to their GPA and how GPA affects their entrance into college.” To Nellie, an important part of the iCCR experience was the college visits. She stated that:

*going to the college visit, and even having another person present that information, it kind of clicked with them that "oh, that this is important, and we have to get our grades up to get our GPA and even scholarships into school" so I think it helped make that connection between what they are doing now.*

Lance originally did not want to adopt the new iCCR curriculum or expand the number of hours in advisory that iCCR required. His understanding of the previous advisory program was that it was “fun time to bond” with students. After the first weeks of iCCR, he changed his mind and felt that

*As it got much more engaging when it was like “Okay, we need to fill out these packets now we see how much we have done in our freshman and sophomore years.” Okay where do we want to go on college visit together. Where do we want to go for job shadows or interviews? So, it actually gave it purpose.*

Lance came to realize the iCCR curriculum provided a focal point for engaging with students.

Jessie worried that students may have confused different requirements. She stated that “I think they understand ‘a-g,’ I think they don't understand the differentiation between California graduation requirements, a-g, and our graduation requirements.” Jessie’s primary concern was that students might see university entrance requirements as

the standard for thinking of themselves as being successful. She stated that “I think they now see ‘a-g’ as the face of everything.”

However, even with this concern, Jessie found that the iCCR process through advisory was one that provided points of conversation and direction. She stated that “for the kids that engaged with the process the understanding is pretty high.” Jessie was a primary contributor to the constructivist development practices used in the development of iCCR. Jessie looked to improvements in the future and stated that “I think we are not done dealing with a small percentage of our population that currently does not see college as anything that they are interested in.”

Megan’s interview mirrored some of Jessie’s concerns. She stated that “I think it is helping them become more prepared for college and understanding what it takes to get to college.” She also found that the iCCR structure helped facilitate learning and understandings. Megan stated that “I think it’s more structured, so it feels like advisory is more of a productive period than it was before.”

There was a shared theme from all of the interviews ( $n = 5$ ). This was about how the structure of iCCR helps facilitate conversations and activities for students in each of the advisory groupings. Megan summarized this when stating that:

*I think that having the structure of all the advisories being on the same calendar was very effective. Because we all shared, like the, common goals and the common schedule and all the students are working toward the same thing.*

Megan also provided examples of how the iCCR activities provided points for reflection and conversations. She noted that some students went on job shadows or interviews and realized that “oh I could actually see myself doing something like this.”

Megan found that the most powerful part of the college trips was hearing from the tour guides. Megan reflected on seeing her students as they heard from a tour guide who presented that “the tour guide came from first generation American (family), she said no one from her family had ever gone to college, her parents don't speak English, so she had like some of the same experiences that those girls have had.” Megan referenced this as “seeing someone who's made it” and noted that it made a difference in how many students saw themselves and altered their academic identity.

***Teacher assertion 2.** There was a feeling that students have a false sense of hope in the future and that they do not fully trust teachers about the need for college. Axial codes that supported this assertion included: addressing social issues, creating community, having the system fail students, imagining the future, identifying student needs, lacking trust, and seeking to make a difference.* Teachers found that there was a low level of student knowledge around the fundamental aspects of college and career readiness. Teachers also commented that students did not trust them and at times questioned if they were trustworthy.

Jessie was fine in her belief about students but had many concerns about their perceptions of the world and the amount of hard work it took to be a success. In the interview, she had supportive belief statements in stating that “I think theoretically almost every student can finish high school graduation and continue college, but the process of getting there, the amount of work needed, if someone is so far from where our program

starts.” This tied into a recurring theme of having students with low levels of trust. Jessie noted that “I feel frustrated” with a grouping of students that she identified as “kids that have very low trust.” She found that “the lack of trust makes them think that everything that we are saying is a made-up story that's meant to hurt the fun life that they want to have.”

Jessie felt that for students who did not have trust in teacher or school there was a bigger problem. To her, the issue was that students were “lacking the political aspects of going to college.” When I member-checked this statement Jessie explained further. Jessie felt that some students believed that the reason that teachers promoted college was because teachers had been to college. In this way she felt that some students believed that teachers were promoting college as a way of validating the teacher’s choice to go to college. She felt like students were missing “what does it mean to go to college, why are we so obsessed with college” because it had not been tied to a greater contextual setting that included connections between education, oppression, and political power.

Lance had a different reason for students not believing in teachers. He stated that “I think that a lot of them, you know, fell into the cracks of being passed along without recognizing the fact that it took a lot of hard work to be successful.” To Lance, much of what he perceived as students having a false sense of hope arose from a social promotion system that did not hold students accountable. He felt that students had been given a “wake-up call” or “reality check” through iCCR and that they were having a hard time reconciling that with a long-range goal.

Megan noted that several students came to a realization through iCCR that they had put themselves in a situation where they might not be able to pass a grade, or even

graduate high school. Nothing had changed in the students other than this new understanding. She stated that she believed in the students but “there are a few students that have already missed so much, so many classes.” While she believed that all students could succeed, she acknowledged that “I don't see how it would be possible for them.”

To Nellie, the process of iCCR was about trying to get students to learn about previously unknown requirements without feeling frustrated about their status in them. She found that when completing the college entrance requirements activity, students “were able to understand the coursework they needed to get to that point.” However, for many students there was a turning point when they started to make connections. Nellie observed that “I saw there was a change in habits that were going to help them be successful not only in high school but in college.”

***Teacher assertion 3.*** *The information in the iCCR program should be presented to students and parents earlier in their academic career.* Axial codes that supported this assertion included: *addressing social issues, becoming responsible, developing professional practice, developing systems, imagining the future, and setting goals.* During the interviews, there were discussions about how students needed the information and experiences in the iCCR program to be provided earlier. There was a sense that some of the information being provided was new and provided some students with an indication that they may not be heading in the right direction.

Each teacher had noted that we needed to engage in iCCR at the beginning of the year and that it should be expanded to our middle school. Megan shared a moment that “was kind of sad for some students because they realized ‘oh, I need this class and I failed and it's-it already happened.” Her solution was to start at the beginning of the year

with student and parent engagement on the iCCR topics. Megan also reflected on a desire to see iCCR in our middle school. She stated that “I'm hoping that if they had seen something like that at a younger age, that they would have had that connection” to help develop academic identity earlier on.

Lance found that because students did not have the iCCR information before getting into high school, “they have had a lot of wake up calls this year like failing a class.” He noted that there were fundamental disconnections that he felt that iCCR would have addressed in an earlier implementation cycle. Lance stated that “I feel like they didn't even know that was something that was possible.” Lance also argued that teachers do not fully understand the college entrance requirements. He found that “being forced to teach it to the students opened up my eyes up to a lot more about it as well—I don't even believe that every high school teacher realizes what UC ‘a-g’ is or means.” Lance advocated that college and career readiness information “be introduced to staff at the beginning of the year.”

Jessie provided a specific example of why students should be exposed to the iCCR program earlier. It came during a reflection about a student finally understanding the severity of the situation. She stated, “I mean look at him now” and continued that “I think he doesn't have false hope anymore.” She continued to reflect on this student, stating that:

*I think he understands the depth of his problem. He's like "I think I know what it takes, what it takes to go to high school now, but I wish I would have known it before I started high school. That would have been helpful.”*

Nellie felt that by introducing the iCCR sooner, it would allow for parents and students to have more time to adjust their understanding. She stated that “I think involving the parents a little bit more would be a next step because I think the students are starting to get it.” More specifically, she felt that there were topics that would be best addressed in working with students and parents together. For example, she found that it would be important to work with parents and students “because there are things like FAFSA and financial aid that not all the parents know.”

**Parent interviews.** All parents that participated in the interview took part in the iCCR parent workshop. Parents were interviewed after giving written consent. There were eight parents who were invited to interview and five accepted (see Table 14).

Table 14

*Characteristics of Parent Workshop Interview Participants*

Parent	Age	Education Level	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	UC 'a-g'	GCA
Jesus	45-50	Associate's/Technical	M	Hispanic/Latino	N	N
Maria	45-50	Bachelors	F	Hispanic/Latina	N	N
Alan	45-50	Masters	M	Filipino	Y	Y
Ella	55-60	Masters	F	White	N	N
Liz	50-55	Masters	F	White	N	N
Ann	45-50	Bachelors	F	African American	Y	N

*Notes.* UC 'a-g' = Attended a University of California or California State University systems or other university that had 'a-g' requirements, GCA = Graduated from a high school within California. Parent names are pseudonyms.

However, one husband requested that his wife have the opportunity to participate in the interview with him. The purpose of this request was because this was how they felt they made decisions as a family unit and wanted to be represented as such. I granted their requested and interviewed them together. During their interview, the wife requested to speak in Spanish and have the husband translate her statements. While the wife did speak



English, and did not have my questions interpreted for her, this was her request and I honored it. This resulted in five interview sessions with six participants.

My participants had all received education beyond graduating high school and they all indicated in the interviews that they valued education. Most came from homes where going to college was implicated or explicit expectation. For example, Liz stated that “it was always an unspoken rule in our house that you were going to college.” Ann stated that in her home that she shares with her son that she “been there done that, done all that, I’ve been to college” and that she has a process for “impressing upon them what the expectations are” regarding school performance and going to college.

During the course of the interview, I came to understand that Jesus and Maria had come to the United States having completed high school and college in a different country. They noted that “things were very different here”. While coming from a community that valued education, they were seeking how to best position their son for success within the educational systems in the United States. They spent time at home researching high schools and colleges to better understand entrance requirements.

Alan stated that while he graduated from high school in the United States, his family had immigrated to the United States when he was young. Alan was the first in his family to graduate from college. During the interview, he wondered how he would do in the current system as he came from a home where his parents “pretty much did not even have a high school equivalency and so college was entirely on my own.” He felt that the iCCR program had supported both students and parents in navigating the complexity of the topics of college and career readiness.

Ella felt that she was the most knowledgeable about college entrance requirements. Her focus was primarily on trying to connect her son to a college that would match his changing passions. She noted that, each year, her son changed his focus while remaining in the media arts. In her interview, she was complimentary of the iCCR implementation as being one that had benefited her son.

Liz had a background in higher education. She also had an older child that had completed college, a student in high school, and another one in middle school. She spent time during the interview reflecting about how things had changed, not only from her time at college, but also in terms of how things were for her older child to her high school students. She felt that the iCCR process helps her to understand the current complexities and navigate the system.

Ann had attended the iCCR parent workshop with her husband. She stated that after learning about the state requirements, “it was almost a shock to the system, we got home we talked about it, we talked to my mom about it, we were talking to everyone about it.” She reflected that it was “shocking that the expectations from the state were so low.” For much of our interview, this was a recurring theme.

**Parent assertion development.** Parent interviews were analyzed using the same processes as the student and teacher interviews. From my initial gerund codes ( $n = 588$ ), I was able to generate a listing of axial codes ( $n = 20$ ). The alignment of my open gerund codes to my axial codes can be found in Appendix U of this manuscript. In examining my axial codes, I noted that there were two codes that carried over from student to parent interviews. These were *finding success* and *learning from failure*. Then I noted that four codes that carried over from teacher to parent interviews. These codes were *addressing*

*social issues, developing systems, growing up, and setting goals.* Finally, I noted that there were three axial codes that were in student, teacher, and parent interviews. These were *knowing yourself, learning a pathway, and replenishing agency.* From the data, I developed three parent assertions.

***Parent assertion 1.*** *College and career readiness for students today is more complex and different than the parents' background and experiences.* Axial codes that supported this assertion included: *developing skills, exploring the future, knowing yourself, learning a pathway, learning from failure, and seeking constancy.* Within the interviews, several themes developed that supported the formation of this assertion. This included that parents viewed their own upbringing as being a simpler time that was not imbedded in a globalized economic market.

Recall that Jesus and Maria were interviewed together. During their interview, this assertion came to the forefront as they were from another country and seeking the knowledge and skills they would need to position their son Michael for success. On college and career readiness, they commented that “there's a lot of things that parents don't know because things have changed so much.” They were seeking “anything, any information that you give us.”

As a first-generation college student, Alan reflected and considered how different things were for college entrance requirements. He stated that “I don't know what I would have done.” Alan had engaged in a practice that few current students do—he applied to one local university. He was concerned for his own children and how they were doing within their own feelings of empowerment. Alan stated that his daughter needed to find “control and managing her own future and all of the complexity.”

Ella had kept up with many of the changes that had taken place with college entrance requirements. However, she still felt that there was navigational complexity that the iCCR program was providing. She stated that “one of the things that I took away from it, like when you detailed all of the different steps, the different classes, and what's required of the potentially different colleges they may pick.” What this navigational capacity brought to her and her son, Ron, was the ability to “make good choices in the future.”

Liz had spent time working in higher education and had a child that had graduated from college a decade earlier. However, Liz noted that “it's very different than what my experience was.” She noted on career readiness and competing in a globalized economy that “things are different than what we understood them to be” in her closing remarks of our interview. She found that the iCCR parent workshop helped her and her husband get “sort of on the same page, that we prepare him (Tobi), for the UC route.”

Ana thought that the iCCR workshops and advisory periods were taking the school community in the right direction but continued to want to see more communication on the topics of college and career readiness. She stated that

*I believe in information overkill, I just don't think you can stress that enough to say "these are the requires, this is where your kid is" I mean, even if you have "here you go, print this out for your automatic at home tally.*

She concluded that “the UC and the California system required so much more so for us it was very eye opening, and it was just, it was almost a shock to the system.” She

expressed disappointment in state requirements and referenced them as positioning students to be part of a “prison state.”

*Parent assertion 2. The implementation of the iCCR parent workshops increased parental knowledge of what needs to be done to position their students for college and career readiness.* Axial codes that supported this assertion included: *becoming responsible, being future oriented, developing skills, growing up, having expectations,* and *setting goals*. In the interviews, all parents found new information about either college or career readiness. Parents also expressed that, as the future was unknown, careers would look differently in the future.

In this area, Jesus and Maria found that the iCCR program “has helped us a lot to get a greater understanding about what he needs.” With the information from iCCR, they changed Michael’s extracurricular activities to ones that aligned with college entrance requirements. They stated that they now felt like they knew “what he needs to get into a prestigious school, which is something that he wants and obviously we need to keep going on more information.”

Before implementing iCCR, there had not been a college and career ready dialogue, program, or curriculum at the school. Alan stated that “as a parent, I appreciate you taking the time and formatting and having all of that ready to go.” He liked the balance of having college visits and job shadows. Alan believed that we needed to make connections between college and career for students. He stated that “you achieve to get into a career, you know that you’ll be inspired to work, and that almost all of those careers require college.”

From a different frame of reference, Ella spoke about state requirements with concerns. While Ella's son was currently on a university entrance requirement path, she had not reviewed the state graduation requirements. She commented that "I think I was more surprised on how a state school requires less, you know." Ella also appreciated the broader topics that iCCR brought in connecting college and career. She stated that, when school programs got to be over specific about making life choices as a teenager, it "sometimes can be overwhelming to a child."

Liz and her husband attended the iCCR workshop and found that it had provided a frame of reference to dialog about their son's future. She stated, "so the information from the parent meeting was very helpful to me to understand that, in forming goals we have to have a target to hit." At home, they began discussions about what types of schools that their son might do well at and enjoy. To them the "UC system sounds appropriate to me" but with relatives living abroad, they also were considering "maybe he'll go overseas."

The process of engaging in the iCCR workshop had provided information on graduation requirements that had Ana and her husband talking with family and neighbors. Ana noted that:

*It was almost like "okay, why are we here again," you know, "why do you want kids" are they learning enough to leave the shelter of school and go out into the real world and, it's unimaginable that they would be able to.*

While they were pleased that our school had adopted much higher graduation requirements, they situated the topic of state graduation requirements within society. Ana also felt that the iCCR parent workshop was helping to knock down real and perceptual barriers that may be preventing students from going on to

college. She stated that “when it's something like college, where they might not believe they can for whatever reason,” iCCR was addressing those issues.

*Parent assertion 3. More parents need to be involved in their students' academic and personal lives.* Axial codes that supported this assertion included: *addressing social issues, being privilege, building community, communicating, developing systems, knowing your family, and wanting more for children.* During the interviews, parents stated that they were taken aback by how few parents had been involved in the iCCR workshops. While parents who participated in the interviews acknowledged that there were many life circumstances that might be preventing parental involvement, they also felt that this might limit a student's future options.

For Jesus and Maria, parental involvement was a critical factor. Jesus felt strongly that parents not being involved was not acceptable. He stated that if “people don't realize it, then they're damaging the future of their kids.” Both Jesus and Maria had articulated that they had noticed a low level of parental involvement from many of the people they knew. This was not part of their parenting philosophy with Maria being on several school committees and Jesus mentoring students in the robotics club. When Jesus talked about the need for more parents to get involved in iCCR, he stated that “they say they love them—how can you love somebody that you're not helping—if you think that love is there, you're not showing it the right way.”

Alan is a designer by original profession but is also known for his local work in community advocacy. While Alan acknowledged that parents might not be as involved as they should be for a variety of complex social reasons, he advocates that we needed to find new ways to reach out. He framed the issue in this way:

*So you know the biggest question is-how we get all parents to participate because at the end of the day you know, students can only teach up to their parents so much and tell them the latest, you know, the ideas they have to hear it first-hand you know, from the authority.*

Alan's position was that "the parents who've been disengaged need to find a way to make it a priority to learn what affects the future of their children."

Ella appreciated that the iCCR workshops took place on different days and times so that working parents could attend. She stated that "I appreciate the fact that there's multiple times, and I think that's very beneficial." To Ella, it was only a matter of time before the practice of holding the iCCR workshops would reach many more parents. However, Ella also felt that parents need to consider why they might not be attending and stated that for some parents they "maybe are just not just making it a priority."

To Ana, parenting is a matter of commitment and disposition. She insisted that "you have to take responsibility as a parent" and continued with "even as an absentee parent." While fully acknowledging that life presents complications, she also felt something needed to be addressed in the parent community. Ana felt it was a complex matter and concluded that "I just find that it's so disturbing, and there are reasons for it, it's just you want it not to be that way."

**Weekly reflections, researcher's journal, and artifacts.** I conducted a review of my weekly reflections to faculty and staff, researcher journal notes, and additional artifact data. The purpose of this review was to provide additional value laden qualitative data for my process crystallization (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011; Ellingson, 2009). Here, I will



briefly review each data source and the purpose of reviewing it as it pertained to the research questions.

***Weekly reflections.*** During the course of my study, I conducted weekly reflections that I shared with the faculty and staff regarding my feelings, observations, and general thoughts. In my reflection on my sharing my reflections, I wrote the following during my final reflection distributed via email: “the purpose of my writing was, and has always been, so that you might get to know my intentions, inner thoughts, and convictions—for they shape my beliefs about what type of future is possible for our students.” The weekly themes of these reflections can be reviewed in Appendix V of this document. These shared thoughts were primarily aligned to the staff meetings and implementation cycles of iCCR.

***Researcher’s journal and notes.*** During my study, I kept a private researcher journal to conduct reflections on activities of the day. The primary purpose of this journal was to document and reflect during the development and primary implementation period. I kept my researcher’s journal from January through the beginning of April. From there, I moved to taking notes, both by hand and on the computer.

***School system charter renewal.*** In preparing for the implementation of the innovation, I reviewed many pieces of artifact data including the school system charter renewal submitted to the local district. Action research is reflexive and cyclical (Ivankova 2015, Mertler, 2014). Action research not only studies the current action being taken, it must make recommendations about what actions should be considered next (Creswell, 2015; Mills, 2011; Kemmis, 2008). I revisited this document several times to help establish what next-step actions should be taken.

***Additional artifact data.*** There were several other sources of artifact data that I reviewed. This included sections of the student and parent handbook for 2017-2018, the employee handbook for 2017-2018, and school system policy documents. These provided areas for reflection after I answered the research questions and engaged in my process of crystallization. These documents also supported my process of sensemaking as to what might be the implications to practice for schools and school districts.

### **Results for Analysis of Quantitative Data**

Quantitative data analysis involved reliability testing of my attitudinal instruments, reviewing pre-innovation test information to guide the development of iCCR, and examination of pre- and post-innovation data collection. Frequency charts, descriptive statistics, and a one-way Analysis on Variance (ANOVA) were utilized. The analysis of each data source was checked three times with procedural steps being followed. I began my analysis with testing the reliability of my attitudinal instruments.

**Reliability.** To calculate reliability analysis of the instruments used in this study that were based upon using a Likert scale, I used the computer program Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 25). Likert scale instruments were limited to use with the student participants in this study. In testing the instrument's reliability, I conducted an analysis based upon Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Cronbach's alpha is an internal test of consistency that results in a coefficient (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005). There are a series of commonly accepted cut-off points that have been established to estimate the reliability of an instrument (Nunnally, 1978). For Nunnally, there were three established points that represented early stages of research ( $\alpha = .70$ ), basic research ( $\alpha = .80$ ), and applied research ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

**Reliability of the Student Hope Scale.** In a previous piloting of the Student Hope Scale (SHS), I had generated a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .94$  for the instrument. For my analysis here, I used the pre-innovation data collected from students. I subjected the primary and sub-constructs to analysis in SPSS (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Internal Consistency Reliability of the SHS (n = 65)*

Construct	Items	Coefficient Alpha Estimate of reliability
Goal	6	.65
Pathway	6	.53
Agency	6	.76
Overall	18	.85

The overall instrument scores and one of the sub-constructs exceed the Nunnally (1978) standards of  $\alpha = .70$ . However, two of the other sub-constructs did not meet this standard. Lance, Buttes, and Michaels (2006) have argued against the .70 cut-off criteria. They assert that a level of  $\alpha = .80$  or higher should be sought out to meet good-to-fit (GTF) criteria of reliability. The overall instrument exceeds the GTF standard of  $\alpha = .80$  (Lance et al., 2006) which also meets the Nunnally (1978) standard for basic research. As the overall instrument exceeded the GTF standard, I deemed it reliable for the purposes of my action research.

**Reliability of the In-School Student Survey.** The school systems where I conducted my study had been using an administered survey to track longitudinal data. From this survey, I selected questions that fell into the sub-constructs of school and

community and that of student beliefs. I then tested both the sub-constructs and the primary constructs in SPSS (see Table 16).

Table 16

*Internal Consistency Reliability of the In-School Survey (n = 66)*

Construct	Questions	Coefficient Alpha Estimate of reliability
School and Community	7	.87
Student Beliefs	7	.71
Overall	14	.87

The overall instrument scores and both of the sub-constructs exceed the Nunnally (1978) standard of  $\alpha = .70$ . In my study, I have chosen to subject the instruments to the Lance et al. (2006) GTF criteria of reliability of  $\alpha = .80$ . As the overall instrument exceeds the GTF standard of  $\alpha = .80$  (Lance et al., 2006), I deemed it reliable for the purposes of my action research.

**Pre-Innovation Surveys on College and Career Readiness.**

As a PAR study, the parent/community, faculty, staff, and students were involved in pre-innovation surveys to inform the intervention plans for iCCR. Here, I will review the results of the Parent/Community/Staff Survey on College and Career Readiness and the initial student survey. This information was shared with members of the faculty, staff, and board of trustees through regular meetings. From those collaborations, the finalized iCCR plans were developed.

Several questions had multiple parts or contained a matrix. Therefore, in the scoring of this instrument, I chose to use a simple scoring method of one point for each correct selection. For example, on the first question, there were a total of seven points

possible; whereas, in question four, there was only one point possible. Therefore, from the 15 questions, there were a total of 36 possible points, with 27 points in college readiness and 9 points in career readiness.

***Community and Student Participants.*** Invitations to participate in this survey were sent to 106 email accounts of community members. From these, 9 went to high school staff and 97 went to parents. Participants ( $n = 47$ ) were advisory/board members ( $n = 3$ ), staff members ( $n = 9$ ), and parents ( $n = 35$ , see Table 17).

Table 17

*Pre-Innovation Parent/Community/Staff Characteristics (n = 47)*

Characteristic	Frequency	Valid Percentage
<b>Gender Identification</b>		
Decline to State	3	6.4
Female	33	70.2
Male	11	23.4
<b>Age Grouping</b>		
18-25	2	4.3
26-35	4	8.5
36-45	11	23.4
46-55	20	42.6
56-65	5	10.6
65+	2	4.3
Decline to State	3	6.4
<b>Racial/Ethnic</b>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	2.1
Filipino	2	4.3
Hispanic or Latina/o	8	17.0
White	28	59.6
Two or more races/ethnicities	6	12.8
Decline to state	2	4.3
<b>Primary Home Language</b>		
English	42	89.4
Spanish	5	10.6
<b>Educational Attainment Level</b>		
High School Graduate or Equivalent	3	6.4
Some College or Associate's Degree	8	17.0
Bachelor's Degree	17	36.2
Graduate of Professional Degree	18	38.3
Decline to State	1	2.1
<b>School Involvement</b>		
Advisor or Board Member	3	6.4
Faculty/Staff	9	19.1
Parent/Guardian	35	74.5
<b>Years Working with High School</b>		
I have not worked at a high school	31	66.0
Less than 1	1	2.1
1-4	4	8.5
5-10	4	8.5
11-15	3	6.4
15+	5	8.5

Students ( $n = 71$ ) were asked to participate in a student version of the parent/community survey. Student participation would take place as part of the regular student surveys administered each year. All student participation in school surveys are

with the consent of parents and with the assent of students. Table 18 summarizes the students that assented ( $n = 65$ ) in this survey.

Table 18

*Pre-Innovation Student Participant (n = 65) Characteristics*

Characteristic	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender Identification		
Decline to State	5	7.7
Other	1	1.5
Female	26	40.0
Male	33	50.8
Age Grouping		
14	25	38.5
15	29	44.6
16	10	15.4
17	1	1.5
Grade Level		
9	44	65.7
10	23	34.3
Racial/Ethnic		
African American/Black	2	3.1
Asian	2	3.1
Hispanic or Latina/o	29	44.6
White	12	18.5
Two or more races/ethnicities	20	30.8
What kind of grades did you get on your last report card		
Straight A's	8	12.3
A's and B's	9	13.8
A's, B's, and C's	9	13.8
I am all over the place on grades	18	27.7
I have some work to do	16	24.6
I consider myself one of the best students in advisory class		
Strongly Agree	9	13.8
Agree	9	13.8
Slightly Agree	16	24.6
Slightly Disagree	12	18.5
Disagree	9	13.8
Strongly Disagree	10	15.4

***Results to inform the innovation.*** This instrument was not intended to be a comprehensive test of knowledge. Rather, it was an overview of the components of college and career readiness. To examine my test scores, I ran descriptive statistics of

central tendency within SPSS looking at the constructs of questions that pertained to college readiness, career readiness, and the overall score of the test. I began by constructing a descriptive table of results from the adult participants (see Table 19).

Table 19

*Pre-Innovation Parent/Community/Staff Results Descriptive Table*

Constructs	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rng</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Pos</i>
College	16.53	16.00	4.14	15	10	25	27
Career	3.96	4.00	1.65	9	0	9	9
Total Score	20.61	20.00	5.45	19	13	32	36

*Note: M = Mean, Mdn = Median, SD = Standard Deviation, Rng = Range, Min = Minim Scored Test. Max = Maximum Scored Test, Pos = Score Possible.*

I noted that the lowest score on this test was 13 or 36% and the highest score was 32 or 89%. Within the sub-construct of “college,” the low score with 10, or 37%, and the high score was 25, or 93%. Career had the widest variation with a low score of 0% and a high score of 100%. Next, I developed a table for student results (See Table 20). I noted that the lowest score on this test was 0 and the highest score was 27 or 75%. Within the sub-constructs of “college,” the high score was 23, or 85% and in “career,” it was 5, or 56%.

Table 20

*Pre-Innovation Student Results (n = 65) Descriptive Table*

Constructs	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Rng</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Pos</i>
College	12.21	13.00	4.11	23	0	23	27
Career	2.15	2.00	1.27	5	0	5	9
Total Score	14.36	15.00	4.86	27	0	27	36

*Note: M = Mean, Mdn = Median, SD = Standard Deviation, Rng = Range, Min = Minim Scored Test. Max = Maximum Scored Test, Pos = Score Possible.*

Table 21 summarizes the frequency chart that I constructed to inform our actions.



Table 21

*Pre-Innovation Community (n = 47) and Student (n = 65) Results by Question*

Questions	Community % Incorrect	Student % Incorrect	Community % Correct	Student % Correct
1. UC 'a-g' Requirements				
a. History	59.6	55.2	40.4	44.8
b. English	23.4	55.2	76.6	47.8
c. Mathematics	70.2	62.7	29.8	37.3
d. Laboratory Science	57.4	64.2	42.6	35.8
e. Language Other than English	25.5	50.7	74.5	49.3
f. Visual & Performing Arts	36.2	50.7	63.8	49.3
g. College Prep Electives	61.7	58.2	38.3	41.8
2. UC 'a-g' recommended extra year courses				
c. Mathematics	28.8	17.9	70.2	82.1
d. Laboratory Science	53.2	58.2	46.8	41.8
e. Language Other than English	44.7	59.7	55.3	40.3
3. Approval of UC "a-g- Courses				
a. History	44.7	58.2	55.3	41.8
b. English	31.9	43.3	68.1	56.7
c. Mathematics	25.5	28.4	74.5	71.6
d. Laboratory Science	31.9	62.7	68.1	37.3
e. Language Other than English	42.6	52.2	57.4	47.8
f. Visual & Performing Arts	57.4	74.6	42.6	25.4
g. College Prep Electives	42.6	61.2	57.4	38.8
4. California State University Minimum Grade	27.7	52.2	72.3	47.8
5. University of California Minimum Grade	83.0	53.7	17.0	46.3
6. Requires the SAT and/or ACT				
a. University of California	12.8	29.9	87.2	70.1
b. California State University	80.9	35.8	19.1	64.2
7. Who Qualifies for Scholarships	2.1	22.4	97.9	77.6
8. Who Qualifies for Federal Aid	14.9	64.2	85.1	35.8
9. What is Articulation	16.2	79.1	63.8	20.9
10. Advanced Placement Exam				
c. 3	66.0	61.2	34.0	38.8
d. 4	40.4	46.3	59.6	53.7
e. 5	46.8	38.8	53.2	61.2
11. State Graduation Requirements				
a. History	31.9	86.6	68.1	13.4
b. English	19.1	83.6	80.9	16.4
c. Mathematics	11.3	88.1	78.7	11.9
d. Science	13.2	71.6	63.8	28.4
e. VPA or CTE	61.2	76.1	38.3	23.9
12. What is an Internship	54.3	70.1	45.7	29.9
13. Taking CTE Courses	8.5	40.3	91.5	59.7
14. Literacy Levels in the Workplace	47.4	80.6	42.6	19.4
15. What is Certification	21.3	88.1	78.7	11.9

*Note: UC = University of California, VPA = Visual and Performing Arts, CTE = Career Technical Education.*

Upon review and discussions with parents, we determined that the iCCR portion of the parent workshop should be inclusive of these topics and that we should focus on the difference in our graduation requirements, that of the state, and the literacy levels required for a successful transition to a career (Daggett, 2012). It was also determined that I would lead the parent meetings as the head of schools and a leader of the school community.

In analyzing student data with teachers, we choose to focus this cycle of iCCR on what we labeled as *college readiness* and *graduate profile information*. College readiness information included the iCCR components of college trips, college counselor workshops, advisory period college explorations, timeline reviews of college admissions requirements including the SAT, and strategies for setting mid- to long-term goals. The focus on graduate profile information included a job shadow as the prerequisite to our 11<sup>th</sup> grade year internships, certification information, graduation requirement information, the development of strategies for setting near-term goals to turn in assignments, and regularly monitoring grades.

**Measuring the Effectiveness of the Innovation.** The implementation of the innovation of iCCR had two primary components, that of parent/community outreach and of the redevelopment of our advisory curriculum. To support answering RQ1, I reviewed the quantitative results from parent participants analyzing the pre- and post-test scores. To support answering RQ2 and RQ3, I analyzed the student results from the pre- and post-innovation test scores, SHS data, and School Survey data. Finally, to support answering RQ4, I conducted a one-way ANOVA to review if implementation levels of iCCR might impact levels of hope as measured by SHS.

**Findings from Parent Participant in iCCR.** Parents that participated in the iCCR workshop ( $n = 17$ ) were asked to take a pre- and post-test of information presented at the workshop. This test used the same information from the Parent/Community/Staff survey used when developing iCCR for parents. From the workshop participants, 10 consented to having their pre- and post-test scores used as part of my study. A summary of the parent workshop participants who participated in this section of my study can be reviewed in Table 22.

Table 22

*iCCR Parent Workshop Participant Characteristics (n = 10)*

Characteristic	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender Identification		
Female	6	60
Male	4	40
Age Grouping		
36-45	1	10
46-55	8	80
56-65	1	0
Racial/Ethnic		
African American/Black	2	20
Filipino	1	10
Hispanic or Latina/o	2	20
White	5	50
Primary Home Language		
English	8	80
Spanish	2	20
Educational Attainment Level		
Some College or Associate's Degree	1	10
Bachelor's Degree	4	40
Graduate of Professional Degree	5	50
School Involvement		
Advisor or Board Member	1	10
Parent/Guardian	9	90
Years Working with High School		
I have not worked at a high school	10	100

***Parent College and Career Readiness Pre and Post Test Results.*** The purpose of the pre- and post-exams was to provide for a simple measure to examine parent learning

within the workshop. Table 23 summarizes the pre- and post-exam test scores by construct.

Table 23

*iCCR Parent Workshop Pre and Post Exams by Points and Percentages*

Construct	<u>Pre</u>		<u>Post</u>		<u>Difference</u>	
	Average Points	%	Average Points	%	Average Points	%
College Readiness	16.3	60.4	22.2	82.2	5.9	21.8
Career Readiness	3.7	41.1	7.4	82.2	3.7	41.1
Full Exam	20	55.6	29.6	82.2	19.6	26.6

*Note:* % = Percentage; *Pre* = Pre-Innovation; and *Post* = Post-Innovation

Parent test scores increased in both college and career readiness questions. As there were not equal weights on questions, I focused on looking at the percentages of gains. The sub-construct of college readiness scores increased by 21.8% and those of career readiness increased by 41.1%. On average, parent average scores on the college readiness portions of the exam moved from 55.6% to 82.2%.

**Findings from Student Participants in iCCR.** From the originally-invited student population ( $n = 71$ ), there was a subset of students that fully participated in all aspects of iCCR, completed the instruments associated with this study, and assented to participate. A summary of the characteristics of my iCCR student study participants ( $n = 49$ ) is summarized in Table 24.

Table 24

*iCCR Student Participant Characteristics*

Characteristic	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender Identification		
Decline to State	3	6.1
Female	19	38.8
Male	27	55.1
Age Grouping		
14	10	20.4
15	29	59.2
16	10	20.4
Grade Level		
9	29	59.2
65+	20	40.8
Racial/Ethnic		
African American/Black	3	6.1
Asian	2	4.1
Hispanic or Latina/o	20	40.8
White	10	20.4
Two or more races/ethnicities	13	26.5
Decline to state	1	2.0
What kind of grades did you get on your last report card		
Straight A's	8	16.3
A's and B's	7	14.3
A's, B's, and C's	1	2.0
I am all over the place on grades	23	46.9
I have some work to do	6	12.2
I consider myself one of the best students in advisory class		
Strongly Agree	7	14.3
Agree	12	24.5
Slightly Agree	9	18.4
Slightly Disagree	5	10.2
Disagree	5	10.2
Strongly Disagree	5	10.2

***Student Pre- and Post-Test Results on iCCR.*** The purpose of the pre- and post-exams was to provide for a simple measure to examine student learning on the topic of college readiness and understanding our graduation profile. This was accomplished by selecting specific questions from the previously established questions from the college and career ready survey. Table 25 summarizes my findings by construct.

Table 25

*iCCR Student Participant Pre and Post Exams by Points and Percentage*

Construct	<u>Pre</u>		<u>Post</u>		<u>Difference</u>	
	Average Points	%	Average Points	%	Average Points	%
College Readiness	6.5	46.5	7.9	56.7	1.4	10.2
Graduate Profile	3.3	36.7	4.2	46.5	0.9	9.8
Full Exam	9.8	42.7	12.1	52.7	2.3	10.0

*Note:* % = Percentage; *Pre* = Pre-Innovation; and *Post* = Post-Innovation.

Student test scores increased in both college readiness and graduate profile questions. As with the parent results, I examined percentage gains. The sub-construct of college readiness scores increased by 10.2% and those on the graduate profile increased by 9.8%. However, there was a low score on the initial examination of the exam with students scoring 42.7%. Even with a total of a 10-percentage point gain final student test scores were at the 52.7% level.

In examining the method and process differences between the high gains reported in the iCCR parent test scores when compared to the iCCR student test scores, I noted a difference in testing methodology. For parent participants, the tests were administered immediately before and after a focused workshop on those topics. For student participants, tests were administered at the onset of iCCR and nearly four weeks after completing iCCR. In addition, information and learning for students had been dispersed over a 12-week intervention cycle.

***SHS Survey Analysis.*** Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data and present what occurred within a sample (Marshall & Jonker, 2010; Allua & Thompson, 2009). There are two categories of descriptive statistics—measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion (Allua & Thompson, 2009). It is common to examine

averages and variabilities as a first step in data analysis (Green & Salkind, 2014). For the SHS, I first analyzed the answers to the questions by sub-construct and then I ran descriptive statistics. I then constructed pre- and post-innovation comparisons.

Table 26 summarizes my frequency results by percentage from questions about the sub-construct of goals.

Table 26

*Post and Post-Innovation SHS Report of Sub-Construct Goal by Percentage*

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Slightly Agree		Slightly Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1: Graduate	57.1	67.3	38.8	26.5	41.0	6.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Q2: Define Life Success	26.5	30.6	34.7	32.7	22.4	26.5	8.2	8.2	8.2	-	-	2.0
Q3: Get Good Grades	51.0	49.0	36.7	34.7	6.1	14.3	4.1	-	2.0	2.0	-	-
Q4: Take AP Test/Course	30.6	22.4	16.3	22.4	30.6	30.6	12.2	16.3	6.1	8.2	4.1	-
Q5: Go to College	53.1	49.0	20.4	24.5	20.4	20.4	6.1	6.1	-	-	-	-
Q6: Talks About Future	26.5	30.6	24.5	26.5	18.4	22.4	6.1	2.0	22.4	14.3	2.0	4.1

*Note:* Items were reported on a 6-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 6, agree = 5, slightly disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. This report represents percentages from respondents. Pre = Pre-Innovation and Post = Post-Innovation.

For the sub-construct of goal, I noted similarities in pre- and post-innovation findings. All students still reported plans to graduate high school. There were slightly higher levels of agreement on life success when compared to the pre-innovation information on the second and third questions. The agreement-to-disagreement levels on questions four and five appeared to remain about the same. Finally, in question six in the pre-innovation report, 69.5% students showed some form of agreement that adults talked with them

about their futures and that rate now indicated 79.5% of agreement in the post-innovation findings.

Next, I generated frequency responses to populate the six questions that related to agency thinking from the pre- and post-innovation administration of the instrument (see Table 27).

Table 27

*Post-Innovation SHS Frequency Report of Sub-Construct Agency Thinking*

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Slightly Agree		Slightly Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1: Achieve My Goals	53.1	49.0	32.7	44.9	8.2	4.1	-	2.0	4.1	-	-	-
Q2: Focus on Future	16.3	22.4	36.7	28.6	32.7	28.6	8.2	4.1	8.2	6.1	-	10.2
Q3: Ways to Achieve	28.6	32.7	28.6	40.8	24.5	18.4	4.1	-	-	8.2	-	-
Q4: Doing Well in School	12.2	10.2	16.3	16.3	24.5	28.6	12.2	18.4	14.3	16.3	12.2	10.2
Q5: Talks about Life Success with Teacher	24.5	24.5	36.7	24.5	24.5	22.4	6.1	16.3	6.1	12.3	2.0	-
Q6: Hears from Teacher that they can be a success	26.5	24.5	34.7	36.7	28.6	16.3	6.1	8.2	4.1	10.2	-	4.1

*Note:* Items were reported on a 6-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 6, agree = 5, slightly disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. This report represents percentages from respondents. Pre = Pre-Innovation and Post = Post-Innovation.

For the sub-construct of agency, the agreement levels were still higher than disagreement levels for each item of the sub-construct of agency. Question one demonstrated a 4.1% increase in agreement than the pre-innovation findings. However, question two represented a decrease, with 14.2% of students disagreeing in the pre-innovation and 20.4% of students in disagreement in the post-innovation. To frame this difference, I noted that the post-innovation instrument was given in the week before summer vacation.



Question three represented a 10-percentage-point increase of agreement about students thinking of ways to achieve their goals. However, this was again matched by a wide dispersion of how students felt they were doing in school. Finally, both of the adult measures as represented in questions five and six had some level of decrease from pre-innovation findings. Here I noted that there had been staffing changes at the end of the year as being a possible influence on these scores.

Next, I examined the pre- and post-innovation data from questions on the sub-construct of pathway (see Table 28).

Table 28

*Pre and Post-Innovation SHS Report of Sub-Construct Pathway*

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Slightly Agree		Slightly Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1: Knows How to Get Good Grades	36.7	30.6	38.8	51.0	18.4	14.3	4.1	2.0	-	2.0	2.0	-
Q2: Knows About Report Card	36.7	30.6	46.9	51.0	10.2	14.3	4.1	4.1	-	-	2.0	-
Q3: Knows What Courses to Take	30.6	32.7	18.4	30.6	20.4	26.5	18.4	4.1	8.2	2.0	4.1	4.1
Q4: Knows UC 'a-g'	8.2	18.4	12.2	28.6	22.4	28.6	28.6	8.2	20.4	10.2	8.2	6.1
Q5: Worked with Teacher on Life Plan	4.1	10.2	14.3	32.7	20.4	26.5	18.4	14.3	32.7	12.2	10.2	4.1
Q6: Talks with Teacher About Goals	16.3	22.4	22.4	28.6	38.8	18.4	10.2	18.4	8.2	8.2	4.1	4.1

*Note:* Items were reported on a 6-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 6, agree = 5, slightly disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. This report represents percentages from respondents. Pre = Pre-Innovation and Post = Post-Innovation.

Pathway continued to exhibit the broadest dispersion of answers. Knowledge levels about grades increased slightly with pre-innovation levels moving from 6.1% to post-innovation levels of 4% of students now reporting they disagreed. There was a similar

movement on question two as well. Questions three and four had the largest movements. In question three, the pre-innovation level of disagreement was 30.7% and the post-innovation level was 10.2% on knowing about high school graduation requirements. In question four, the pre-innovation level of disagreement was 57.2% and the post-innovation level was 24.5% on understanding UC ‘a-g’ requirements.

The final two questions on pathway reflected student perceptions of adults being involved in supporting them in planning for their future goals. In question five, the pre-innovation levels of agreement had been at 38.8% and the post-innovation levels were 69.4% of adults working with students on life plans. For question six, the pre-innovation levels of agreement were at 77.5% and the post-innovation levels had fallen to 69.3%. Similar to my findings on agency thinking, I reflected on how the end of the year staffing changes made might have influenced this score.

Next, I generated descriptive statistics in SPSS on central tendency and dispersion (see Table 29).

Table 29

*Post-Innovation SHS Descriptive Table of Central Tendency*

Sub-Construct	<u>M</u>		<u>Mdn</u>		<u>SD</u>	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Goals	4.88	4.94	5.00	5.00	.75	.65
Agency	4.55	4.50	4.50	4.50	.71	.78
Pathway	4.17	4.56	4.33	4.67	.89	.86

*Note.* Items were reported on a 6-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 6, agree = 5, slightly disagree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. *M* = Mean, *Mdn* = Median, *SD* = Standard Deviation, Pre = Pre-Innovation, and Post = Post-Innovation.

Pre- and post-innovation findings on the sub-constructs had mean and median closely aligned. The previously analysis sub-construct of goals had the highest score of

central tendency ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $Mdn = 5.00$ ) and the lowest for dispersion ( $SD = .65$ ). There was an increase in the pre-innovation mean from 4.88 to the post-innovation mean of 4.94. In addition, there was a lower level of dispersion in the post-innovation score ( $SD = .65$ ) when compared to the pre-innovation findings ( $SD = .75$ ).

Within the sub-construct of agency, there was a slight decrease in central tendency from the pre-innovation ( $M = 4.55$ ) to the post innovation ( $M = 4.50$ ), with the median score remaining the same ( $Mdn = 4.5$ ). The standard deviation scores increased slightly with the pre-innovation reporting standard deviation of .71 and the post innovation having a standard deviation of .78. In examining the sub-construct of pathway, I found an increase in central tendency from pre-innovation ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $Mdn = 4.33$ ) to that of post-innovation levels ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $Mdn = 4.67$ ). There was a decrease in standard deviation, with the pre-innovation finding of  $SD = .89$  and the post innovation finding of  $SD = .86$ .

***School System Student Survey Analysis.*** To assist in my analysis of the perceptions of students about school and themselves, I conducted analysis on the 14 measures that I selected from the School System Student Survey. Recall, there were two constructs for these questions that of student perceptions of self and that of school/community supports. As I had done with the SHS method, first I analyzed the answers to the questions by sub-construct and then I ran descriptive statistics. At each step, I used SPSS to generate reports and recorded the outputs in a saved file for procedural review and checks. I then constructed pre- and post-innovation comparisons.

I ran frequency reports on the sub-construct of student perceptions of self (see Table 30).

Table 30

*Pre and Post-Innovation Frequency Report of Student Perceptions of Self*

Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1: I belong	16.3	22.4	49.0	46.9	30.6	24.5	4.1	6.1
Q2: I am safe	14.3	18.4	44.9	49.0	28.6	28.6	12.2	4.1
Q3: Expectations for student behavior	20.4	30.6	55.1	59.2	20.4	10.2	4.1	-
Q4: I am a good student	27.1	20.4	39.6	46.9	22.9	24.5	10.4	8.2
Q5: I can be a better student	61.2	57.1	32.7	36.7	4.1	4.1	2.0	2.0
Q6: Learning important things	6.3	20.4	56.3	46.9	25.0	24.5	12.5	8.2
Q7: Getting good grades	41.7	32.7	39.6	55.1	16.7	12.2	2.1	-

*Note.* Items were reported on a 4-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. Pre = Pre-Innovation and Post = Post-Innovation.

In the first question, there was a slight improvement from pre-innovation levels where agreement levels moved from 60.3% to 69.3% of students feeling that they belong.

Student safety as reflected in question two remained about the same as pre-innovation levels. On question three there was an increase in agreement levels from a pre-innovation level of 75.5% to a post-innovation level 89.8% on expectations for student behavior.

Perceptions of being a good student remained about the same as pre-innovation levels.

Learning important things for your future increased from pre-innovation levels by five percentage points to a new agreement level of 67.3%. Finally, students reported that they had higher levels of understanding of what they needed to get good grades as exhibited in question seven. Here, the pre-innovation level of agreement was 81.3% and the post-innovation level was at 87.8% with no students strongly disagreeing.

Next, I generated frequency reports on the sub-construct of school/community supports (see Table 31).

Table 31

*Pre and Post-Innovation Frequency Report of School/Community Support*

Item	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree			
	Agree		Disagree		Disagree		Disagree	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Q1: My teacher cares about me	32.7	38.8	53.1	49.0	10.2	8.2	4.1	4.1
Q2: My teacher thinks I will be successful	32.7	38.8	51.0	44.9	8.2	12.2	8.2	4.1
Q3: My teacher listens to my ideas	20.8	24.5	52.1	49.0	22.9	24.5	4.2	2.0
Q4: My principal cares about me	32.7	32.7	51.0	51.0	10.2	12.2	6.1	4.1
Q5: My teacher believes I can learn	38.8	30.6	51.0	51.0	6.1	16.3	4.1	2.0
Q6: Teachers/Principal expectations	27.1	36.7	58.3	44.9	10.4	14.3	4.2	4.1
Q7: My family believes in me	54.2	49.0	35.4	42.9	6.3	4.1	4.2	4.1

*Note.* Items were reported on a 4-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. Pre = Pre-Innovation and Post = Post-Innovation.

My pre- and post-innovation data had high levels of agreement. Teacher listening levels, having a caring principal, teacher and principal expectations, and having a family that believed in you remained about the same or had slight increases between the pre- and post-innovation levels. In examining the data, I found slight increases in teacher caring and a slight decrease in teachers thinking that students will be successful. Here, I again reflected about our year-end staffing changes and how this might have impacted the second question. On question five, there was a decline in the perception that teachers believe that students can learn. Here there was a move from the pre-innovation level of 89.8% agreement to the post-innovation level of 81.6% which may have also been a reflection of staffing changes.

Then, I generated pre- and post-innovation descriptive statistics in SPSS (see Table 32).

Table 32

*Post-Innovation School Survey Descriptive Statistics*

Sub-Construct	<u>M</u>		<u>Mdn</u>		<u>SD</u>	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Student Perceptions of Self	2.92	3.02	3.00	3.00	.51	.52
School/Community Supports	3.13	3.16	3.14	3.14	.60	.60

*Note.* Items were reported on a 4-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. *M* = Mean; *Mdn* = median; *SD* = Standard Deviation; Pre = Pre-Innovation; and Post = Post-Innovation.

The sub-constructs mean and median closely aligned. Student perceptions of self dispersion levels remained lower (*SD* = .52) than school/community (*SD* = .60). Both the mean and median reflect a general level of agreement in both sub-constructs. In looking at pre and post-innovation levels, there were increases in the mean scores with student perceptions of self increasing by 0.10 and school/community supports by 0.03. However, the median scores remained the same and the standard deviation levels increased by .01 for student perceptions of self.

***Levels of Use and ANOVA.*** My fourth research question asked if the implementation level of iCCR might support student hope levels. To support answering my research question, I conducted interviews to determine teacher implementation status as measured by the Levels of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) branching interviews system. Five teachers were invited to participate in the Levels of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) interview process with all agreeing to participate (see Table 33).

Table 33

*Summary of Levels of Use Interview Participants*

Advisory Teacher	Years Teaching	Education Level	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	UC 'a-g'	GCA
Betty	10-15	Masters Plus	F	White	N	N
Lance	10-15	Masters Plus	M	White	N	N
Nellie	1-5	Masters Plus	F	White	N	Y
Megan	1-5	Bachelors	F	White	N	N
Jessie	10-15	Masters Plus	F	White	Y	N

*Notes.* UC 'a-g' = Attended a University of California or California State University systems or other university that had 'a-g' requirements, GCA = Graduated from a high school within California.

The purpose of this interview was to examine implementation levels of iCCR. Interviews took place in my office at the school site. Information on use level was member checked.

I reflected upon the statements made and compared them to the descriptions of level usages as provided by Hall and Hord (2015; see Table 34).

Table 34

*Advisory Teachers Levels of Use Rating*

Teacher	Sample Evidence of Level of Use	Level of Use
Jessie	"I feel like I was relying on the schedule that we all discussed, and then went off from it on my own for there . . ."	Renewal
Megan	"I mean it went from not doing any of that, to doing most of that. I feel like I'm coordinating with Nellie . . ."	Integration
Lance	"I might go to another teacher for guidance or see what formats they are using so that I can copy or create my own . . ."	Refinement
Nellie	"Yes, we're working with the document that we had that we agreed on, and then we also coordinated . . ."	Refinement
Betty	"I try to keep up with what we are doing and follow the weekly schedule. However, I don't know about internships . . ."	Mechanical Use

*Notes.* Levels of Use from lowest to highest are *Nonusers*: Nonuse, Orientation, Preparation; *Users*: Mechanical use, Routine, Refinement, Integration, and Renewal.

Hall and Hord (2015) place the adoption of an innovation into two primary categories, nonusers and users. All of the advisory teachers qualified as users of iCCR with the lowest level of user being that of mechanical use. Four of the teachers felt that as the semester went on they were able to increase their usage of the innovation. Two teachers felt that they were starting the process of adapting it to their students. Once I ascertained the assigned Level of Use of each teacher, I added it as a new variable into SPSS which created groups for analysis.

Then I conducted a one-way ANOVA to assess any differences in student hope levels, as measured by student scores on the SHS, between teacher groups as defined by different Levels of Use. To accomplish this, I calculated the raw score from participants ( $n = 49$ ) in the SHS. Recall that the SHS had 18 questions on a 1-6 Likert scale. This meant that the lowest score possible was 18 and the highest score possible was 108.

In SPSS I used the equal variances assumed options of R-E-G-W  $\underline{Q}$  and Tukey and the equal variance not assumed using Dunnett's T3 and set my significance level at .05. Then I set my output options for descriptive statistics and homogeneity of variance test. The *f-crit* level was established by noting the first and second degree of freedom level with the probability level (see Table 35).

Table 35

*ANOVA of Levels of Use on Student Hope Levels*

Source of Variation	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	1142.256	3	380.752	2.814	.050*	2.812
Within Groups	6087.744	45	135.283			
Total	7230.000	48				

*Note.* Method of at  $p \leq \alpha$  with  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; \*notes that  $p \leq 0.05$ . *SS* = Sum of Squares; *df* = degrees of freedom; *MS* = Means Squared; *F* = F distribution; *P-value* = probability value; *F crit* = F critical value.



There was a significant effect on student hope levels as measured by the SHS when compared to the advisory teachers' levels of use with the  $\alpha \leq .05$  between levels [ $F(3,45) = 2.814, p = 0.05$ ]. I continued my analysis by reviewing the listing of descriptive statistics that were generated by SPSS (see Table 36).

Table 36

*Descriptive Statistics of Level of Use on Student Hope Levels*

Level of Use	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Renewal	12	87.91	11.56
Integration	13	86.38	13.68
Refinement	16	84.38	11.89
Mechanical Use	8	73.50	6.00
Total	49	84.00	12.27

Note: *M* = Level of Use Assigned Metric, *n* = number, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation. Levels of Use from lowest to highest are *Nonusers*: Nonuse, Orientation, Preparation; *Users*: Mechanical use, Routine, Refinement, Integration, and Renewal.

Then I conducted my post hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test which suggested that renewal ( $M = 87.91, SD = 11.56$ ) was statistically significantly different than mechanical use ( $M = 73.50, SD = 6.00$ ), with a  $p = 0.045$ . All of the other comparisons were different, but they were not statistically significant. In addition, when moving from the lowest Level of Use, mechanical, to the highest Level of Use, that of renewal, the levels of use corresponded to the increments of refinement ( $M = 84.38, SD = 11.89$ ) and integration ( $M = 86.38, SD = 13.68$ ). I noted that the move from mechanical use to refinement use was two steps on the Level of Use scale (Hall & Hord, 2015) rather than the single steps of moving between refinement, integration, and renewal use. This might account for the larger difference in means between mechanical use ( $M = 73.50$ )

and refinement use ( $M = 84.38$ ) when compared to those between refinement ( $M = 84.38$ ), integration ( $M = 86.38$ ), and renewal use ( $M = 87.91$ ).

### **Triangulation and Answering the Research Questions**

Triangulation is a method of answering research questions based upon the comparative analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2015). To answer the research questions, I concurrently analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data. In my process of triangulation, I reviewed the research questions and my previously established results of data analyses. The answer to each research question included my supporting qualitative and quantitative data.

**Answering RQ1.** My first research question asked *how, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR parent/community development plans increase parent/community understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready?* My data supports that the iCCR plans to increase parent/community understanding of college and career readiness was successful. However, the extent of this increase was limited to parent participants in the workshop.

Recall that parent pre- and post-innovation test scores rose on an average of 26.6% on the full test. There were increases in both college and career readiness knowledge. On the community/parent/faculty survey, the lowest score was at the 36% level and the highest score was 32 or 89%. This high score was from a teacher that recently finished college. The average iCCR parent school was now 82.2%.

Qualitative findings supported this as well. The first parent assertion found that college and career readiness for students today is more complex and different than the parents' background and experiences. This knowledge was formed as part of the

workshop process whereby parents actively engaged in their own experiences and compared them with what their students were experiencing in the current model. Jesus and Maria stated that “parents don’t know because things have changed so much” and Liz found that “it’s very different than what my experience was.” In this way, the parent participants were demonstrating an understanding and change in awareness.

The second parent assertion supported the pre and post-innovation test scores. This assertion stated that the implementation of the iCCR parent workshops increase parental knowledge of what needs to be done to position their students for college and career success. Parents found that learning more about college and career readiness left them feeling better prepared to position their students for success but also concerned about the differentiation of state graduation requirements and university entrance requirements. Ella was “surprised on how a state school requires less” while revealing that she also felt comforted that her son was conforming to college entrance requirements. Alan stated that for him it was about the acquisition of information and stated that he appreciated the workshops for “having all of that ready to go” in a way that made sense to him.

**Answering RQ2.** My second research question asked *how, and to what extent, will the level of iCCR support the school site in setting positive goals for students?* My data supports that students increased their positive goals. However, this process was part of reassessing what goals were being set and the increasing of knowledge around what goals a student might want to have in the future. In answering this question, I found evidence in survey data and through interviews.

Recall that there were several measures about goal setting. With the SHS sub-construct of goals had the highest scores of central tendency. Within the post-innovation analysis goals had the highest score of central tendency ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $Mdn = 5.00$ ) and the lowest for dispersion ( $SD = .65$ ). There were also increased expectation levels reported on the School Survey sub-construct of school/community supports where 81.6% of students reported agreement that adults at schools had high expectation levels for them. My findings may have also been supported by the increased student understanding of what college readiness was and what was needed to graduate high school. In looking at data from the pre- and post-innovation test scores, I found an average increase in these areas of 10 percentage points.

This was also supported with the first student assertion that students felt like most teachers believe that they can be a success in high school and should go to college. Tobi recalled that he felt as if he had failed a teacher in getting a lower grade on test than expected stating that it was because “she has such high expectations for me.” Opal stated that her teachers were helping her set “personal goals” related to her future as well as working with them on “academic goals” on how to get there.

Teacher assertion one also stated that the iCCR program provided new information for students that facilitated discussions about goal setting, pathway developed, and engaged in agency thinking. Teachers found that students had not understood what the goals were and that they needed to find more connections “between what they are doing now and the prep they need to get into college.” Lance stated that iCCR had moved advisory from “fun time” to a more productive structure that was connecting students to thinking about goals. However, Jessie wondered if students were

only setting goals as it related to college. She reflected that “students see ‘a-g’ as the face of everything.” Recall that with the exception of History/Social Science, the school’s graduation requirements were directly aligned with UC ‘a-g’ recommended requirements and recommendations.

**Answering RQ3.** My third research questions asked *how, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR student pathway and agency plan increase students’ understanding of what they need to accomplish to be college and career ready?* My data supports that students increased their pathway knowledge but may have decreased their agency thinking. While Snyder (2002) suggested that pathway and agency thinking may be linked, he did not state that this would mean that an impact to one would have an implication to the other. There was quantitative and qualitative evidence to substantiate this argument.

Student pre- and post-innovation test demonstrated some increase in pathway knowledge. Recall that college readiness test scores rose by 10.2% and graduate profile scores by 9.8%. However, these were also an early concern as the average pre-innovation test scores were 42.7%. Recall that the post-innovation test was not given until the end of school, and I reflected on how this might have had implications to student scores when compared to parent scores on this test.

Within the SHS findings, there was evidence that pathway had increased while agency had decreased. In my analysis, there was a slight decrease in central tendency in agency with the median score remaining the same ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $Mdn = 4.5$ ). For pathway the post-innovation levels had risen above that of agency ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $Mdn = 4.67$ ).

The second student assertion supported this when stating that students thought that the iCCR was meaningful and improved their understanding of college and career. Opal was a 9<sup>th</sup> grader at the time of this study and felt that “at the beginning of the year I had no idea about anything, especially high school classes” and she now understood high school graduation requirements and could state university entrance requirements. As a 10<sup>th</sup> grader Max found that he had been missing a plan and did not know what to do to “pass high school” or what college entrance requirements were for “minimum GPA.” Ginger had a similar experience and now felt she knew more “about ‘a-g’ requirements, and I didn’t know that before.”

The third student assertion stated that with iCCR some students were feeling off track, which supports the decrease in agency. Keith felt that as a sophomore he had missed on critical information he needed before he got to high school. Tobi found himself suddenly realizing that “I need to pass this” when it came to classes that he thought didn’t matter. This was echoed in the third teacher assertion which called for an earlier implementation of iCCR. Jessie recalled a specific student story where she found that “I think he understands the depth of his problems” and stated that students felt that they “wish I would have known it before I started high school.” Megan found that it “was kind of sad for some students” because they were starting to realize that they were not where they previously thought they were. This sort of cognitive disconnection may result in lower levels of agency thinking.

**Answering RQ4.** My final research questions asked *how, and to what extent, will the implementation level of iCCR support student levels of hope for their future?* In the data, I found that the level of implementation of iCCR by the advisory teacher had an

impact on student levels of hope as measured on the SHS. My quantitative data that supported this was from my ANOVA. There were several triangulated sources of qualitative data.

Using the LoU and examining student hope levels I found that higher levels of student hope corresponded with higher implementation levels of iCCR. Recall that in conducting a one-way ANOVA I found that there was statistical significance with  $p \leq .05$  between the groupings [ $F(3,45) = 2.281, p = 0.5$ ] and between the level of implementation and the mean score on hope levels as measured by the SHS. In my post hoc comparison of the descriptive statistics there was an increase in the mean score by the progression of implementation levels as defined by groupings in the Levels of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) system. I noted that renewal ( $M = 87.91, SD = 11.56$ ) was statistically significantly different than mechanical use ( $M = 73.50, SD = 6.00$ ), with a  $p = 0.045$ .

Student assertion three called for implementing iCCR earlier in the year and academic career for students. In that assertion there were observations that supported the quantitative findings. First, as a 10<sup>th</sup> grader with a higher-grade point average Max made several observations about changing of student levels of knowledge and hope. For example, Max stated that “I have seen it help other students” in reference to all aspects of the HT framework. Tobi moved advisory teachers at the end of the year from the lowest implementation group of mechanical use to the highest implementation level of renewal use. Tobi observed that “moving to Jessie's advisory for the end of this year I was like ‘wow, I wish I was here a lot sooner because’ it's taken a lot more seriously.” Tobi represented a student that moved from a class with mechanical use to one with renewal

use where I found statistical significance with a  $p = 0.045$ . He felt that there was a difference in an advisory class where iCCR was being implemented at a high level.

### **Summary**

Results from this chapter examined both qualitative and quantitative data sources. Full participants included students ( $n = 67$ ), parents ( $n = 35$ ), staff ( $n = 9$ ), and advisory/board members ( $n = 3$ ). Quantitative data collection was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, information was gathered from surveys to support the development goals of iCCR. The second phase of quantitative data was generated to support measures of effectiveness of iCCR for participants.

Qualitative data underwent a rigorous transitioning and memoing process. This included code analysis, theoretical framework alignment, and axial codes. Student interviews ( $n = 8$ ) yielded 456 open gerund codes developed into 18 axial codes ( $n = 18$ ). This process developed three student assertions that focused on the themes of teachers believing in students, students finding meaning in iCCR, and the need for earlier implementation of iCCR. Advisory teacher interviews ( $n = 4$ ) yielded 342 open gerund codes that developed into 17 axial codes. This process developed three teacher assertions that focused on the themes of how iCCR provided new information for students, that students may have had a false sense of hope and difficulty trusting teachers, and that there is a need for earlier implementation of iCCR.

Parent interview participants ( $n = 6$ ) resulted in 588 open gerund codes that developed into 20 axial codes. This process resulted in the development of three parent assertions on the themes of the changes in college and career readiness, how iCCR parent workshop included parent knowledge, and that more parents need to be involved in their



student's academic and personal lives. With all student, teacher, and parent assertions I provided a thick description in support of my claim. This included axial alignment and information from the source data. Additional sources of qualitative data included researcher's journals and notes, school system charter renewal, and supplemental artifact data from the school system. The purpose of reviewing this information was to support answering my research questions and for use within my process of crystallization in Chapter 5.

Quantitative analysis included reliability testing, reviewing the initial gathering of data to support the development of iCCR, and the measures of effectiveness of iCCR on parents ( $n = 10$ ) and students ( $n = 49$ ) participants. Both parents and students took pre and post-innovation tests. The parent test was on college and career readiness and had an average post-innovation increase of 26.6 percentage points. The student test was on college readiness and our graduation profile and resulted in a post-innovation average increase of 10.0 percentage points.

Students were administered two attitudinal measure pre and post-innovation tests. Analysis was conducted on the SHS and the School Survey. The results from the SHS indicated that students maintained higher goal setting, agency thinking slightly declined, and pathway knowledge had increased. School systems survey resulted in higher scores on the sub-construct to student perceptions of self and that of school/community supports.

Using the data generated from the Levels of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) I measured how implementation levels might have impacted student hope levels as measured on the SHS. I found statistical significance at the 95% confidence level that advisory teacher

implementation of iCCR impacted student hope levels. I reviewed the progression with descriptive statistics that demonstrated that from the lowest to the highest level of iCCR implementation had a positive impact on student hope levels. The difference between mechanical use to renewal use showed a mean difference of 0.8 on a 6-point Likert scale.

Through my process of triangulation, I answered each of my research questions. For RQ1, I found that the innovation had increased parent and community knowledge of college and career readiness. However, there needed to be a broader outreach to parents for full implementation of iCCR. For RQ2, I found that students increased their positive goal setting. However, this positive increase may have been offset by the process of reassessing what goals were being set as students increased their knowledge of college readiness and our graduation profile.

In answering RQ3, I found that students increased their pathway knowledge, but this may have decreased their agency thinking. This may have occurred as a natural process of learning about pathways and having students reorient themselves with pathway information. Finally, in answering RQ4, I found that the level of implementation of iCCR by the advisory teachers had impacts on student hope levels as measured by the SHS.

In answering each of the research questions I provided quantitative and qualitative data that supported my arguments. In Chapter 5, I will discuss my thoughts on these findings through a process of crystallization and present my grounded theory. Then I will explore limitations to this study, suggest implications to practice and future research, and reflect upon what the findings may mean to my theoretical framework and student preparedness. Finally, I will reflect upon how I intend to move forward from over three

years of research activities where I have used hope as a strategy to help measure the effectiveness of innovations of the mind.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

*. . . by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.*

—The Declaration of Independence (1776, p. 1)

*He continues quick and dull in his clear images;  
I continue slow and sharp in my broken images.*

*He in a new confusion of his understanding;  
I in a new understanding of my confusion.*

—Robert Graves (1959, p. 94)

This was a mixed-method action research study. The purpose of this study was to examine the introduction of an innovation that was intended to advance goal setting, pathway knowledge, and agentic thinking for college and career readiness. My problem of practice was that systems complexity may lead to socio-economic reification of our students' educational and post-secondary opportunities through institutional structures that spanned ecological systems. This complexity obscured setting relevant positive goals for high school graduation, college attainment, and career success. As a new high school, there were no formalized college and career readiness programs for students or parents. My innovation was the I am College and Career Ready Student Support Program (iCCR). The iCCR was comprised of an advisory intervention program for students and a parent workshop.

My action research study involved multiple cycles of research in different workplace settings which were linked through transferability of findings (Ivankova,

2015; Mertler, 2014). My situated context of my action research study was that of the Southern California megaregion (Regional Plan Association, 2005). My reconnaissance, cycle 0, and cycle 1 of action research took place in the Inland Empire of the greater Los Angeles region. My cycle 2 and present cycle took place in urban settings of downtown San Diego. My personal context for this cycle of research was as the chief executive officer of a public charter school system in downtown San Diego. This study took place at a new high school founded on design thinking.

This study had four research questions to examine the effectiveness of the innovation. They were:

RQ1. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR parent/community development plans increase parent/community understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready?

RQ2. How, and to what extent, will the level of iCCR support the school site in setting positive goals for students?

RQ3. How, and to what extent, will the implementation of the iCCR student pathway and agency plan increase students' understanding of what they need to accomplish to be college and career ready?

RQ4. How, and to what extent, will the implementation level of iCCR support student levels of hope for their future?

My study utilized a theoretical framework where Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1994) Ecological Systems Theory (EST) was my organizational mid-level theory and Hope Theory (HT, Snyder, 2002) was my ground level change theory. I presented EST as being a well-established theory of human development (Scalco et al., 2015; Boxer et al., 2013;

Chun et al., 2013; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013) that has been applied to school practice (Burns et al., 2015; Tynan et al., 2014; Wicks & Warren, 2014; Bronfenbrenner, 1994). I presented HT as being from the branch of positive psychology (Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Valle et al., 2006; Snyder et al., 2005) with a growing body of literature of the importance of hope in education (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Lopez, 2013; Webb, 2013; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Sheehan & Rall, 2011; Duncan-Andrade, 2009). I presented my theoretical model, whereby I suggested that three sub-constructs of HT could be utilized to span the environmental systems of EST along the lines of proximal process (see Table 1).

In considering the attributes for iCCR, I reviewed the literature and argued that my students had a diminished level of economic freedom (Miller & Kim, 2016; Miller et al., 2016), were not living in relative peace and safety (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015), were subject to a higher likelihood of incarceration (Kaeble et al., 2015), and had lower levels of educational performance when compared to students in other industrialized countries (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012). In addressing my problem of practice, I utilized transferability (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014) of applicable findings from my previous cycles of action research. My previous cycles included document analysis, exploratory interviews, actions on school and district systems, and critical inquiry. The development of my innovation was conducted using my theoretical model, findings from my review of the literature, and used a participatory action research (PAR; Herr & Anderson, 2015; Gaventa & Cornwall, 2008) approach.

My multi-strand mixed-methods study collected preliminary data from students ( $n = 65$ ), parents ( $n = 35$ ), staff ( $n = 9$ ), and community advisers/board members ( $n = 3$ ).

Quantitative data collection included information from the student information systems, surveys, and tests. Qualitative data included interviews, researcher's journal, and school system artifacts. The participants in the process of implementing iCCR included student, parents, and students. Data collection from students took the form of pre- and post-surveys ( $n = 49$ ) and interviews ( $n = 8$ ). Data from parents took the form of community surveys ( $n = 47$ ), pre- and post-surveys from parents that participated in the parent workshop ( $n = 10$ ), and interviews ( $n = 6$ ). Community advisor/board member ( $n = 15$ ) data collection took place from my field notes, document analysis, and as part of the community surveys ( $n = 2$ ). Staff ( $n = 9$ ) data collection took place in the form of my field notes, document analysis, staff surveys ( $n = 9$ ), and interviews of the advisory teachers ( $n = 5$ ).

Qualitative findings included three student assertions, three teacher assertions, and three parent assertions. Student assertions themes included that teachers believe in students, that students found meaning in iCCR, and that iCCR should occur earlier in their academic career with some students feeling off track. Teacher assertions themes included that iCCR provided students with new information and a framework for achieving goals, that some students have a sense of false hope and that they may not trust teachers, and that iCCR should be presented to students earlier in their academic career. Parent assertions themes included the complexity of college and career readiness, that iCCR increased parent knowledge on college and career readiness, and that more parents need to be involved in their students' academic and personal lives.

Quantitative findings included that parent participants ( $n = 10$ ) had a 26.6 percentage-point increase on pre- and post-test on iCCR topics. Students ( $n = 49$ ) were

administered a pre- and post-test on iCCR and two attitudinal measures. Student scores on the pre and post-test represented 10 percentage point increase in iCCR knowledge. Data analysis of the attitudinal measures found that students may have maintained their levels of hope and beliefs in school while the increased academic expectations of iCCR were introduced. I conducted Level of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) branching interviews with teachers to create groups of implementation levels. I then conducted a one-way ANOVA to assess if there was any difference in student hope levels, as measured by the student scores on the SHS, between teacher groups as defined by the Levels of Use. I found that there was statistical significance at the 95% level that the implementation level between mechanical use and renewal use with mean difference of 0.8 on 6-point Likert scale.

Using triangulation, I directly answered the research questions. For RQ1, my findings suggested that iCCR had increased parent and community knowledge of college and career readiness. For RQ2, my findings suggest that students increased their positive goal setting. For RQ3, my findings suggested that students may have increased their pathway knowledge while decreasing their agency thinking. For RQ4, my findings suggested that the teacher implementation level of iCCR may have impacts to student hope levels as measured by the SHS.

Here, I reviewed my triangulated findings using a process of crystallization (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011; Ellingson, 2009). Then using my new understanding and contemplation from crystallization, I presented my constructed grounded theory and my arguments in support of it. Then I reviewed the limitations of my cycles of inquiry and the possible implications to future practice and research. Finally, I closed my study with



my final thoughts about my action research journey of the past three years, as I engage in a final forward-looking critical reflection.

### **Crystallization**

Crystallization comes from a tradition which includes the post-modernist dispositions of Derrida and Deleuze (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011). I use this term, crystallization, to move beyond what Richardson and St. Pierre (2011) have argued is the two-dimensional process of triangulation. To me, triangulation still has situational value to provide a starting point for a discussion. Crystallization involves a three-dimensional process that allows for knowledge to be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed to form options for multiple truths and realities (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2011).

Ellington (2009) described crystallization as combining different disciplines, engages in dealing with the positionality of the researcher and their vulnerabilities, and is a critical process that allows for an author to question themselves in pursuit of a greater understanding or meaning. To Richardson and St. Pierre (2011), crystallization was a form of writing analysis. For me, crystallization involves a critical reflection through writing that was prepared to explore alternative answers to my research question. Here I embarked upon my use of crystallization as a means of discussion to revisit all that I have written with a willingness to contemplate alternative truths (Denzin, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009).

Therefore, in my previous chapter, I engaged in triangulation (Creswell, 2015; Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015) with the purpose of directly answering the research questions. In this chapter, I sought to engage in a discussion that included alternative considerations and possible truths. In this way I developed my thinking on those

questions and can further contemplate my “new understanding of my confusion” (Graves, 1959, p. 94). This new understanding was then applied in the development of my grounded theory.

**Discussion on RQ1.** My first research question was focused on if iCCR would support increased parent and community understanding of what students needed to do to be college and career ready. This study was based upon a theoretical framework whereby Hope Theory (HT, Snyder, 2002) was the ground level change theory and Ecological Systems Theory (EST, Bronfenbrenner, 1994; 1997) was the mid-level systems theory. With this theoretical framework, the iCCR process started with engaging the school community in the actions of developing the parent workshops. In doing so, I found that the parent community that participated in the iCCR workshop did have a positive impact in the subjects engaged in during the first phase of iCCR. While there was evidence that iCCR did increase parent understanding of what students need to accomplish in order to be college and career ready, there are questions as to the extent that this occurred. By this, I mean that there was a limited audience and a limited scope to what was discussed.

My data provided evidence that the extent of reach of iCCR was too narrow. Recall that I issued over 100 invitations to the first survey and less than half participated ( $n = 47$ ) with parent involvement being at less than 33% ( $n = 35$ ) of those invited. In addition, the parent workshops had a lower level of participation ( $n = 17$ ) than anticipated. This was supported by the parent assertion that more parents need to be involved in their students’ academic and personal lives regardless of time constraints. Jesus felt strongly that by not engaging that if “people don’t realize it, then they’re damaging the future of their kids” through non-involvement. As a community organizer

Alan stated that “the biggest question is how we get all parents to participate.” Even when it was noted that there were life circumstances that might prevent parental involvement, there were calls for ways to work through that. Ana summarized this as “you have to take responsibility as a parent” and then added “even as an absentee parent.”

As discussed in my situated context, the school where iCCR was located was in the center city area of downtown San Diego. Within this setting, we serve a diverse student body from a wide-range of socio-economic settings. Specifically, my study was working within a group of students who were part of the prototype for the new design thinking high school. It was within this diverse context of the re-urbanization of downtown San Diego that students and parents were interacting with each other. By re-urbanization, I am referencing the repopulation of downtown San Diego by groups of people that were moving from the suburbs back to the city.

The emergence of a divergent urban socio-economic status and cultures of this city might best be represented in noting the proximity of poverty to privilege. During this study, I was surrounded by reminders of the urban transformation that my study was contextualized within. On the large scale, one only needed to look at the skyline and the ground-level realities around the school. From my office window, I witnessed the building of high-rises with housing prices few in my parent community could afford. This came at the cost of lower-priced housing that was dismantled to make room for those high-rise condominiums.

To further contextualize the proximal influences on the school, it was situated between Section 8 housing, federal and state courthouses, law offices, the city prison, multi-million-dollar condominiums, the social-security administration, the financial

district, and immigration and naturalization services. Within my student body we had families reporting household incomes greater than \$250,000 a year and others that rely upon the school for food and transportation services. As a school community, we were situated within a context that was a point of intersectionality of disparity via the claim of progress, bound by a hope and belief that every student could develop the dispositions and skills to have a future of their choosing.

From my parent participants in this study, I noted that none of the families qualified for federal assistance through programs such as free and reduced lunch. I also looked back on my research journal entries that lamented about the hidden struggles. For example, I noted my journal entry of February 22, 2018, where I asked, “how do we bridge the divide between active parenting and attempting to survive?” To many of my parents, they are not absent as a matter of choice—it is a matter of financial survival. I also noted in my review of policies that there were many that presented barriers to parent participation from those that did not have financial resources.

However, the social struggles of some parents were only known to other parents in general terms. By this, I mean it was something understood but obscured in the absence of specific facts or first-hand knowledge. For example, the number of families and student homeless or living in poverty is privileged and private information that the greater community does not have access to. During this study, we changed the volunteer policy which was requiring parents to subject themselves to background checks that required them to find transportation to get to a screening center and pay for the screening themselves. What might be a 15-minute drive and a portion of an hour of pay for some families represented to another family a half day’s travel and many hours of labor to pay

for the exact same screening. Without this kind of situational awareness of how participation is impacted by disparities in transportation, finance, and time furthers misunderstandings about why participation for some parents might be challenging or even prohibitive.

As we look ahead on this topic, we will need to address how we will change our parent outreach to meet more parents on their terms. There had been many recommendations discussed during parent meetings, but there were also limitations to those recommendations. For example, as a community activist, Alan had suggested that the method he used in his community center might be an option. In their model, they no longer sought to bring the community to a central point of information distribution. Rather they were engaging in a practice of moving into the community and holding discussions in homes. However, he noted that this method, while highly effective, was likely cost prohibitive to schools. There had been sentiments that parents should just find a way, but acknowledgements that it was not that easy.

In Chapter 2, I presented Ecological Systems Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; 1977) as my systems level theory. I reviewed the literature of EST in school practice. As a model of child and human development, EST has been used to work through the cycles of how students interacted with each other and their families as it relates to school (Brendtro, 2006). Burns et al. (2015) found that EST supported explaining the complicated interactions schools have with students and the community. In my theoretical review, I presented that EST represented the types of dynamic and interactive systems that students, schools, and communities are nested within.

However, when added to this discussion the community social dynamics at work in some of our students' lives, the macrosystem as presented in my study is only relational of the community to the school. Whereas, when it comes to family and homelife considerations of EST, many of those forces manifest themselves at the micro- and meso-system levels. By this I mean, that EST is situated from the individual outward and depending upon where it is contextualized one's frame of reference may be different. My model of EST was only based upon a positionality of the student through school, rather than the school as part of the student.

I argued in Chapter 2 that there are situational forces at work that students will face in the future which are manifested in the challenge we face today. For example, the reduction of economic freedom (EF, Miller et al., 2016) that may impact the future of our students is a current factor for families (Miller and Kim, 2016). This includes the noted reduction in property rights for Americans (Miller et al., 2016; Miller & Kim 2016). While situating my students' futures with a frame of reference of seeking peace, they are currently situated in a society that is ranked 94<sup>th</sup> of the 162 countries reviewed on the world peace index (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015). However, I did not usefully situate my families within those same forces. In this way, while we sought to engage parents and students in a discussion about the future, we may have discounted some of the present realities they are facing.

**Discussion on RQ2.** My second research question explored how and to what extent the innovation would support setting positive goals for students. My triangulated findings presented evidence that this did occur. For example, quantitative data indicated that goal formation slightly increased on the Student Hope Scale (SHS), even when

introducing the complexity of the pathways to achieve those goals. There were qualitative statements of support, whereby teachers had high expectations. To this end, my findings seemed secured within the confines of the research question. However, these findings should be balanced with those of the second teacher assertion which stated that there was a feeling that students had a false sense of hope in the future and that they do not fully trust teachers about the need for college. Here, I will discuss and examine the ideas of goal setting and trust. In reviewing RQ3, I will return to the ideas behind false hope.

Jessie found that students thought that having a goal for college was one that teachers pushed as it was part of what teachers thought “was cool.” She found that students thought that the school was “obsessed with college” and that they had “very low trust” including accusing teachers of lying about things. Lance had a different opinion and stated that he felt that many students may have false hopes because of their middle school experience where they “fell through the cracks of being passed along without recognizing the fact that it took a lot of hard work to be successful.” To Lance, iCCR was the start of a “wake-up call” that he felt the students needed to be able to work on meaningful goals.

It should also be discussed that what a positive goal is may be situated to context as well. In my interview with Alan, he stated that goals were “relative to each family and each parent.” In member checking his statement, he clarified and indicated that while there are people, such as himself as a first-generation college student from immigrant parents, who break through socio-economic barriers, that for him positive goals were situational. He explained that, for some, “if they don’t see their parents achieving a certain level to them, the question is then ‘what kind of support can they get to go beyond

what their parents have achieved academically or career wise.” Several parents had similar reflections that goals were situationally-based.

There were teachers who also had concerns about what positive goal setting might mean. Some teachers discussed a fear that the University of California entrance requirements (UC ‘a-g’) might be interpreted by students as being the graduation requirements. Recall that Jessie stated that “I think they see UC ‘a-g’ as the face of everything.” There was also a concern that some students did not feel connected to positive goal setting because it was situated within the context of college. Even within the context of iCCR job shadow experience, college often became a topic of discussion or a focal point. Roberto stated that his primary discussion within his job shadow day was focused on “what were his struggles in college, during college, and how did he master those things.”

However, to what extent the process of setting positive goals that intentionally or unintentionally seemed to come back to a discussion of college, may have disconnected some students was not explored in this study. While many aspects of my study, and the development of iCCR, utilized a constructivist framework, the idea of positive goal setting was framed within the eyes of adults and may have been tied to economic prosperity and wellbeing that may have been associated with going to college. Recall that all of my parent participants made statements about how they and their families valued education. For example, Liz stated that “it was always an unspoken rule in our house that you were going to college.”

An examination of the characteristics of the adults that participated in this study indicated that they were comprised of those with college degrees. For my pre-innovation



survey, over 65% of participants were between 36-55 years of age, close to 69% were white, over 89% spoke English at home, and 91.5% or more had education beyond high school. Of those, over 38% had graduate or professional degrees and over 36% had bachelor's degrees. These demographics are not representative samples of my parent or student population. In this way, the framing of the conversations about the development of iCCR may have been centered within a cultural norm that saw college as a singular positive goal of merit. In this way we might have been engaged in a process of reification (Wenger, 1999) of a community of academic practice based in a college disposition.

This may relate to the feelings from some students that contributed to mistrust. Recall that for some advisory teachers the discussion of career readiness was limited to the job shadow and discussion of workplace literacy levels. In my interviews with them, much of the conversations focused on college trips. There was a feeling among students that “we,” meaning the teachers, were pushing college because it helped validate why “we” had been to college. There was also a general feeling of mistrust in the student body that was not explored further but may originate from the concept that there is a singular positive goal.

In this study, I did not explore the hidden meanings that our school might be sending to students when we framed our discussions about positive goals around the ideas of college. For example, during my various research cycles, I have written about my fear that in trying to define a successful positive goal for a student that it may send a hidden message to the student that their parents are not a success. Within iCCR, how might students that now have defined college as their new chronosystem goal change their perceptions of their family members who may not have gone to, or graduated from,

a college or post-secondary opportunity? How might this lead to mistrust or distrust among some students? Furthermore, how might the idea of positive goal setting be culturally bound and the idea of economic or academic standards for goal setting represent the appropriation or assimilation of the cultural values bound within a society that is dominated by a hierarchy of Euro/American norms?

In this way, while I believe that the research questions were answered, and that most students were successful within the context of setting positive goals for college and career, there are further explorations that need to occur within the context of a diverse post-modern diverse democratic society. Upon reflection, I found that, as the advisory teacher team worked to establish the norms of practice of iCCR, there were philosophical misalignments that needed to be addressed. From my research journal reflections of our first design session on February 7, 2018, I noted that there was “a large debate on where we stood as a school” on the topic of educational philosophy and beliefs in students. The debate was not local to the school; it resided within the school system as well. During the course of this study the school system put forward an effort to clearly demonstrate a philosophical disposition by adopting *reconstructivism* (UDA, 2018) within policy documents.

This should also be framed within the context as I presented in my second chapter. In that chapter, I argued that goal setting may be subject to forces well beyond the local systems and cultural values. Recall that Meyer et al. (2015) found that mass education was an enterprise to create social order. I have also framed the argument of goal setting as being one that must be considered within the context of the neoliberal and globalized market forces that our students are situated within (Stephens et al., 2015).

I have discussed that our students may not be being prepared for either academic nor economic success based upon present models (Alfeld & Bhattacharya, 2012; Zhao, 2012; American Management Association, 2010; Wagner, 2010) and based upon current lower levels of goals being set. Furthermore, regardless of one's cultural backgrounds and dispositions towards goal setting, students are entering economic systems with increased requirements to achieve employment (Zhao, 2012; Daggett, 2012). If the situated context for students has been digitized in a way that will continue to have them competing with others, then we have external indicators that we must work towards as we are falling short in many academic areas (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 20120).

**Discussion RQ3.** My third research question asked how pathway and agency thinking might be influenced by iCCR. My triangulated finding stated that while students increased their pathway knowledge, they may have had a decrease in agency thinking. Snyder (2002) suggested that while pathway and agency were individual sub-constructs of hope, they fluidly interacted with each other. Therefore, it might be expected that as pathway knowledge increases one might have their agency thinking challenged or affirmed depending upon where you found yourself situated within that pathway. While answering the research question directly in Chapter 4, here I will discuss the second part of my findings that I believe should be critically reviewed and while I discuss how the idea of false hope came to become a discussion point in the development of iCCR.

In the second part of my triangulated findings, there was a feeling that some students felt off track. This was supported by student and teacher assertion three. It was presented that students were encountering an awakening of what needed to be done to

pass classes, get grades, have a pathway plan for college and career, and know the specific steps to get there. Between students and teachers, there was a common theme within a group of students that felt like a kind of sadness.

Recall that Megan shared that it “was kind of sad for some students because they realized ‘oh, I need this class and I failed, and it’s-it already happened.’” Jessie presented a type of critical awakening that occurred with a student and found that “I think he understands the depth of his problems.” Lance referenced these moments as “wake-up calls” that students needed to get beyond the ideas of social promotion they had been subjected to in middle school. From my Friday reflection of March 16, 2018, I noted that students were experiencing a “sense of fulfillment and pain, of hope found and lost, of sensing that things might never be the same again for ourselves or how we are viewed in the eyes of our parents, teachers, and peers.”

During the implementation of this study, teaching staff expressed concerns that the development of a graduation plan with higher graduation requirements for students may have an adverse impact on their levels of hope. This was in part based upon a fear that students might lose hope as they started to understand that they may be behind timeline targets for graduation or college acceptance requirements. In some ways, this provided the framework for the opening of the second teacher assertion which referenced students having a false sense of hope in the future. This may have been compounded by the implementation cycle of iCCR which came in the second semester for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Recall that as a new school this was the first schoolwide formal college and career readiness plans the participants had been part of.

In Chapter 4, an interview contained a term that the development team of iCCR spoke of as the phenomenon of *false hope*. The term false hope first appeared in my meeting notes and researcher's journal on February 23, 2018, from a morning meeting where some teachers and I reviewed some of the early student college and career ready exams and scores on the SHS. When Merton's (1948) defined the self-fulfilling prophecy, he stated that it originated from "a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true" (p. 60). Within the concept of HT, the staff discussion of false hope was also situational to having a positive goal but without either a clear definition of what that goal might look like or pathway knowledge to achieve it. It was the idea that in just having a goal, we also had created the mechanism to get there by remaining positive in our thoughts.

This is in part what Jessie and Lance were referencing when they discussed student dispositions during the course of the semester. Jessie stated that students think "that everything that we are saying is a made-up story that's meant to hurt the fun life that they want to have." Lance felt that students were starting to get that they had to work hard to achieve their goals. In member checking statements about the idea of false hope, I found that the teachers were referencing that there were students who would have an overtly stated goal of going to a four-year university, but little to no situational awareness that failing coursework in high school was somehow related.

In this way, I believe that there was a research question that could have been explored about the relationship that may exist between understanding what goals mean, how they relate to pathway plans, and what forces of agentic thinking must be supported to accomplish a radically different goal. For example, when Megan and Nellie discussed

their college visits, both saw the value of having students hear from current college students who came from a similar background. They also had students with them who had overtly stated that their goal was to go to college but had never been to one. Megan recalled two of her students that went with her on a college visit and that the students were having a hard time understanding how different an environment it was from their home life. Megan found that the tour guide made the difference for her students and said, “she was very honest about her experience in high school and transition into a college student and she also was a first-generation college-goer.”

From my meeting notes, I had a student come to speak with me. He had just come from his first college visit frustrated, as he had just gone to see a college for the first time, knew that that is where he wanted to be, but also knew that his grades would not get him there. I think that while this round of iCCR focused on pathway development, there is a need to discuss the role of agency at greater length. In Chapter 2 I noted that Freire (2014) referenced hope as an “ontological necessity” for those working in poverty and that there was a growing body of literature on the importance of hope (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Webb, 2013; Duncan-Andrade, 2009, Yasso, 2005). However, within HT it may be the sub-construct of agency where we find the intangible resilience that may be most readily associated with the ideals of hope as a concept rather than hope as a theoretical construct.

The topic of false hope might be defined as a generalized positive goal that does not have contextually bound meaning, coupled with high levels of affirmed agentic thinking in the absence of practical pathway knowledge. To this end, a research question that was not asked and became a point of ongoing discussion was “how do we go about

supporting a change from false hope to one of authentic hope?” The idea of authentic hope was to define those positive goals in relationship to context, develop a pathway plan to get there, and find the agentic support structures on that journey. A subset of this discussion centered on the concern of how we support this move from false hope in a way that does not leave some students in a state of more authentic hope, other feeling hopeless, and an additional group falling into the category that Duncan-Andrade (2009) called “hope deferred” (p. 184).

**Discussion on RQ4.** My final research question examined how the level of teacher implementation of iCCR might support students’ levels of hope. I found that there were triangulated data that the implementation level may support student hope levels. Recall that I conducted a Level of Use (Hall & Hord, 2015) branching interview to create groups of implementation levels and then conducted a one-way ANOVA to assess any difference in student hope levels, as measured by the student scores on the SHS. Recall that there was a significant effect on student hope levels as measured by the SHS when compared to the advisory teachers’ levels of use with the  $\alpha \leq .05$  between levels [ $F(3,45) = 2.814, p = 0.05$ ]. However, post hoc analysis suggested that this statistical significance was limited to differences between the levels of renewal and mechanical use,  $p = .045$ , with no other groups being statistically different.

There are two general categories in the Hall and Hord (2015) model, those of nonusers and users. All of the teachers met the standard of being users of iCCR. Within the stepwise progression of users, there are five levels from lowest to highest being mechanical use, routine, refinement, integration, and renewal. There were no users that fit into the group of routine use. While there was no statistical difference in these groups

with the exception of renewal and mechanical use, there was a stepwise progression that I found. When moving from the lowest level of use to the highest, mean scores increased as well from mechanical ( $M = 73.50$ ,  $SD = 6.00$ ), refinement ( $M = 84.38$ ,  $SD = 11.89$ ), integration ( $M = 86.38$ ,  $SD = 13.68$ ), and renewal ( $M = 97.91$ ,  $SD = 11.56$ ).

However, this finding assumes that the introduction of iCCR was a factor in this finding. This may not be so. We do not know if this finding would have been the same in the absence of iCCR. For example, it is possible that teacher belief systems in general may be influencing student hope levels. Tobi is the only student who went from a classroom with mechanical use to one with renewal use and he did notice a difference in how different the iCCR implementation was. However, that is not a confirmation of iCCR in and of itself. I believe it is reasonable that this might have been about the teacher's general belief structures in students regardless of iCCR.

Recall that in my review of the research and literature guiding this study, I presented Hattie's (2013) finding of over 800 meta-analyses of factors influencing student achievement where student expectations might be the most important factor. I also discussed how the framework of HT created the idea that there could be expectations that were positive, maintenance, or negative in disposition. In this way, it is difficult to fully explain if iCCR was the primary factor of the statistical difference that was found or if it might be that there was a different expectation from these two groups and that is what led to this finding.

The development of iCCR may play a role in this as well. From the implementation model, iCCR used a constructivist approach through participatory action research (PAR) as my mechanism for praxis. I presented earlier in this chapter that there



was a philosophical debate occurring within the school system. These may have been triggered by the discussion around iCCR, as these debates were framed around student outcomes and in turn became a dialogue of our beliefs about students. A central topic of discussing belief systems was about moving from dialogue to actions that were consistent with our overt statements. After iterations of discussion about the importance of speaking honestly about our beliefs, I was prompted to write to staff that “being honest does not mean we agree with each other—it means that our actions are consistent with what we have claimed through our words and are an accurate representation of our thoughts, intentions, and beliefs.”

Other forces may have been at work as well that might have been evidenced through our implementation cycle. Lance discussed his journey in his interview stating that he had advisory as a “fun time to bond.” In my discussions with Lance, he might have been categorized as being in mechanical use at the onset of the study and in refinement at the end of the study. In moving through his implementation cycle, he found that iCCR advisory curriculum gave the class purpose. He noted that as the program built, his level of enthusiasm for it increased.

Megan and Nellie had a similar finding and noted that class enthusiasm rose through the semester. They both found that the college visits became rallying points for their classes and had excited students. Jessie maintained a high level of enthusiasm throughout the semester. It could also be argued that it was in the levels of enthusiasm of iCCR that students might have had an influence on student hope levels. I will continue to explore this idea as one of these aspects in my limitations to this study under my discussions on *experimenter effect*.

## **The Emergence of my Grounded Theory**

The purpose of engaging in a constructivist grounded theory approach is to move beyond assertions and explicitly state a theory (Charmaz, 2017, 2014). Early in my memoing, I began the process of code weaving (Saldaña, 2016) and examining the interconnectivity of the data. In addition, I presented in my review of my rigorous qualitative process that I had engaged in specific activities to support the development of a grounded theory that was part of my dynamic process of crystallization. Upon review of all data, answering my research questions through triangulation, and discussing my research questions and theoretical framework through a process of crystallization, I constructed the following grounded theory:

*Teachers, parents, schools, and school systems have influence over a student's level of hope and dispositions to seek out a more ideal future state of being—with agentic thinking and pathway knowledge being primarily influenced through interactions in environments of higher proximal process and goal setting being primarily manifested in environments of lower proximal process.*

I found that my grounded theory supported my primary triangulated findings and my subsequent crystallization of multiple truths. It framed why parent assertions demonstrated the characteristics of complexity of current college and career ready requirements, how parents felt iCCR supported their knowledge levels to situate their student for success, and the call for more parental involvement. For example, the complexity of the chronosystem goal of going to college existed not in the goal, which is at low proximal process, but in the pathways of getting there, which was discussed at the

school and classroom levels. The parental knowledge to deal with this complexity was addressed in the iCCR workshop which was an environment of high proximal process. Finally, the call for more parents to get involved was a call to set positive chronosystem goals that parents may not be aware of and the process of getting to them which represented a problem of pathway to be addressed in a system of high proximal process.

Within teacher assertions, there are similar findings in support of my grounded theory. Teachers felt that iCCR did support students in setting goals, pathway, and agency. However, the goals were often fixed or assumed as being at the chronosystem level of low proximal process while the processes and thinking to get to them were being taught through the iCCR curriculum in an environment of high proximal process. Recall that teachers felt that UC ‘a-g’ and college was the “face of everything” and that there were assumptions that were being made about chronosystem goals. However, this was not put in check, it was assumed, and pathway and agency supports continued through the implementation of iCCR.

For the teacher assertion of students having a false sense of hope and not fully trusting teachers, these were statements and sentiments about chronosystem goals. There was a sense that what was being done was to “ruin a student’s easy life” or that “this would be hard work” which all pertained to the highest proximal process and related to the pathway of what needed to be done now or how students thought of themselves as agents of their own destiny. When both teachers and students found that iCCR needed to occur sooner in a student’s academic career, it was not about the setting of chronosystem goals, many of those were assumed. These were things about high school graduation, finding a meaningful or sustaining career, or going to college. Rather, this call was about

students losing faith and feeling that they were off track and that engaging pathway knowledge sooner would have helped this. These were items that were to be engaged in within an environment of high proximal process.

The students' first assertion was that teachers believed in them and that they could go on to college. Here again, I found that the goal was fixed but the belief support system was encapsulated within high proximal process. For the second student assertion, the focus was on the knowledge that iCCR had provided students. This related back to pathway thinking areas of higher proximal process within the classroom setting, taking part in a job shadow/interview, or going on a college trip. The larger chronosystem goals appeared to be more fixed at areas of lower proximal process, were imbedded into a larger context, and needed to be engaged in at a different environmental systems level.

In addition, I found quantitative findings that I used in the development of my grounded theory. Recall that the SHS student level of goal setting and future orientation remained high. The primary differences that occurred were in agentic thinking and pathway knowledge through the intervention that took place in an environment of high proximal process. In addition, I found that a teacher's level of implementation of iCCR may have had an influence on student levels of hope with agency thinking and pathway knowledge being the areas that demonstrated change in pre- and post-innovation measures.

At the onset of my study, I framed the topic and the problem of practice of my study as a wicked problem. Recall that in wicked problems, the problem itself is the manifestation of being a symptom of another problem. Here is the paradox of my grounded theory, as positive goal setting primarily exist in areas of lower proximally

process, the situated context of the student and their home environment matter. Should there not be a vision for what a more ideal state should look like, then we may be engaging in Merton's (1948) self-fulfilling prophecy or what Duncan-Andrade (2009) called "hope deferred" (p. 184). This grounded theory situates students within broader community contexts as suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1994, 1977). It also relates to the literature which found that few school interventions and studies examined the levels of EST (Tudge et al., 2009).

While this does continue to situate students within the broader context of community and institutional politics, including system that may continue to support oppression, it does not provide a closed loop system. Rather, this grounded theory is intended to suggest that there are ways to break through cycles of multi-generational poverty. However, as suggested by scholars (Anyon, 2014; Carter & Welner, 2013; Anyon, 2009), it requires traversing the complexity of student lives which may involve opportunity gaps that come from background forces beyond students' control. Finally, what this grounded theory is intended to suggest is that by coming together, we can and should not make mental model decisions based upon a student's background and our own perceptions of what we think should happen.

This grounded theory also presents a case whereby we must move beyond assuming not only what a student can or cannot do, we must move beyond an assumption that they might know what the future could hold. We must actively engage in equitable division of opportunities so that all students can have access to what their future might be able to look like, so that they can set positive goals that their parents might not be aware of. This also requires us to understand the difference between the ideas of equity and

equality (Stone, 2012), and the difference between opportunity (Carter & Welner, 2013) and that of resources, which are often associated with finance and services. An equitable distribution of opportunities is not mutually exclusive of an equitable distribution of resources, but they should not be confused as being one and the same.

My argument suggests that my grounded theory may represent a framework whereby operationalized hope is a strategy that can allow for us to break through our mental models and to have an innovation of thought and disposition. It is this change of thought and disposition that I have chosen to call an innovation of the mind. My argument also suggests that HT can be utilized to span the nested constructs of EST. However, this argument does imply that simply being hopeful is enough. Rather I suggest that hope cannot become a passive feeling that might be associated with high levels of agentic thinking alone. Rather, hope must be a strategy of operationalized action that involves changing some of our fundamental assumptions about our situated context and world.

### **Limitations**

All research has limitations. Research that involves the introduction of an innovation in a non-clinical setting may have additional limitations (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2015; Smith & Glass, 1987). In addition, there may be additional limitations to action research studies (Creswell, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). Here, I review what I believe to be the three primary limitations to my study, those of experimenter effect, novelty effect, and transferability.

**Experimenter Effect.** Experimenter effect is characterized as a threat to external validity (Smith & Glass, 1987). By this, I mean that those implementing the innovation

may have been key to its success (Hall & Hord, 2015; Rodger, 2003). It has been argued that by the nature of the experimenter personality, characteristics, or other influences that they hold, they may be in part an influence on the findings of a study. In this way, it can be argued that if the experimenter was not in place that the experiment may have had a different result (Smith & Glass, 1987).

Within action research, this can happen in several ways, including the positionality of the researcher (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Ivankova, 2015). First, we should consider that as I was the lead of this study, my positionality of being the head of schools may have influenced both the adoption of the innovation, who was drawn to be involved in the development of iCCR, and the findings from students and parents. For example, parents who participated in the iCCR workshop exhibited high test results. However, were these the result of the content of the iCCR parent workshop, the parents that were drawn to attend it who knew me as the head of schools, or my relationship with the parents? It can be argued that this may have constituted experimenter effect and influenced the findings.

Next, I considered that iCCR was developed collaboratively with advisory teachers. Within this adoption cycle, it could be argued that teachers with high degrees of implementation may have also been those that had a higher enthusiasm for the program. This could have put into place a secondary process and a leadership-membership exchange system (Northouse, 2018), whereby those teachers with the highest level of enthusiasm also had students that were subjected to experimenter effects. This may have also been proven within the context of this study, whereby it was demonstrated in RQ4 that advisory teacher implementation level had a statistically significant influence on

student hope levels. It could be argued that those that exhibited high implementation levels also carried with them impacts related to experimenter effect.

**Novelty Effect.** Novelty effect is characterized as a threat to ecological validity of a study (Smith & Glass, 1987). Ecological validity pertains to what happens in the setting where a study takes place. It has been argued that the introduction of an innovation in a school setting may be accompanied with a level of enthusiasm that makes the innovation successful based upon its being new to the system. By this, I mean that it is possible that the findings of this study may be limited to iCCR being promoted and adopted because it was new rather than the findings being influenced solely or in part based upon the merits of the program.

Recall that I found evidence that may support that iCCR may have been subject to novelty effect. For example, recall that Keith did not want to implement iCCR at first and then was eager to adopt once the program started. Megan was excited that things were finally organized. There were plans in place, things were new, and there was a feeling that things were progressing. However, it could be argued that it was the novelty of the innovation that created the excitement and it was the enthusiasm that was making a difference rather than the innovation.

Parents were eager for innovation that iCCR provided. However, the parents that came to the iCCR workshop did so without having a prior program in place to which to compare iCCR. Finally, students also reported that much of the information and experiences that they encountered in iCCR was new.

**Transferability.** Dissertations and post-graduate studies often seek out generalizable knowledge (Herr & Anderson, 2015). By this, I mean that the findings of



the research are assumed to be applicable to a different context or setting. Transferability is a type of threat of ecological validity. Recall that when I presented my theoretical alignment (see Table 6), I situated my action research within the theoretical perspective of critical inquiry, the epistemology of subjectivism, and the ontology of idealism. Therefore, by naming transferability a limitation, I am arguing that action research, as being epistemologically situated as subjectivist, has a direct connection to the context in which it occurs. Therefore, action research embraces transferability as a regularly-cited limitation associated with contextually-based research (Creswell, 2015; Mertler, 2014).

In this study, I have presented that action research does not take place in a clinical setting and must solve problems within the context of the real world (Bradbury, 2015). Therefore, within the limitation of transferability, I also affirmed that this study is adaptable to an appropriate context and can be modified to meet the needs of that context. Recall that I did not develop all aspects of iCCR alone; rather, I used a constructivist framework of involvement around a core set of ideas and a situated problem of practice based upon addressing complexity. It could be argued that it is not the innovation of iCCR that is transferable, but perhaps it is the process of PAR that might support your setting. Therefore, what may be transferable to another context is left to the descension of scholarly practitioners and researchers who seek to implement change to advance student opportunity and achievement at their location.

### **Implications**

Action research is defined through a cyclical approach (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014). In this way, the action being studied was selected by previous investigations and implications to practice and research. By an implication to practice, I mean that the

knowledge gained in this study may have direct applicability to the work of teachers, schools, districts, and scholarly practitioners. By an implication to future research, I mean that my findings may suggest areas where additional research may be warranted either within action research or another tradition of research.

**Implications to Practice.** As a scholarly practitioner, I reflected upon several implications to practice. First, I examined implications to my context and actions that are already underway. Next, I considered the implications of using PAR and how theoretical modeling may have provided guidance. Here, I will argue that I found three primary implications to practice, those of taking action to modify and expand iCCR, the use of PAR to facilitate change, and the need for practitioners to adopt a theoretical framework.

***Modification and expansions of iCCR.*** The first implication to practice comes at the contextual level. Within my context, we noted several revisions to iCCR we made. Even before the formal close of this study in September of 2018, we were taking actions to modify the program, the distribution of information, the timeline of activities, and begin to prototype a middle school version. With a focus on continuous improvement, there were several findings that drove these changes.

First, iCCR was situated as being a full year program for students and a series of workshops for parents. The measures used in this study to measure the effectiveness of iCCR remained in place going into the next school year by request of the faculty and staff. The next action that was taken was that all new students started their journey with us in having a redesigned summer orientation session whereby students started their high school journey with the information that students had requested earlier in their academic

career. Next, the framework of iCCR is now implemented five days a week, with an advisory meeting with their advisees every day.

The iCCR parent workshops are being continued with modifications. First, the meeting schedules were altered to occur throughout the year versus in the fourth quarter. The rationale for this was to be sure that there were seasonal workshops that could address additional topics. Next, the parent engagement campaign was revisited. In the next implementation cycle, there are plans to have parents reach out to each other through testimonials and community-based meetings. In addition, all materials for iCCR are planned to move from the prototype implementation to that of a refinement stage. Finally, the topics of iCCR, including that of the parent workshops, are slated to be prototyped at our middle school.

*Use of theoretical alignment for practitioners.* Recall that in my third chapter, I presented my theoretical alignment. In this alignment, I dietarily stated my ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Extending this framework would include a statement of educational philosophy, where I would reference the normative educational philosophy of reconstructivism (Gutek, 2004). Here, I argue that having an articulated theoretical framework has implications to practice for teachers, school administration, and district administration.

Within the broader framework of my multiple cycles of research which spanned three years, I have attempted to demonstrate the need for an articulated theoretical framework for practitioners. For example, it may have been difficult to situate the implementation of iCCR without understanding the emancipatory qualities of ensuring students' access to a future of their choosing without dealing with the underlying

ontological split between realism and idealism. In this way it can be argued that within this split of philosophical disposition, we can find trace elements within educational institutions that are modeled in the classroom. For if there is *a way*, then it can and should be taught, but if there are *many ways*, then there are options. Where it is presented that there is *a way*, then we run into the paradox of what Dewey (1938) cautioned us would become the “either-or affair” (p. 52). Here there may be an assumption that there can only be one right choice. However, where there are *many ways*, we enter the spaces presented by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that are consistent with post-modern thinking and critical inquiry.

In this way, I believe an important implication to practice is that school and district leaders should act from an articulated theoretical framework. For example, Koroljungberg et al. (2009) presented an extension of the model articulated by Crotty (1998), which is the basis for my articulated theoretical framework of this study (see Table 6), and how I approach many aspects of leading change. I believe that this implication to practice will result in many school leaders discovering a primary disconnection between what we overtly state we want for our students, teachers, schools, and communities when compared to our actions.

***Use of participatory action research.*** An extension to my belief that school leadership should work from a clearly aligned theoretical framework is for the adoption of participatory action research. Scholars have argued that action research should be approached as a constellation of practices (Bradbury, 2015; Reason & Bradbury, 2008). Within school settings, action research has primarily been focused on use at the classroom teacher level (Glickman, Bordon & Ross-Gordon, 2018; Mertler, 2015). For

some, the use of classroom action research is then focused on practical applications of innovations that apply to a singular context of that classroom space and place. However, within the constellation of practices that are action research, I argue here that the PAR model has implications to practice.

The overarching practice of action research is based upon the idea that we should take an informed action based upon our own contextual understanding. Within this study, I have utilized the PAR model as a change structure to build consensus, understanding, and drive innovations forward. If the adoption of an innovation is in part, or in full, a communication process (Rogers, 1983), then PAR was utilized in my various cycles as the communications means to execute my praxis (Freire, 2011; 1970). By this, I mean that the cyclical nature of PAR, the emancipatory traditions from which it arises, and the idea that people must be involved helped to drive the innovation forward and what I deemed a health critical reflection of practice that was accompanied with actions to match rhetoric.

The implication to practice is that leaders must then lead from merit, conviction, and dialogue, rather than positional power and authority. This is not an abdication of positional power, but rather a return to leading through learning as a larger group. What I have argued is that this is in the best interest of school and district leadership, as PAR represents a constructivist model of leading that often times is what we claim we want to see in our classrooms. Just as constructivism does not abandon the need for direct instruction or guided practice, PAR does not give up the ideal of inspired vision, directives, or planned learning. What PAR may facilitate is resituated group learning

within the framework that breaks down community rolls and focuses us squarely on the outcomes that we seek for students.

**Implications to Future Research.** As I neared the conclusion of this study, I reflected upon what areas of future research I might explore. In this process, I examined the study and found gaps that future research may address. While there are many areas that could be considered, I have limited myself to the identification of four topics within two areas that I feel are important. Here, I will review why I believe that future research should consider cultural studies and the theoretical models of EST and HT.

***Cultural studies and research.*** During my crystallization process, I discussed several cultural considerations. There are two primary areas relating to students that might be considered within cultural studies and research. First, future research might focus on how school culture influences agentic thinking. Recall that in this study, I did not address school culture and, while there was evidence of increased levels of positive goal setting and pathway thinking, agency thinking did decrease.

Next, schools exist within the broader cultural context of society (Anyon, 2014, 2009). While my students did seek to engage with my community of parents, it did not look at a broader topic of developing a community intervention or innovation. Future research might focus on how to use PAR to develop an expanded community effort to support students in positive goal setting. In this way the discussion of what positive goals look like might also engage in how cultural values and understanding influence what types of goals we are setting.

***In EST and HT research.*** In my second chapter, I stated that there is a growing body of research on HT within the context of schools. In my study, I have situated HT as

a change theory for districts and schools that is then situated within the system theory of EST. While EST has been recognized and studied in schools, it has been noted that rarely have those studies involved looking at all aspects of EST in terms of impacts to students and the community (Trudge et al., 2009). Future research might examine a longitudinal data of students who participate in an intervention or innovation that sought to span multiple levels of EST and the implications to student achievement over time.

There is a gap in the literature as to the intersectionality of HT and EST. Through the course of multiple cycles of research, I utilized HT as a change strategy within EST. However, this has been limited to explorations within my own situated contexts. Using the concept of transferability, future research might explore how HT can be used to span the various aspects of EST. While my research in this cycle was focused on using HT for students, a future cycle of research might examine how HT might influence parent goal setting for students through the various levels of EST.

### **Forward**

Action research is cyclical and reflexive (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014). Therefore, upon reflection, I have found the thought of concluding this cycle of PAR study with a summary or conclusion as being paradoxically inconsistent with the tradition. Having presented my initial findings to my participants in August and September of 2018, by the time of this publication, we had already begun the never-ending process of “re-solving” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 60). I opened this study with a statement to set a tone of differentiation for this style of dissertation. I stated that:

*This is an action research dissertation. I speak in the first person because it accurately reflects my positionality to my research—I exist within it and*

*it exists within me. Action research takes place in the real-world rather than a clinical setting. Therefore, action research must address the challenges of the real-world.*

Having stated my findings, explored those findings through crystallization, examined the limitations, and presented implications, here I conclude my writing process for this cycle of action research with what I believe to be the most appropriate mechanism, a forward.

It was from this point forward that I put down my citations and wrote freely, although I did use citations as they came to me. I sought to reflect upon my three-and-a-half-year action research journey that I celebrate with the publication of this dissertation. I did so while exploring my thinking for my next cycle in inquiry. In this way, my closing thoughts were part of the cyclical nature of action research. These thoughts may also prove to be my opening considerations in my future work as a scholar and practitioner.

A wonderful part of arriving at a destination is that one may retroactively assign meaning to the journey that brought you there. As I wrote this forward, I was bound in the moment of completing my doctoral work while reflecting upon the journey it represented. As I reflected upon my various stages of research, I noted that situated within this moment, my problem of practice seems to have always been based in systems complexity, although focused through different lenses. Perhaps this was a reconstruction of my previous iterations of research as I would like to see it now, or this may simply have been the way that meaning emerged for me over time.

I reviewed the evolution of the cycles of my problem of practice. In reconnaissance, I stated my problem of practice as possible *misalignment(s) of policy, practice, expectations, and what schools were engaged in when compared to what is*



*required for students to be successful in post-secondary environments. In cycle 0, it had developed into graduation rates continued to rise while university preparedness remained the same as early assessment placement scores continued to fall. In cycle 1, it further evolved to the course of study may neither meet student needs for post-secondary success and create systems complexity to establish a clear pathway for post-secondary success. In cycle 2, I explored if students labeled as high need are not thought of as being capable of high levels of achievement. And here, in my third cycle, as reflected in this dissertation, it was stated that systems complexity may lead to socio-economic reification of our students' educational and post-secondary opportunities through institutional structures that spanned ecological systems. This complexity obscured setting relevant positive goals for high school graduation, college attainment, and career success.*

The evolution of the problem was such that in its current form it could be retroactively applied to any of the previous cycles and provided a framework for exploration. Throughout these cycles of research increasing student opportunity and achievement was always my primary driver. The ecological systems were what I was seeking to transverse. It was system complexity that was obscuring the way to transverse those ecological systems to advance student opportunity and achievement. At least for now this is my understanding. However, with action research it is often the next cycle that brings the clearest view.

As I have previously stated, what was an important part of my action research journey was the reconciliation between the two definitions of ontology, that of being and of becoming. I found that my research was a bridge to that divide. In this way, being became an empathetic cognitive embrace of now, visioning was part of a belief structure

of what can be and becoming was part of the motion of a praxis that sought that more ideal future state. In this way, my cycles of action research were not just action steps, they became a transitioning from being to becoming to being, in an idealistic cyclical and belief structure that we can find a better way forward.

Depending upon your frame of reference, many of the complex problems that we face as a society are either a symptom of another problem or a problem to you and your institutions. A change in your contextual frame of reference might quickly reposition your symptom as the primary problem or the symptom of another problem. Things look differently to you based upon examining something through the lens of transportation, health care, poverty, homelessness, education, economic development, and the list continues. While I acknowledge that education is not likely to provide a catalyst for change to address all of the social forces that are at work, I will continue in my belief that it is a primary point of intersectionality. Therefore, I will continue to argue that education holds a powerful and predominate place for change in our students' lives, in our communities, and for real and substantive change in the world.

I believe that education is not simply a transfer of knowledge or establishment of behavioral norms. To me, education is an extension of creating the type of world we ought to want to live in. This places schools and teachers as emancipatory practitioners of a pedagogy that is rooted in the philosophical traditions of idealism. However, we have a tradition of fearing education, educators and of the power of their philosophical positions. From our persecution of Socrates, the exile of critical scholars such as Freire, to the appropriation of education to carry the messages of nation states, we have a history of demonstrating that, as a society, we know how powerful education is. In particular, we

seem to understand the power of public education and its potential influence on our communities, society and the world.

As I began to construct this dissertation, I engaged in a reflection about my own beliefs. I found myself returning to our founding documents of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and asking myself, where do we stand? By this, I mean where do our children stand within the framework of the promises we think should be delivered upon? In this case, from my point of view. To frame this reflection, I have tried to think of students of every classroom, school, and system that I have served in as part of my responsibility and considered their experiences through the eyes of my own children. So, here I embark upon a final reflection as it relates to my thoughts in these areas.

I have presented that our children have had their Constitutional property rights diminished without due process. This violation occurred by not having access to a competitive education situated within a globalized marketplace. Our urban youth do not live in places with a likelihood to “insure domestic tranquility.” We do not meet the standard for peace within the industrialized world that we helped to create. Furthermore, our children are more likely to experience incarceration as a means of trying to achieve that promise of domestic tranquility.

We may overtly claim that we “hold these truths to be self-evident.” However, our equality may suffer from a fundamental paradox that may be bound within the differences of the American traditions of egalitarianism and democracy itself. Baudrillard (2010) framed this paradox as follows “democracy presupposes equality at the outset, egalitarianism presupposes it at the end” (p. 103). Caught in the middle of this paradox

are the very children and communities that we serve. I believe that we must consider and take action to close the opportunity and achievement gaps that quell our students' right to their own "Pursuit of Happiness." We must allow schools to have a practical mechanism to become functionally equitable. In this way while students might not arrive to them equal at the onset, they can enter adulthood through a school process that provides them with a more equal opportunity upon the outcome of successfully graduating.

Our Declaration of Independence reminds us that we will rationalize current systems and models. It states that "Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed." But, what should we do with present thinking and educational models when we have mounting supporting evidence that they do not serve the best interest of *all* children? Do we adhere to prudence? Perhaps we should remember that on behalf of our children, it is our duty to seek out systems and structures to establish "new Guards for their future Security." As we seek out how to accomplish this, it cannot be through institutional stagnation and/or nostalgic rationalization of another time that presupposes that things were better, if not only for a privileged few. It must be through informed action and research to perpetuate a praxis squarely rooted in a more ideal future for all children—for this is the way to better our collective society.

To this end, let us not "patronize them with lowest-common-denominator blancmange masquerading as knowledge and learning" (Hattie, 2013, p. ix). Rather, let us engage in a pedagogy of hope and meaning that empowers our children to reinvent the world as we think it ought to be. Let us abandon our assumptions that may create cycles of self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948). For those very assumptions might be the

constructs that provide a means and mechanism to limit our collective capabilities and diminish the future itself.

Let us remember that, in order to ensure free thinking, we cannot engage in a practice of granting privileged information that is only accessible to a few. We must have free and public access to knowledge for all, so that we too may “become free men and women through education” (Palmer, 1998, p. 111). Let us engage in a process of “locating the responsible group or groups” (Kuhn, 2012, p. 179) that constrain us in our current paradigms of thought, economic structures, and subsequent degrees of freedom that may be linked to our levels of opportunity. In this way we might shatter the paradigms we see failing us, fulfilling our duty to adopt new systems that embrace our changed values and beliefs based on our new understandings of our humanity. Within our “new understanding” (Graves, 1959, p. 94) of our confusions, let us embrace the diversity of choice that our postmodern world affords us as one of infinite options, which then allows for us to embrace a future of our choosing.

I remain confident that, if we are to find a way forward to “a more perfect union,” education ought to take the predominate lead. For I believe that manifested in the education that we provide for our children today is the framework for the world that we will see in the future. Time will tell, but perhaps hope is the very strategy required to construct new paradigms to make a positive difference in our world. We face mounting evidence of continued institutional oppression that diminishes our children’s economic freedom (Miller et al., 2016), including property rights (Miller & Kim, 2016), ability to live in peace (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015), and access to the types of quality education (Stephens et al., 2015; OECD, 2013; OECD, 2012) necessary to prepare them

as they compete in a neoliberal globalized marketplace. We must find the courage to speak of a different way forward. To this end, the multiple cycles of action research that are embodied within this dissertation have been part of me finding the courage to speak more readily and articulately of a different way forward.

I have argued here that we must engage in a pedagogy of liberation, hope, and even defiance of the mainstay factors that may have institutionalized caste systems of poverty and oppression. However, my situated context was not some distant land that America regards as being of a different world order. I asserted that this has happened, and will continue to happen, here in the land that proclaims freedom for all. For our students, they deserve nothing less than the full and equal opportunity of that dream that we have called America. Rather than a dream achievable for a privileged few, let us seek out liberty and justice for all.

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APPENDIX A

CYCLE 0 -1, IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Michelle Jordan  
Division of Teacher Preparation - Tempe  
480/965-9663  
Michelle.E.Jordan@asu.edu

Dear Michelle Jordan:

On 2/22/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Perceptions of Post-Secondary Student Preparedness as Expressed Through Graduation Requirements.
Investigator:	Michelle Jordan
IRB ID:	STUDY00003952
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• interview protocols, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li><li>• Shawn Loescher Recruit Consent Form Administrators Draft 2.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li><li>• Shawn Loescher IRB Protocol Draft 3.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;</li><li>• Shawn Loescher Recruit Consent Form Parents Draft 1 (1).pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li></ul>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/22/2016.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

## APPENDIX B

### CYCLE 0 -1, SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. To what extent do you believe that current district graduation requirements are philosophically aligned with the strategic plan? Please explain.
2. What role do you believe graduation requirements may play in setting expectations for what it means to foster hope for a better life after graduating from school? Can you give a specific example from your experience?
3. Do you believe that there are disconnects between the coursework provided to students and what they need to be a success after graduating from high school? Please explain.
4. What barriers prevent students from meeting graduation and/or UC “a-g” requirements?
5. What current school-based factors do you believe help students stay on track for graduation and/or to meet UC “a-g” requirements? What new school-based factors do you believe could further help students stay on track?
6. Is there anything that you would like to add about your observations about district graduation requirements, student preparedness, and student expectations?

## APPENDIX C

### CYCLE 0 -1, AXIAL TO GERUND OPEN CODING ALIGNMENT



Axial	Gerund Open Codes
Acknowledged disconnections	acknowledging organizational goals acknowledging disconnections adding requirements asking for clarification changing of the guard expressing nostalgia fostering low expectations getting confused relinquishing ownership
Belief systems	addressing higher order change caring matters changing belief systems developing mindset educating parents fostering hope including stakeholders involving parents raising awareness raising expectations understanding equity
Coursework	becoming college ready developing literacy grading on opinions grading practices developing soft skills developing units' dishonoring non-university pathway including certificate programs lacking standards limiting curriculum not meeting rigor not preparing students preparing students for the past providing relevant connections struggling with career readiness
Known issues	identifying expectation gaps identifying impacts to status quo identifying inequities identifying known issues identifying pathway identifying setbacks

identifying social capital  
identifying social barriers  
identifying solutions  
labeling students  
lacking knowledge  
lacking systems  
maintaining the status quo  
messaging low expectations  
remediating courses

Policy and operations

bridging policy to reality  
misaligning with mission/vision  
monitoring for grades  
providing equitable opportunities  
resourcing restrictions  
using graduation requirements

School site culture

becoming inclusive  
championing students  
connecting resources  
connecting with school  
counseling  
developing competitiveness  
developing culture  
developing positive goals  
developing programs  
developing relationships  
facilitating learning  
finding success  
learning communities  
maintaining focus  
making connections  
mentoring of student's  
motivating students  
providing interventions  
providing planning time  
reviewing a-g requirements  
scaffolding for student's  
setting expectations  
supervising students  
supporting friends  
teaching matters  
tracking students  
training teachers  
weeding out students

APPENDIX D

CYCLE 0 -1, AN OVERVIEW OF THEME DEVELOPMENT

**Current graduation requirements neither align to the intent of the strategic intent of the district nor do they systematically support student post-secondary success.** This finding was supported in answers given to questions one, two, and three. Responses fell within the categories of acknowledging disconnections and known issues. For example, Interviewee 2 stated the “knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential.” Interviewee 4 commented that in the development of the strategic plan that he/she did not know “to what degree they looked at graduation requirements” and went on to explain that if there was any alignment it would have been by “chance.” Interviewee 1 stated that “the current district graduation requirements are not well aligned with the current values, mission, vision, and district strategies.” All four interviewees noted that this misalignment was likely due to process gap in the development of the strategic plan. However, one interviewee stated that this part of a strategic process with the development of new graduation requirements represented a “second order change” to be addressed in the near future.

Several of the interviewees felt that the graduation requirements were representative of different philosophical positions and a different era. All four interviewees generated a gerund code of “changing of the guard” representing the change of administrative direction and expectations of current administrations. There was an agreement that there were several areas that were represented in the categories of known issues that lead to students not being positioned for post-secondary success. Interviewee 4 stated that there should be attention focused on “service components” and systemic implementation of the district “10-year plan.” Interviewee 2 acknowledged the

coursework category in stating that “there is a paradigm shift in what is happening in what needs to be successful in career” and supported this statement by saying “the coursework is the biggest indicator that we struggle because we are stuck perhaps, often times, in coursework that was successful for us and our generation that has since left us.” Interviewee 1 stated that “things have changed so dramatically in the past 15 or 20 years” and felt that the district graduation requirements needed to be updated. Interviewee 3 felt that the graduation requirements were low and stated that “the expectations are not as high as they should be.”

**District system and policies can support raising adult school site expectations but are not a requirement for doing so.** Questions two, three, and four were used in developing this theme. The categories of school site culture, policy and operations, and known issues were represented in the development. This was supported by Interviewee 1 stating that “I think that even with our graduation requirements not being as rigorous and strong as I think they should be, I don’t know that really has limited any of the kids from being successful, in terms of their own personal expectation.” Interviewee 4 felt that the school site should develop systems for supporting higher expectations and expressed that students “in a pathway or academy” would “have the best chance to stay on track for graduation and meet” college entrance requirements. Interviewee 2 felt “I think that beyond the graduation requirements setting the expectations for success, it is the people that we are there championing causes for our students.” Interviewee 3 said, “I think there is a disconnect between the students and the expectation of graduating because the curriculum is not meeting the rigor as they graduate from high school.”

Each of these statements was in support of systems and policies that could be conducted at the district level but were fully within the capacity of the schools to control. For example, while the district has recommended curriculum, it does not have mandated curriculum with schools free to choose from approved coursework. Pathway and academy systems were the prerogative of the school site to develop. Graduation requirements represent baseline standards and schools are free to establish higher expectation levels. Interviewee 1 shared from his/her time as a principal that often there are unintended messages of low expectations that are sent to students in what a school offers. She/He stated:

None of that had anything to do with graduation requirements, what that had to do with was the message that our school was sending to the kids that we expected less of them so therefore we did not need to offer more AP courses because clearly we probably didn't have any kids that would do well in them.

**The knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential.** This theme was supported by answers given to questions three, four, five, and six. The answers fell within the categories of school site culture, coursework, and belief systems. Interviewee 4 shared his/her own personal story of belief system break through:

it wasn't until I truly realized that it is much better for you to be exposed to that rigor and be exposed to those expectations, and then us put scaffolding in place to help you to stay "a-g" eligible . . . you are going to do better in college and you're going to stay in that "a-g" track. And so, it was a huge big kind of aha, big

awakening for me because under that old belief, that "oh no," that elitist kind of belief.

Interviewee 2 stated "I think that students will be as prepared as we prepare them" and shared that in her/his educational journey it was school counseling that had made the difference. There was also an acknowledgement that knowledge of what is required to be a success outside of school needed to be addressed. Interviewee 3 stated "I think that is a fair assumption when you talk with any teacher, I don't think they can tell you what it takes to graduate."

APPENDIX E  
CYCLE 2, IRB APPROVAL





EXEMPTION GRANTED

Mirka Koro-Ljungberg  
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe  
480/727-7725  
Mirka.Koro-Ljungberg@asu.edu

Dear Mirka Koro-Ljungberg:

On 2/21/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Inter-Views of Urban Education: How Perspective May Guide Actions for Students Labeled High Need
Investigator:	Mirka Koro-Ljungberg
IRB ID:	STUDY00005771
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revised Recruit and Consent Form, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li><li>• Loescher_Expectations_HRB_503a.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;</li><li>• Semi-Structured Interview Guide, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above);</li></ul>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/21/2017.

In conducting this [protocol](#) you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Shawn Loescher  
Shawn Loescher

APPENDIX F

CYCLE 2, SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-Structured Interview Questions Guide  
with Sample Follow-up Probing Questions

1. What is your background and experience working with students that are high need?
  - a. How have these experiences shaped you?
  - b. Can you tell me more about your current school?
  - c. What are some of the challenges that high need students are facing at your school?
  
2. What are the views at your school of the learning potential of high needs students?
  - a. Where do you think these assumptions come from?
  - b. Do you think they are formed with positive intent?
  - c. How is this talked about in your setting?
  
3. How do urban educational leaders justify their expectation levels for students that are classified high need?
  - a. What are the implications of the expectation level?
  - b. How is the expectation level communicated?
  - c. How is the expectation level received?
  - d.
  
4. What are the views of the responsibilities we may have to high needs students?
  - a. Why do you think that is?
  - b. Is there a moral or ethical conflict with that position?
  - c. Does this view create conflict among staff?
  
5. Is there anything that you would like to add about your experience in working with students that are high needs?

APPENDIX G

CYCLE 2, AXIAL CODE ALIGNMENT

Axial	Gerund Open Codes
Cited leadership attributes	acknowledging shortcomings committing to social justice defining previous failures defying authority going into schools (in vivo) having an open mind leading learning for the past learning (in vivo) listening (in vivo) observing firsthand organizing rejecting status quo setting expectations talking with teachers testing beliefs valuing diversity
Cited management attributes	asking for opinions creating priorities dedicating yourself going and seeing identifying shortcomings making choices planning for next year planning together providing examples scheduling expectations setting direction zoning in on goals (in vivo)
Community awareness	community organizing comparing communities finding disparity focusing on community focusing on hope identifying racism taking action undermining justice
Conditions for school change	creating sense of urgency defining student challenges examining practices examining the school culture focusing on solutions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>focusing on the future</li> <li>identifying differences</li> <li>identifying disconnections</li> <li>identifying needs</li> <li>identifying problems</li> <li>realizing disconnections</li> <li>using data</li> </ul>
Conditions surrounding poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming homeless</li> <li>becoming poor</li> <li>concentrating</li> <li>concentrating poverty</li> <li>creating imbalance</li> <li>defining family unit</li> <li>defining segregation</li> <li>describing history of poverty</li> <li>escaping poverty</li> <li>normalizing poverty</li> <li>ordering desegregation</li> </ul>
Creating parent opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating opportunity</li> <li>developing career advancement</li> <li>providing adult education</li> </ul>
Developing district systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicating with the public</li> <li>defining scope</li> <li>defining systems complexity</li> <li>developing a strategic method</li> <li>developing equitable opportunities</li> <li>focusing on neighborhood schools</li> <li>strategic planning</li> <li>unifying vision</li> </ul>
Developing local context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aligning systems</li> <li>building local environments</li> <li>committing to community</li> <li>community building</li> <li>developing community</li> <li>developing community reform</li> <li>developing hope</li> <li>developing local systems</li> <li>developing mindset</li> <li>finding local systems</li> <li>finding positive worker</li> <li>seeking local knowledge</li> </ul>

Elements of community change

being hopeful  
defining by wages  
defining economic disparity  
defining quality of life  
defining relational poverty  
defining relationships  
elevating schools  
energizing experience (in vivo)  
having quality of life  
identifying costs of living  
improving access to services  
improving living conditions  
improving wages  
seeking dignity  
seeking employment  
seeking hope  
seeking livable wage  
seeking nourishment  
seeking opportunity  
seeking self determination  
seeking shelter

Elements of understanding poverty

defining eradicating poverty  
defining history  
defining poverty  
expressing dismay  
meaningless statistic (in vivo)

Environmental resistance to school change

defining school history  
fearing loss of control  
finding resistance  
grading policies  
lacking student engagement  
lacking understanding  
normalizing  
not measuring  
punishing environments  
punishing teachers  
reflecting life beyond school  
reforming efforts  
resisting  
rising tensions  
wanting evidence

Environments for students

being dedicated to students  
being positive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caring about students</li> <li>dealing with student fear</li> <li>focusing on children</li> <li>focusing on students at risk</li> <li>forgiving environments (in vivo)</li> <li>providing programs</li> <li>providing sanctuary</li> </ul>
Establishing personal experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledging experience</li> <li>defining situation</li> <li>describing career experience</li> <li>directing conversion</li> <li>exploring personal history</li> <li>going in depth</li> <li>indicating understanding</li> <li>positioning in proximity to the researcher</li> <li>presenting professional expertise</li> <li>questioning positionality</li> <li>refusing to comply</li> </ul>
Expectations for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>defining student achievement</li> <li>finding different expectations</li> <li>finding student achievement</li> <li>finding student passion</li> <li>focusing on academics</li> <li>focusing non-writing</li> <li>getting students to grade level</li> <li>having choices</li> <li>keeping students at grade level</li> </ul>
Individual resistance to school change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being hypocritical</li> <li>being in a double bind</li> <li>being isolated</li> <li>being left alone</li> <li>being skeptical</li> <li>getting frustrated</li> <li>judging student potential</li> <li>justifying grading policies</li> <li>keeping your head down</li> <li>limiting based on experience</li> <li>not believing</li> <li>panicking</li> <li>perceiving differences</li> <li>running out of options</li> <li>struggling with instruction</li> </ul>



Having crucial conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addressing bias</li> <li>conflicting cultural values</li> <li>dealing with life</li> <li>finding outliers</li> <li>finding similar perceptions</li> <li>identifying late adopters</li> <li>questioning assumptions</li> <li>redefining relationships</li> <li>starting conversations</li> </ul>
Models of community and school change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming aware</li> <li>challenging assumptions</li> <li>collaborating</li> <li>engaging in struggle</li> <li>finding positive deviants</li> </ul>
Models of community change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being transparent</li> <li>believing in people</li> <li>bringing people together</li> <li>building community</li> <li>expressing hope</li> <li>expressing solidarity</li> <li>finding pressure points</li> <li>finding trust</li> <li>unionizing</li> </ul>
Models of school change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledging difference in schools</li> <li>checking on expectations</li> <li>exploring options</li> <li>letting schools grow</li> <li>making slow progress</li> <li>meaning making</li> <li>providing supports</li> <li>questioning authority</li> <li>reaching out for help</li> <li>reworking</li> <li>sense making</li> </ul>
Motivating factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being part of the team</li> <li>believing you make a difference</li> <li>building relationships</li> <li>building trust</li> <li>delivering in the classroom</li> <li>feeling accepted</li> <li>feeling supported (in vivo)</li> <li>finding success</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving student learning</li> <li>increasing student performance</li> <li>looking at results</li> <li>making a difference</li> <li>motivating people</li> <li>moving in the right direction (in vivo)</li> <li>seeking results</li> <li>sharing showing appreciation</li> <li>supporting</li> </ul>
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dealing with difficult decisions</li> <li>dealing with hard stuff (in vivo)</li> <li>finding agreement</li> <li>finding people</li> <li>finding political support</li> <li>framing issues</li> <li>growing the base</li> <li>situating politics</li> </ul>
Perceptions of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>busing students</li> <li>failing neighborhood schools</li> <li>failing to understand schools</li> <li>getting tricked</li> <li>going into program improvement</li> <li>judging schools</li> <li>labeling schools as failing</li> <li>leaving neighborhood schools</li> <li>moving back to neighborhood schools</li> <li>rationalizing leaving neighborhood schools</li> </ul>
Profession development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>asking for PD</li> <li>AVID training</li> <li>being SADIE trained</li> <li>integrating curriculum</li> <li>learning strategies</li> <li>needing consistency</li> <li>needing instructional strategies</li> <li>needing training</li> <li>providing professional development</li> <li>supporting teachers</li> </ul>
Resource allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accessing resources</li> <li>allocating equitably</li> <li>bringing investment (in vivo)</li> <li>building schools</li> <li>developing infrastructure</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exhausting resources (in vivo)</li> <li>finding partners</li> <li>housing schools</li> <li>investing in schools</li> <li>lowering class sizes</li> <li>providing common prep</li> <li>struggling for resources</li> </ul>
School beliefs structure (current state)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>accepting challenging work</li> <li>believing in schools</li> <li>caring families</li> <li>defining responsibility to students</li> <li>feeling like an expert</li> <li>identifying students at risk</li> <li>making positive change (in vivo)</li> <li>practicing restorative justice</li> <li>providing a safe environment</li> <li>rallying around students</li> <li>seeing low expectations</li> <li>supporting students</li> <li>transforming school</li> <li>wanting to do a good job</li> <li>welcoming environments</li> </ul>
School desired beliefs structure (future state)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>believing in all students</li> <li>breaking down lessons</li> <li>knowing students</li> <li>knowing your population</li> <li>owning beliefs</li> <li>providing the same experience (in vivo)</li> <li>sacrificing for students</li> <li>sharing needs</li> <li>supporting at risk students</li> <li>teachers leading</li> <li>understanding varying levels of students</li> <li>welcoming all students</li> </ul>
Student offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming global citizens</li> <li>broadening curriculum</li> <li>citing preparation for life</li> <li>conferencing with students</li> <li>counseling supports (in vivo)</li> <li>exploring career education</li> <li>implementing AVID</li> <li>preparing students for career</li> <li>providing AP courses</li> </ul>

Structural elements for school changes

aligning programs  
building connections  
building on the work (in vivo)  
building school community  
changing to 4 x 4  
creating support systems  
finding early adopters  
growing organically  
implementing

Teaching models

backward planning (in vivo)  
being GATE certified  
being hands on (in vivo)  
building on student strengths  
co-teaching (in vivo)  
constructivist learning  
defining mastery  
demonstrating mastery  
differentiating in teaching  
focusing on literacy (in vivo)  
personalizing learning  
starting with literacy  
reviewing lesson plans

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## APPENDIX H

### CYCLE 2, AN OVERVIEW OF THEME DEVELOPMENT

Transcribed interviews were developed into 320 gerund open codes, 29 axial codes (see Appendix E), and 8 selected codes. In my process of reflexivity, I generated 12 analytic memos that represented over 100 pages of explorations of my data during the development of my grounded theory. To increase the validity of my findings I conducted an open process of memoing that included the use of a critical friend and member checking through follow-up questions. I used the Constant Comparative method (Charmaz, 2014) to explore the data. In this way I continued to return to the source transcriptions and inductively constructed the coding structures and themes to develop my theories. My process for theory development resulted in four grounded theories that pertain to my research questions which I summarized in Table 3.

Here I will present an overview to supporting my findings in the construction of my four assertions.

**Assertion one.** *The learning potential of students labeled high need is perceived by educational leaders as a result of the interactions of school and community environmental factors.* This aligned with my selective codes of *school supports* and *community supports*. Both Gene and Betty acknowledged that environmental factors of school and community interacted. While coming from different backgrounds and relationships to their context, both participants expressed that the intersection of school and community factors needed to be acknowledged.

For Gene, recognizing community environmental factors was important so that “those kids didn’t get sidetracked by racism.” He discussed the factors that students and families were facing as being related to socioeconomic and racial issues. In discussing the students and families that he represented, he stated that they are subjected to “social and

economic injustice” of the community. Recall that Gene is an organizer, but places the community activities of organizing as being ultimately about student prosperity:

*But even when people are in an organizing campaign and fighting very hard for issues that benefit adults the focus is always “because this is creating a better future for our kids.”*

Betty referenced the environmental factors of the students as being “various” and felt it was first an educator's job to understand this. She stated that:

*we have the task of understanding what the varying levels are, and then working with our staff to provide the professional development necessary so that they are able to teach their students accordingly and with high expectations.*

Betty’s school has many students that choose to go there. She attributes this to school environmental factors stating that “you don't have that feeling of students bullying and harassing each other and they are all very accepting.”

**Assertion two.** *The learning potential of students labeled high need is perceived by educational leaders as being driven by educators who join students in the community struggles the students are engaged in.* This aligned with my selective codes of *school leader’s determination and struggles for change*. Betty and Gene spoke about the need for educators to get involved in the struggles that students were facing. Both had experience seeing that through involvement with students labeled high needs who were able to achieve the same results as those that did not have this label.

Early in Gene’s office he had what he described as an “energizing experience” in seeing educators that joined students in their community struggles. This experience had

Gene meeting with adults whose beliefs systems were equally matched with the “highest level of commitment.” The needs of the students were known and were taken on by educators. Gene recalled that there was “just an incredible sense among educators at those schools that we have to be aware of those issues to figure out ways to support kids and their families.” In this way the belief in students was matched with resolve from the school, a willingness to engage in issues of social injustice, and to invest extra time at work for students.

Betty made her position known to faculty and staff upon becoming the principal at her school. She stated that “it is our sole responsibility of ensuring that all students, regardless of their ability levels, are able to succeed in high school.” Her process of engaging in struggle was both about developing internal options for students, but also about equipping the teachers at her school with the resources they needed. For Betty, she believed in teachers and that they are willing to do whatever it takes for their students. However, sometimes “the teachers really struggle with regards to adapting their curriculum in order to meet the student’s needs.” This was a matter of what struggles students had in their day to day lives and the assumptions that some teachers were making about students. For Betty, there were many crucial conversations that needed to occur to get people to start in the process of “recognizing their own biases of why they feel and think a certain way” so that it could be addressed.

**Assertion three.** *Educational leaders feel they have a responsibility to grow and support learning environments where students who are labeled high needs have the same positive goals established as students not labeled high needs. This aligned with my selective codes of student options and responsive teaching and learning environments.*



Betty and Gene both were advocates for setting positive goals for all students. These goals were sometimes met with skepticism at first. However, through growth models and advancing teaching practice positive goals remained as fixed expectations that were known to the school and community.

Betty took her school through a process of making it an “equal opportunity school.” To which she has worked with her school on a survey that the teachers and students took to identify where things were not perceived as equal. They have embarked on providing a framework where every student will take at least one AP class “regardless of their perceived abilities.” In addition, Betty and staff have resolved to support all students in meeting university entrance requirements which requires them to “come up with actions to better support the students.”

Gene has focused on working with schools that set positive goals for all students. He sees schools achieving that as having responsive environments. In Gene’s observation teachers are “wanting to make a difference.” Gene had been to many places where “those kids were ready to take over the world.” Gene noted that in his experience younger students labeled high needs were not aware of this status and therefore did not respond to the label. However, Gene also acknowledged that when the district set new graduation requirements to address the unequal outcomes at high schools, many in the community felt that the district had set “expectations too high for kids,” particularly for those labeled high needs.

**Assertion four.** *Educational leaders feel they have a responsibility to invest resource allocations of additional staff, finance, and capital investments in our schools and communities where students are labeled high needs.* This aligned with my selective

*codes of equitable investment of resources and providing additional supports for students.*

Betty and Gene both expressed that resource allocation and investments in schools are needed at schools where students are labeled high needs. These investments may come as additional staff, funding for programs, or capital investments such as new school construction. The need for equitable investments was discussed with both participants.

For Gene, he focused on the larger areas of addressing that schools that serve high needs were getting additional resources stating that “I think about what investment equity gives rise to” and that “there is going to be extra counselors, there’s going to be lower class sizes”. In addressing staff resources Betty noted that she had received extra supports to help her teacher in the areas of English language learners. The support was put into place and has been “helping our Gen Ed teachers planning for differentiation.” For Betty the allocation of resources is critical as she identifies this with resistance to the changes, she wanted to bring about to serve all students, but in particular students labeled high needs. Betty stated that “the true push back comes when teachers feel that they have exhausted all of their resources and they still struggle to meet the needs of students.”

Gene looks at resources from several perspectives but has noted a change in how the district operates, stating that “we've got five board members that want our superintendent focused on equity.” Gene points to the district's obligations to invest in schools and communities as extending from similar concepts of urban renewal. This includes capital building campaigns or rebuilding schools and creating systems to ensure that the investment goes into communities where students are labeled high needs. Gene stated that when you review the project placements for the district all the innovation centers are going into those communities with the idea that it not only sparks economic

development in the communities, but will provide learning environments that will help students to meet the increasing learning demands on students.

APPENDIX I

SCHOOL COMMUNITY SURVEY ON  
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS KNOWLEDGE

Q1: How many years of each of the following subject do you need to take to meet the minimum University of California (for example, schools such as UC San Diego and UC Berkeley) and/or California State University (for example, schools such as San Diego State University or California State University San Marcos) systems entrance requirements? (select one box for each subject)

Subjects	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years
History/Social Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laboratory Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language other than English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual & Performing Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College Prep Elective(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2: What three subjects does the University of California system say they would prefer students to take an extra year of? (select three)

- History/Social Sciences     English     Mathematics  
 Laboratory Science     Foreign Language     Visual & Performing Arts  
 College Prep Elective(s)

Q3: The University of California system must approve courses before they will count for their entrance requirements in which of the following subject areas? (select all that are true)

- History/Social Sciences     English     Mathematics  
 Laboratory Science     Foreign Language     Visual & Performing Arts  
 College Prep Elective(s)

Q4: What is the minimum grade point average California State University system (for example, schools such as San Diego State University or California State University San Marcos) accepts as passing? (select one)

- A     B     C     D

Q5: What is the minimum grade point average for University of California (for example, schools such as UC San Diego and UC Berkeley) system accepts as passing? (select one):

- A       B       C       D

Q6: The SAT and ACT are commonly administered tests that are required by: (select all that are true)

- The University of California System       The California State University System  
 Community Colleges in California       All Private Colleges  
 All Out of State Universities

Q7: What students may qualify for scholarships? (select one)

- Students that qualify for free or reduced-price lunch  
 Students that come from a particular racial or ethnic background  
 Students who are the first in their family to attend college  
 Students whose parents belong to a particular occupation  
 It depends on the scholarship

Q8: What students may qualify for federal financial aid? (select one)

- Students that qualify for free or reduced-price lunch  
 Students that come from a particular racial or ethnic background  
 Students who are the first in their family to attend college  
 Students whose parents belong to a particular occupation  
 Nearly all students qualify for some form of federal financial aid

Q9: Articulation is a program where students can:(select one)

- Receive free college credit while taking a course in high school  
 Speak to college counselors about college  
 Can attend a college class for free without receiving credit  
 Talk with college students about what college is like  
 Make visits to colleges

Q10: An Advanced Placement (AP) exam can lead to free college credit if the student scores at what level(s): (select all that are true)

- 1       2       3       4       5

Q11: In California, how many years of each of these subjects do you typically need to take to graduate from high school? (select one box for each subject)

Subject	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years
History/Social Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual & Performing Arts, Foreign Language, or Career Technical Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q12: An internship for a high school student is defined as being:(select one)

- An industry/career-based experience of more than 30 hours where students learn about all aspects of the industry/career
- The opportunity to observe the workplace of one or more people for less than 30 hours
- An offer of employment based upon a period of unpaid work in order to learn a job
- A chance for a student to learn a job so that an employer can reduce their overhead cost
- An opportunity for a student to earn core curriculum course credit by demonstrating their knowledge in a workplace setting

Q13: Students that take career readiness and/or technical education courses are:(select one)

- Less likely to graduate from high school
- Less likely to go to college
- Less likely to complete college
- More likely to go into the military
- More likely to graduate high school and complete college

Q14: The level of reading required for today's workforce is:(select one)

- Considered much lower than it was 20 years ago
- Considered slightly lower than it was 20 years ago
- Considered about the same as it was 20 years ago
- Considered slightly higher than it was 20 years ago
- Considered much higher than it was 20 years ago

Q15: For the career and job market, a certification is:(select one)

- An industry recognized competency issued by an industry approved organization or accredited university
- A document issued by a high school to indicate mastery of a subject
- An award given by a high school to demonstrate academic achievement
- A certificate given by an employer to indicate the successful completion of an internship or job shadow
- None of these are certifications

### **Background and Demographic information**

Gender identification: (select one)

- Female     Male     Other     Decline to State

Age group (select one):

- 18-25     26-35     36-45     46-55  
 56-65     66+     Decline to State

Racial/Ethnic: (select one)

- African American/Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latina/o
- Pacific Islander or Hawaiian
- White
- Two or more races/ethnicities
- Decline to State

What is the primary language spoken at your home:

- English     Spanish     Other: \_\_\_\_\_



Please select your highest educational attainment level:(select one)

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate or equivalent
- Some college or associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree
- Decline to State

What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months? (select one)

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$34,999
- \$35,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 or more
- Decline to State

Tell us about involvement with this school. (select one)

- Official Advisor or Board Member
- Faculty/Staff Member
- Parent/Guardian

How many years have you worked at or with high schools in a paid position? (select one)

- I have not worked at or with high schools in a paid position
- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 15+ years

APPENDIX J

iCCR STUDENT SURVEY/EXAM  
GRADUATE PROFILE AND COLLEGE READINESS

*Sub-Construct 1: Graduate Profile*

Q1: How many years of each of the following subject do you need to take to meet the minimum graduation requirements? (select one box for each subject)

Subjects	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years
History/Social Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laboratory Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language other than English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visual & Performing Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College Prep Elective(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2: For the career and job market, a certification is:(select one)

- An industry recognized competency issued by an industry approved organization or accredited university
- A document issued by a high school to indicate mastery of a subject
- An award given by a high school to demonstrate academic achievement
- A certificate given by an employer to indicate the successful completion of an internship or job shadow
- None of these are certifications

Q3: What is the minimum passing grade for the CSU system (for example, schools such as San Diego State University or California State University San Marcos), UC system (for example, schools such as UC San Diego and UC Berkeley), and our school? (select one)

- A       B       C       D

*Sub-Construct 2: College Readiness*

Q4: What three subjects does the UC system say they would prefer students to take an extra year of? (select three)

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences   | <input type="checkbox"/> English          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science Electives | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> College Prep |

Q5: The UC system must approve courses before they will count for their entrance requirements in which of the following subject areas? (select all that are true)

- |  |   |                                       |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences   | <input type="checkbox"/> English          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science Electives | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> College Prep |

Q5: What is the minimum grade point average for the UC system (for example, schools such as UC San Diego and UC Berkeley) system accepts as passing? (select one):

- A       B       C       D

Q6: The SAT and ACT are commonly administered tests that are required by: (select all that are true):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The University of California     | <input type="checkbox"/> The California State University System |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Colleges in California | <input type="checkbox"/> All Private Colleges                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All Out of State Universities    |   |

Q7: What students may qualify for federal financial aid? (select one)

- Students that need money for school
- Students that have special needs
- Students who are the first in their family to attend college
- Students who academically do well in school
- Nearly all students qualify for some form of federal financial aid

Q8: Articulation is a program where students can:(select one)

- Receive free college credit while taking a course in high school
- Speak to college counselors about college
- Can attend a college class for free without receiving credit
- Talk with college students about what college is like

Make visits to colleges

**Background and Demographic information**

Gender identification: (select *one*)

Female     Male     Other     Would prefer not to respond

Age group (select *one*):

14     15     16     17

Racial/Ethnic: (select *one*)

- African American/Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic or Latina/o
- Pacific Islander or Hawaiian
- White
- Two or more races/ethnicities
- Decline to State

What kind of grades did you get on your last report card: (select *one*)

- Straight A's
- A's and B's
- A's, B's, and C's
- Mostly B's and C's
- I am all over the place on grades
- I have some work to do

I consider myself one of the best students in this school: (select *one*)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX K

IN-SCHOOL STUDENT HOPE SCALE

Part 1 of 4

Goals are about where you want to be in the future. The following six questions are about goals for school, graduation, and your life. There are no right or wrong answers, select the one that best matches your beliefs.

---

1. I plan to graduate from high school.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I have defined for myself what it means to be successful in life.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I plan to get good grades.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. I plan to take an advanced placement course during high school.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. I plan to go to college after I graduate high school.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I have an adult at school that talks to me about my future

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Part 2 of 4

---

Motivation is about our feelings, supports, and finding a reason to reach our goals. The following six questions are about motivation. There are no right or wrong answers, select the one that best matches your beliefs.

---

1. With hard work, I can achieve my goals.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Achieving my future goals is more important than having fun.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. I can think of several ways to achieve my goals

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. I think I can do well in school.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. Adults at school talk about what it takes to be a success in life.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. Adults at school tell me that they know I can achieve my goals.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree



Part 3 of 4

---

Plans are about knowing the steps we need to take to achieve your goals. The following six questions are about where you may be in developing your plans. There are no right or wrong answers, select the one that best matches your beliefs.

---

1. I know what I need to do to get good grades on my class assignments.  

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
  
2. I know what I need to do to get good grades on my report cards.  

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
  
3. I know what courses I need to take to graduate from high school.  

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
  
4. I know what the University of California (UC 'a-g') requirements are.  

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
  
5. I have worked with an adult at school on a plan to be a success in life.  

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
  
6. Adults at school talk to me about how to achieve my goals.  

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Part 4 of 4

---

Knowing some things about you will help us in our study. The following five questions will help us to get know more about you.

---

1. Gender identification

- Female       Male       Other       Would prefer not to respond

2. What is your age

- 14       15       16       17

3. Race/Ethnicity

- African American or Black       American Indian or Alaska Native       Asian       Filipino       Hispanic of Latina/o       Pacific Islander or Hawaiian
- White       Two or more races/ethnicities       Would prefer not to respond

4. What kind of grades did you get on your last report card

- Straight A's       A's and B's       A's, B's, and C's       Mostly B's and C's       I am all over the place on grades       I have some work to do

5. I consider myself one of the best students in this class

- Strongly Agree       Agree       Slightly Agree       Slightly Disagree       Disagree       Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX L

SCHOOL SYSTEM STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

*Sub-construct Student Perceptions of Self*

When I am at school, I feel . . .	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I belong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am safe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. There are expectations for student behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I am a good student.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I can be a better student.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I learn important things that will help me when I grow up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I understand what is expected to get good grades.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Sub-construct of School/Community Supports*

When I am at school, I feel . . .	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My teacher(s) care(s) about me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My teacher(s) think(s) I will be successful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My teachers(s) listens to my ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My principal cares about me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. My teacher(s) believe(s) I can learn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My teacher(s) and principal have high expectations for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. My family believes I can do well in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX M

PERMISSION TO USE THE LEVELS OF USE BRANCHING INTERVIEW MAP



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Jan 16, 2018

PE Ref # 203590

Shawn Loescher  
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Design School  
PO Box 871605

Tempe, AZ 85287

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115 Figure 5.1

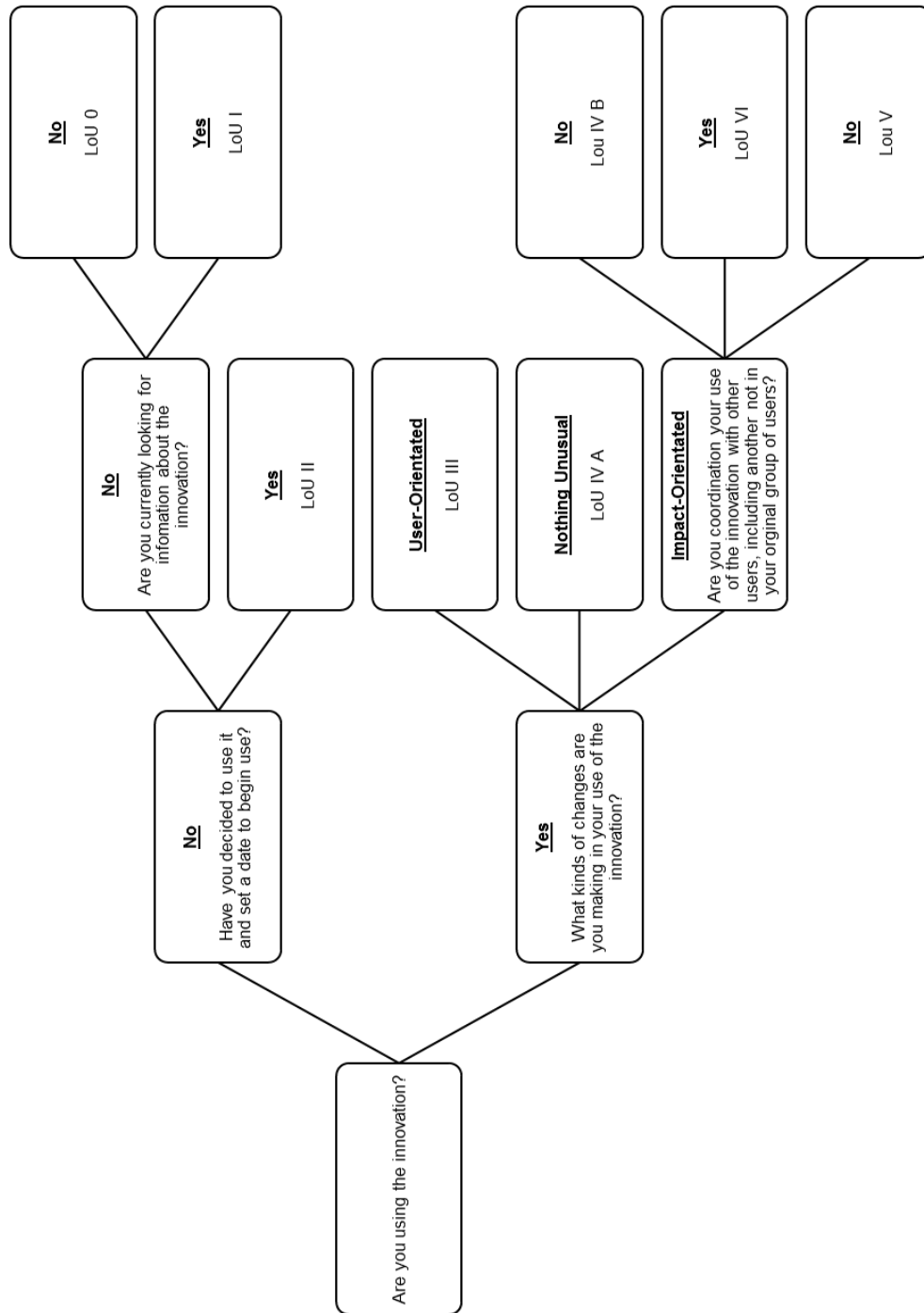
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Sincerely,  
Michael Prince,  
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APPENDIX N

LEVELS OF USE BRANCHING INTERVIEW MAP

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APPENDIX O

ADVISORY TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about how you feel the implementation of iCCR has influenced students.
2. To what extent do you believe that students now understand our graduation requirements? Please explain.
3. Do you believe that all students can meet or exceed our graduation requirements? Please explain why or why not.
4. To what extent do you believe that students now understand UC “a-g” requirements? Please explain.
5. Do you believe that all students understand how to use the iCCR?
6. Do you believe that the implementation of iCCR has supported students in setting future goals? Please explain.
7. Do you believe that the implementation of iCCR has supported students understanding the steps they need to take to meet our expectations? Please explain.
8. What next steps do you think we should take to increase student expectations around college and career readiness?

APPENDIX P  
STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Now that you have completed the iCCR, do you feel you better understand what you need to do to graduate? Please explain.
2. Who have you talked to about graduating from high school?
3. What do you think your teachers think about you and what you can achieve in academic classes?
4. Who do you go to when you feel you cannot reach your goals?
5. Do you know if your parents have taken the iCCR parent workshops? If so, do you talk about the iCCR at home? Do you talk about the future?
6. In what ways do you think the iCCR could be improved?

APPENDIX Q

SEMI-STRUCTURED PARENT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How might our new understandings guide our work and responsibility in student goal formation?
2. How might our new understandings guide our work and responsibility in pathway development and formation?
3. How might our new understandings guide our work and responsibility in developing agency thinking and replenishment?

APPENDIX R  
DISSERTATION IRB APPROVAL



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Craig Mertler  
 Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - West  
 602/543-2829  
 Craig.Mertler@asu.edu

Dear Craig Mertler:

On 2/7/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Hope as Strategy: The Effectiveness of an Innovation of the Mind
Investigator:	Craig Mertler
IRB ID:	STUDY00007575
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Student Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Student Assent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Community Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Teacher Interview Recruit and Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Student Assent Form Interview, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Student Survey iCCR, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Levels of Use Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• In School Hope Scale, Category: Measures (Survey</li> </ul>



	<p>questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallup Hope Scale, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Adult Survey Recruit and Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Parent Recruit and Consent Form for Student Interviews , Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Advisory Focus Group Recruit and Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• School System Survey, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• School System Approval, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc);</li> <li>• Parent Focus Group Recruit and Consent Form, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Community Focus Group Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Hope as Strategy 503a Form, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Advisory Teacher Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Parent Workshop Focus Group Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> </ul>
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The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings, (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/7/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Shawn Loescher  
Shawn Loescher

APPENDIX S  
STUDENT INTERVIEW AXIAL CODES

Axial	Gerund Open Codes
Avoiding conflict	avoiding answering avoiding problems avoiding talks about the future being cautious about the future being cynical being dramatic clarifying statement clarifying the question forgetting forgetting past discussions keeping goals hidden from family and peers rationalizing searching for words talking about nonsense
Becoming responsible	accepting failure adapting - in vivo being disappointed being educated being on task being on track being organized - in vivo catching up engaging in the class following up - in vivo growing up knowing what's going to happen knowing what's missing making up credits making up tests missing tests missing work turned in needing to check on grades staying on task trying to make sense
Being accountable	being responsible for grades failing a class failing in an academic goal falling behind falling behind in schoolwork feeling disappointed in self feeling responsible

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>having consequences</li> <li>having low grades</li> <li>messing up</li> <li>missing class assignments</li> <li>needing to pass a class</li> <li>talking about grades</li> </ul>
Believing in self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being strong</li> <li>believing in self</li> <li>debating with self</li> <li>establishing credibility</li> <li>hoping things will work out</li> <li>learning by yourself</li> <li>learning all the time - in vivo</li> <li>opening up - in vivo</li> <li>persevering</li> <li>pushing myself</li> <li>putting in effort</li> <li>rejecting accommodations</li> </ul>
Caring for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being available</li> <li>being in the now</li> <li>being involved</li> <li>being shown around</li> <li>celebrating others</li> <li>putting others first</li> <li>seeing others succeed</li> <li>showing concern</li> <li>watching people learn</li> </ul>
Communicating needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>asking about CRBS</li> <li>asking for help</li> <li>bouncing off ideas in vivo</li> <li>bringing things up</li> <li>communicating to people</li> <li>describing a project</li> <li>getting advice</li> <li>getting help</li> <li>getting parents concerned</li> <li>having a parent that understands advisory</li> <li>having casual talks</li> <li>having informal talks</li> <li>having questions</li> <li>helping</li> <li>lacking communication</li> <li>making a change from CRBS</li> </ul>

missing communication  
needing a different advisory teacher  
needing advisory  
nothing she told me - in vivo  
seeking help  
seeking moral advice  
sharing project time  
sharing struggles  
talking with advisory teacher  
talking with siblings  
talking with teachers  
updating parents  
wanting CRBS

Creating community

believing in all students  
believing in students  
building student teacher relationships  
building student teams  
creating family environment  
creating support groups  
differentiating advisories  
feeling cared about  
feeling close to advisory teacher  
feeling comfortable with teacher  
feeling connected  
feeling safe - in vivo  
feeling supported  
feeling that the teacher is good  
giving a false impression  
having a bad relationship with a teacher  
having a small class  
having an iron fist  
having an adult to be there  
having faith in students  
having fun  
having fun days  
having students lead  
knowing students  
knowing your teacher  
learning in advisory  
liking a teacher  
liking advisory  
liking another teacher  
liking smaller schools  
liking the class environment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>needing to be seen</li> <li>seeking adult mentor</li> <li>seeking an adult friend</li> <li>seeking connections with advisor</li> <li>understanding students</li> <li>wanting to feel included</li> <li>wanting to know your teacher</li> </ul>
Developing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being able to hear the teacher</li> <li>being forced - in vivo</li> <li>being told</li> <li>checking on grades</li> <li>choosing advisory</li> <li>doing grade checks</li> <li>feeling prepared</li> <li>feeling structured</li> <li>getting assigned an advisory task</li> <li>getting on task</li> <li>getting things done</li> <li>getting work done</li> <li>giving assignments</li> <li>having a checklist</li> <li>having a guiding document</li> <li>having a plan</li> <li>having a schedule</li> <li>having a weekly schedule</li> <li>having assignments</li> <li>having no plan</li> <li>having structure</li> <li>identifying skills</li> <li>identifying supports</li> <li>identifying weak strategies</li> <li>increasing changes</li> <li>keeping an agenda</li> <li>keeping up</li> <li>needing structure</li> <li>needing time management skills</li> <li>personalizing assignments</li> <li>planning</li> <li>planning ahead</li> <li>seeking structure</li> <li>taking notes</li> <li>using an advisory tool</li> </ul>
Facing challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledging differences in teacher beliefs</li> </ul>

acknowledging disconnections  
adjusting to a new teacher  
assuming pathways were in place  
being afraid  
being an outlier problem  
being based in books  
being stressed  
being stuck in now  
being uninformed  
being unmotivated  
being unsure  
changing advisory teachers  
coming from another system  
ending the year  
facing challenges  
failing to teach  
feeling disconnected  
feeling lost  
feeling out of control  
feeling unchallenged  
feeling unmotivated  
feeling unsupported  
getting confused  
getting distracted  
getting frustrated  
getting mixed up  
getting sick  
getting stuck  
giving up on a teacher  
grading correctly  
hating a class  
having advisor with low expectations  
having to move  
identifying barriers  
identifying challenges  
identifying content  
identifying previous teachers with low expectations  
knowing what you're teaching  
lacking academics  
lacking meaning  
lacking structure  
lacking teacher expectations  
limiting what you think of students  
loathing traditional schooling  
minimizing self

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>missing courses</li> <li>missing teachers - in vivo</li> <li>needing to be challenged</li> <li>returning teachers</li> <li>seeing few supports</li> <li>seeing other advisories do better</li> <li>shutting down</li> <li>slacking off - in vivo</li> <li>staffing turnover</li> <li>struggling</li> <li>struggling in English</li> <li>struggling with first year teachers</li> </ul>
Finding success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>achieving goals</li> <li>completing math</li> <li>doing better</li> <li>feeling good about grades</li> <li>figuring it out</li> <li>finding academic success</li> <li>getting good grades</li> <li>reaching goals</li> <li>working hard</li> </ul>
Imagining the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming a pilot</li> <li>becoming an engineer</li> <li>becoming aware</li> <li>becoming independent</li> <li>becoming successful</li> <li>committing to one thing</li> <li>contemplating college as future</li> <li>contemplating the future</li> <li>discovering a workplace</li> <li>exploring careers</li> <li>exploring careers outside of advisory</li> <li>exploring life</li> <li>exploring not going to college</li> <li>exploring options</li> <li>fearing expensive housing</li> <li>fearing failure</li> <li>figuring out what's best</li> <li>finding a college</li> <li>finding a passion</li> <li>getting a job</li> <li>getting a reward</li> <li>getting prepared</li> </ul>



getting prepared for life  
getting ready  
getting ready for a career  
getting ready for college  
going directly to four-year college  
going to college  
going to community college  
graduating high school - in vivo  
having a college preference  
having career options  
identifying a college  
learning about careers  
learning about college  
looking at college departments  
looking beyond college  
making choices  
meeting professionals  
raising kids  
realizing size of college  
retiring  
seeing a better future  
seeing the future  
seeking a master's degree  
seeking life adventure  
seeking meaning in life  
talking about going to college  
talking about life after high school  
talking about options  
talking broadly  
talking in the car  
talking with boy/girlfriend  
talking with friends  
talking with grandparents  
talking with parents  
talking with relative  
talking with the principal  
thinking about local colleges  
wanting happiness  
wanting something different  
wanting success  
wanting to achieve goals

Knowing yourself

being bilingual  
being busy  
being clear

being good at math  
being linear  
being lonely  
being motivated  
being nervous  
feeling unsure  
feeling unwanted  
finding a reason  
finding an interest  
finding meaning  
gaining more knowledge - in vivo  
getting interested  
getting what you need  
going to charter school  
having prior commitments  
holding back  
identifying shortcomings  
knowing academic strengths  
knowing I can do better  
knowing me  
knowing shortcomings  
liking math  
liking science  
loving learning  
loving some textbooks  
making sense  
missing out  
needing pathway knowledge  
organically learning  
taking it seriously  
talking about math and science  
talking about me  
talking about now  
trying to find my passion in vivo  
valuing life  
writing  
writing poetry

Learning a pathway

considering college financing  
demonstrating college entrance requirements  
following the advisor  
going on a job shadow  
interviewing colleges  
interviewing professionals  
knowing a-g

knowing class content  
knowing college options  
knowing minimum entrance requirements  
knowing what to do  
learning about college requirements  
learning about hiring  
learning about pathways  
learning about work evaluation  
learning academic pathways  
learning a-g  
learning from college students  
learning from others  
learning from pop culture examples  
losing a career option  
researching at home  
searching college websites  
seeking a pathway  
taking SATs  
talking about careers  
talking about pathways  
talking about school  
talking in class  
talking with tour guides  
transferring to four-year college  
understanding college  
understanding HS graduation requirements  
visiting colleges

Reflecting

empathizing  
exploring 8th grade  
exploring the past  
expressing myself - in vivo  
expressing self  
expressing worries  
missing middle school preparation  
reflecting on different requirements  
reoccurring topic - in vivo  
starting in middle school  
taking advisors recommendations

Replenishing agency

being comforted  
being encouraged  
being known by teachers  
being seen  
being there for us

being unknown by teachers  
caring for our personal lives  
encouraging  
feeling believed in by teachers  
feeling encouraged  
feeling successful  
getting affirmation from teachers  
getting attention  
getting better  
getting excited  
getting support  
hearing supportive statements  
identifying advisory teacher  
identifying family  
identifying good teachers  
identifying teachers  
understanding my role - in vivo

Seeking alternatives

being given extra chances  
defining different situations  
differentiating assignments  
finding similarities  
following a fixed path example  
getting extra chances  
getting extra credit  
getting options  
going to summer school  
having an alternative assignment  
identifying options  
needing more time  
needing more time with a teacher  
needing options  
seeking alternative curriculum  
seeking alternative pathways  
seeking more time  
seeking options  
waiting time  
wanting a backup

Setting goals

creating goals - in vivo  
developing near term goals  
establishing baseline goal  
getting into college  
having academic goals  
having an advisor with high expectations

having expectations  
having high expectations  
having personal expectations  
having personal expectations of college  
having personal goals  
joining the military  
needing expectations  
preparing for college  
setting goals - in vivo  
setting grade goals  
setting homework goals  
setting long term goals  
setting more goals  
setting positive goals  
setting project goals  
setting short term goals  
setting subject goals  
taking advanced classes  
talking about expectations

Sharing goals

presenting learning to peer's  
presenting to people  
sharing goals  
sharing in advisory

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APPENDIX T

ADVISORY TEACHER INTERVIEW AXIAL CODE ALIGNMENT

Axial	Gerund Open Codes
Addressing social issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being raised in poverty</li> <li>developing opportunities for underrepresented</li> <li>developing social justice projects</li> <li>failing to reach non-college bound students</li> <li>having absent parents</li> <li>having parents with new families</li> <li>knowing your background is different than students</li> <li>lacking family knowledge of college</li> <li>learning about voting rights</li> <li>moving homes</li> <li>needing to talk about social issues</li> <li>needing to understand political aspects</li> <li>talking about institutional oppression</li> <li>talking about issues in society</li> <li>talking about social justice with students</li> <li>teaching in a world that doesn't value education - in vivo</li> </ul>
Becoming responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming accountable</li> <li>completing math assignments</li> <li>doing better</li> <li>doing their homework</li> <li>having a bad attitude</li> <li>knowing what needs to be done</li> <li>learning about consequences</li> <li>learning adult expectations</li> <li>learning to pass a class</li> <li>needing to learn more</li> <li>putting in the work</li> <li>recognizing the need for hard work</li> <li>ruining student fun</li> <li>understanding consequences</li> <li>understanding GPA</li> <li>understanding what has to be done</li> <li>watching students mature</li> <li>working on assignments</li> </ul>
Creating community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>affirming students understand advisory purpose</li> <li>asking to clarify a question.</li> <li>asking why</li> <li>being careful about what you say</li> <li>being seen as human through advisory</li> </ul>

bonding with students  
bringing parents into the discussion  
building a school  
building relationships  
committing to each other  
contacting parents  
developing community  
developing students  
enjoying a college visit  
finding meaning in advisory class  
finding purpose in advisory  
focusing on relationships  
getting parents involved  
having conversations  
having influence on kids - advisory  
laying the foundation - in vivo  
learning with the students  
providing an example  
providing service hours to school  
reaching out to outlier groups  
spending time together  
struggling to find an example  
talking with parents  
telling a joke  
using advisory as bonding time  
using advisory for fun  
wanting more time  
wanting more time with students

Developing professional  
practice

acting like a professional  
being a specialist  
being absent from a day - teacher  
being allowed to take risks  
being new to teaching  
being willing to try something new  
coming from a tradition teaching school  
developing ethics  
keeping complaints from students  
lacking a-g experience - teachers  
learning about advisory - teacher  
learning about a-g - advisory teacher  
making decision based on adults  
needing a caring adult  
needing a consistent teacher  
needing adult integrity



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>needing adults to role model</li> <li>needing highly educated teachers</li> <li>needing professionalism</li> <li>recognizing need for a-g PD</li> <li>rejecting at first</li> </ul>
Developing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changing habits</li> <li>developing habits</li> <li>developing skills</li> <li>developing tasks</li> <li>developing timelines</li> <li>explaining their grades</li> <li>figuring out student transcripts a-g</li> <li>getting overwhelmed with too much information</li> <li>getting structured</li> <li>having an academic plan</li> <li>having tools to graduate</li> <li>helping students navigate pathways</li> <li>learning about school in advisory</li> <li>learning the sis</li> <li>learning to use the LMS</li> <li>needing follow through - students</li> <li>wanting planners for students</li> <li>writing down missing assignments</li> </ul>
Developing systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agreeing that parent education is important</li> <li>agreeing that we need middle school iCCR</li> <li>becoming clearer on process</li> <li>becoming more productive in advisory</li> <li>building programs</li> <li>changing to four day a week advisory</li> <li>continuing to develop advisory</li> <li>developing advisory</li> <li>developing curriculum</li> <li>developing internships</li> <li>doing the same thing - in vivo</li> <li>engaging curriculum</li> <li>finding a curriculum balance</li> <li>focusing on service hours</li> <li>getting coordinated</li> <li>getting on the same page</li> <li>having a weekly schedule</li> <li>having activities</li> <li>having the same calendar</li> <li>hoping for earlier academic identity</li> </ul>

identifying area of growth for advisory  
implementing advisory with IEPs  
looking for structure  
making a-g easier to understand  
making things clearer  
needing more clarity  
needing time for personalization  
needing to simplify UC 'a-g' instrument  
providing data-based examples to students  
starting to plan for next year  
talking about improvement cycles  
wanting iCCR information early  
wanting monthly themes  
wanting more coordination  
wanting more time to talk about next year

Having the system fail  
students

addressing sped needs too late  
beginning of the school year - in vivo  
being given inflated middle school grades  
being passed along - in vivo  
being social promoted in middle school  
being unprepared  
coming from a weak middle school program  
falling into the cracks - in vivo  
falling too far behind to graduate  
frustrating sped students  
having a middle to high school disconnection  
having a misconception about your school  
performance  
having a reality check  
having students lead advisory  
receiving students below grade level  
spiraling out of control - in vivo  
talking about false hope - in vivo

Identifying student needs

addressing different needs  
developing opportunities for students  
Finding the right program for SPED students  
giving students a second chance  
going to credit recovery  
having SPED challenges  
having students with attention deficit  
identifying 10th graders  
identifying 9th graders  
identifying a spectrum of student performance

identifying different groups of students  
identifying math as a barrier to college  
identifying non-college bound students  
identifying SPED gaps  
identifying students on alternative curriculum  
lacking demographic correlation  
looking case by case  
missing credits  
receiving SPED services  
recognizing students on alternative curriculum  
recognizing variations in student success  
refusing to do schoolwork  
talking about math  
wanting teachers not to care  
wanting to be left alone - student  
wanting to have it easy  
working for most students

#### Imagining the future

defining the future  
getting a degree for more money  
having expectations  
learning about life  
learning about the world  
looking into college - in vivo  
obsessing about college  
picturing different career options  
planning a college resume  
realizing what you want to do in the future  
realizing you could go to college too  
seeing a graduating class  
seeing college  
seeing college for the first time  
seeing options  
seeing yourself at college  
talking about college  
thinking about the future for students

#### Knowing yourself

being self-conscious - student  
caring about what people think - student  
caring about what people think of you - student  
feeling anxiety  
getting a break in the day  
having lots of things to coordinate - advisors  
having teaching experience  
learning about self

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>needing a better attitude first</li> <li>procrastinating</li> <li>reflecting</li> <li>reflecting on a student's journey</li> <li>surviving</li> <li>thinking something different than what you say</li> <li>understanding workload</li> <li>understanding your problems</li> </ul>
Lacking trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>addressing student rumors</li> <li>being accused of lying by a student</li> <li>being against everyone</li> <li>being indoctrinated in mistrust</li> <li>feelings of mistrust</li> <li>finding it hard to answer a question</li> <li>flourishing lack of trust</li> <li>identifying students with low trust</li> <li>missing the importance of advisory</li> <li>speculating about trust</li> <li>thinking adults make things up</li> <li>thinking college was cool</li> <li>trying to prove adults are wrong</li> </ul>
Learning a pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coming from another state system</li> <li>confusing college and high school graduation requirements</li> <li>going on college visits</li> <li>going on job shadows</li> <li>going to a new school</li> <li>increasing student knowledge of college</li> <li>influencing college and career readiness</li> <li>knowing another state's system</li> <li>learning about a-g - students</li> <li>learning about FAFSA</li> <li>learning about finance</li> <li>learning about scholarships</li> <li>learning from a job shadow</li> <li>preparing for SATs</li> <li>recognizing failure of knowing a-g</li> <li>reflecting upon graduation requirements - teacher</li> <li>understanding 'a-g'</li> <li>understanding college entrance process</li> <li>understanding college entrance requirements</li> <li>understanding graduation requirements</li> </ul>
Learning about failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>becoming a third-year freshman</li> </ul>

being given-up on - student  
dropping a class  
failing a class - in vivo  
failing to reach project goals  
getting a wake-up call  
getting hurt  
getting your eyes opened  
learning about failing  
losing hope  
not feeling important - student  
realizing failure too late  
relinquishing control  
repeating a grade  
repeating a year  
retaking the sat

Replenishing agency

being a good middle school student  
celebrating student success  
developing understanding  
finding success  
gaining and losing ground  
hearing from college tour guides  
identifying successful students  
learning about college from someone like you  
learning from college tour guides  
looking at advisory as a type of counseling  
making an impact - advisory  
making sense  
relating to a college tour guide  
seeing results  
seeing someone like you make it  
spacing college visits  
starting to understand  
thinking college is cool

Seeking to make a difference

agreeing that we should focus on growth  
being sad about a student not doing well  
believing in all students  
believing most students can achieve  
believing students can graduate  
believing we could have made a difference  
choosing to go into education  
pushing the envelope - in vivo  
seeing growth  
seeking more benefits for SPED students

	<p>         thinking about freshman          thinking things would have been different          wanting more time to support SPED students          wanting to change the world through teaching          wanting to do more          wanting to do more for SPED students          wanting to go to work          wondering if we had gotten to a student sooner          wondering why       </p>
Setting goals	<p>         being college orientated          challenging students          challenging yourself          changing majors in college          changing mindset          choosing a charter school          coming back to school          finding another job          getting prepared for college          getting SPED student certification          having common advisory goals          having maintenance goals - high achievers          learning graduation requirements          making it to the next grade          needing additional goals for high achievers          planning for college          planning your future          raising the bar on goals          setting future goals - in vivo          setting goals          setting long term goals          setting positive goals          setting short term goals          setting SMART goals          taking regent exams          taking the SAT          wanting to stay in cohort       </p>
Using an advisory strategy	<p>         checking for student progress          checking on grades          forgetting specifics of entrance requirements          getting extra help          having a guiding document          holding students accountable          making a personalized a-g document       </p>

making connections  
tracking student progress - in vivo  
using an advisory tool

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APPENDIX U

PARENT INTERVIEW AXIAL CODE ALIGNMENT



Axial	Gerund Open Codes
Addressing social issues	acknowledging another countries' value system applying to one school being a mother being against nepotism being occupied - in vivo being relative to family status coming from a different country coming from a home with no college knowledge coming from a single parent household competing in a global marketplace coping with a changing world damaging the future of their kids - in vivo dealing with a globalized society developing predictive metrics developing prison populations developing school policies on protecting students' rights developing state graduation requirements - history disturbing the status quo encountering tragedies at home fearing being deported fearing living on their own fearing the police feeling alone in a public space finding importance of technical schools going to a rich kids' school graduating students without preparation having a parent who has lost hope having expectations about graduation requirements having hierarchy in society having life circumstances having no time to attend school meetings having parents that are not engaged institutionalizing poverty knowing people that have been deported lacking the basics learning to protest living in fear making life decisions on behalf of 13-14 year-olds needing childcare needing to work two jobs needing vocational education workers perceiving the world as a dark place protecting students from the government

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protesting in the streets  
reflecting on a changed world  
reflecting on the pace of change  
responding to adversity  
serving a diverse student population  
shocking the expectations were so low - in vivo  
starting at the bottom  
talking about social strife  
thinking California would be a leader  
thinking that vocational education was less than  
trying to rebrand technical schools  
valuing career education  
wanting the state to require more from students  
wanting to survive - in vivo

Becoming responsible

being a hard worker  
being accountable  
being on the right track  
being responsible for finding out more  
being responsible for your attitude  
being too smart  
being trainable  
being treated like a child  
being treated like an adult  
being trustworthy  
caring what your parents think  
challenging yourself  
developing purchasing plans  
doing your part - students  
explaining the situation - students  
failing to do your work  
falling behind  
getting a B  
getting your math done  
going to school as your job  
going to summer school  
having a good attitude  
having an obligation to learn more  
identifying with your grades  
knowing what to do  
learning about grades  
learning all the time  
learning to be independent  
learning to manage your time  
learning to take action steps

making good choices  
making plans  
making priorities  
making your way in the world  
managing time  
needing strong work ethic  
needing to be told  
pushing forward  
realizing you have to decide  
signing up for the sat online  
taking responsibility as a parent - in vivo  
taking the sat  
working hard  
working on life challenges  
working on your goals

Being future oriented

becoming more flexible  
being fearless of failure  
being focused  
being future oriented  
being willing to take risks  
believing you can go to college  
creating a future identity  
creating visualization maps  
embracing change  
feeling comfortable with changes  
finding experts  
having a base  
having a sense of control - in vivo  
narrowing focus  
needing a vision of the future  
searching for solutions  
seeing complexity  
seeing the future  
seeing the possibilities  
solving for multiple possibilities  
taking a leap of faith - in vivo  
taking risks  
talking about a bias for action  
talking about the future  
trying to solve the impossible  
weighing risks

Being privileged

appreciating what you have  
being privileged with rights

being “UC” centric  
coming from wealth  
growing up with secured rights  
having - not for my kid syndrome - in vivo  
having clean water  
having enough food  
having good schools  
having knowledgeable parents  
having the law on your side  
learning that others are not as well off  
living in peace  
putting California first on the agenda  
realizing your privilege  
relying on parent’s wealth  
taking things for granted  
valuing degrees to a fault

Building community

acting appropriate at church  
affirming parent workshop helped  
appealing location - in vivo  
arguing with parents about involvement  
being respected  
being with friends  
building relationships  
feeling good through giving  
finding common interests  
getting push back from parents about higher graduation requirements  
giving away something you wanted  
giving to the less fortunate  
going to award ceremonies  
having a parenting philosophy  
having the adults in charge  
helping each other out  
helping people  
joining robotics  
laughing  
meeting them where they are - students  
respecting elders  
showing love through helping  
struggling together  
talking about parenting  
talking about scenarios  
talking with other parents  
wanting more parents involved

	wanting more parents to participate wanting to help out
Communicating	communicating in multiple ways communicating requirements with parents communicating the expectations communicating through middle class norms creating slogans doing whatever it takes to communicate to students' expectations exploring communication strategies getting information from an authority getting information to parents getting more information getting more information about the SAT getting new information giving out laminated copies - in vivo having a print rich environment having college banners having goals stated in student led conferences having parents promote parent workshops having things in print having workshop materials online hearing a testimonial holding meetings at people's homes inviting parents to participate marketing - in vivo organizing through promotoras putting up information everywhere questioning authorities relying upon information from school seeking guidance from school officials sharing goals sharing thoughts shooting for the same goal - in vivo something simple and powerful stating goals in presentations of learning talking about teachers talking as part of teamwork talking with advisory teacher talking with teachers trying different communication strategies
Developing skills	being challenged competing with adults

doing the math in your head  
engaging in mastery learning programs  
gaining critical thinking skills  
gaining experiences  
gaining skills in college  
getting better  
getting more skills  
getting out of your comfort zone  
getting smarter  
getting the right equipment  
learning about getting better  
learning about teamwork  
learning at your own pace  
learning problem solving - in vivo  
learning to question schools  
looking for answers  
looking to remember state requirements  
needing math on a daily basis  
needing more math  
preparing students for a capitalistic system  
preparing students for commerce  
pushing things off  
trying to understand what college does  
understanding different methods

#### Developing systems

adapting to students - teachers  
creating spaces to talk about the future  
dividing responsibilities  
engaging more parents  
engaging parents  
failing to present overseas colleges as an option  
finding passionate teachers  
getting courses UC 'a-g' approved  
having a small school environment  
having a systems approach  
having earlier interventions  
having limited time  
having parent meetings  
having teachers lead internship placements  
implementing financial literacy  
lacking structure  
letting students down  
making a middle school trip to colleges  
needing information as a freshman  
needing information in middle school

needing quality controls  
needing to engage more parents  
providing a dense parent workshop  
providing parent workshops  
providing structure  
reaching more parents  
redesigning schools  
saving money through earned credit  
seeking a support system for students  
taking sat in sophomore year  
taking the maximum  
talking about traditional counselor workload  
trying to reach parents  
using advisory as counseling

### Exploring the Future

adding five teachers  
being a double major  
being drawn to the military  
being pushed to find out more  
choosing for life  
choosing your future career  
exploring careers  
exploring college options  
exploring college systems  
exploring colleges overseas  
exploring life options  
exploring non-linear academic paths  
exploring out of state university options  
exploring science and polytechnic universities  
exploring the future  
exploring the UK system  
figuring out what you want to do when your grow-up  
finding a college you like  
finding a college you want to go to  
finding a new location for the school  
finding a passion  
finding the college you want to attend  
finding the right college for your passion  
getting ready for college  
going away to college  
going on a job shadow  
going on an internship  
going on college visits  
having a dream  
having a long-range plan

learning about a career  
learning about apprenticeship programs  
learning along the way - in vivo  
looking at careers more broadly  
looking at tier I universities  
making a change  
needing practical experience  
needing to look at more colleges  
preparing for an unknown future  
providing your child experiences  
researching college requirements  
seeking the right answer  
taking a gap year  
taking a vocational path  
talking about apprenticeships  
talking about Canadian colleges  
talking about career education  
talking about college  
talking about colleges overseas  
transferring to a state college  
visiting workplaces  
visualizing what's possible  
wanting life adventure  
wanting to know what you get from education  
working for someone else

#### Finding success

being a success  
being accomplished  
being in the principal's advisory  
being the first to go to college  
being top of your class  
completing college  
earning college credits in apprenticeships  
finding success  
finding value in new advisory  
finding value in new iCCR  
getting a bachelor's degree  
getting a doctorate  
getting a good job  
getting a job  
getting a master's degree  
getting an apprenticeship  
getting into prestigious schools  
going to a college of your choice  
going to a community college



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>going to a four-year university</li> <li>having workshops at different times for working parents</li> <li>providing advisory period</li> <li>reflecting on workshop</li> <li>seeing results</li> <li>taking time to educate parents</li> <li>utilizing advisory successfully</li> </ul>
Growing up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being closer to adulthood than to childhood</li> <li>being laughed at</li> <li>being ready to be an adult</li> <li>changing interest as you grow up</li> <li>changing your mind about a career</li> <li>growing up</li> <li>having a friend with no interest in college</li> <li>having a high school moment</li> <li>having a moment</li> <li>having a teenager mindset</li> <li>lacking a sense of control</li> <li>needing to be challenged</li> <li>seeing them as children</li> <li>transitioning to being an adult</li> <li>wanting to be left alone</li> </ul>
Having expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being expected to go to college</li> <li>believing that traditional districts know more</li> <li>having high standards</li> <li>having parent expectations</li> <li>holding your kid accountable</li> <li>providing expectations</li> <li>trying to reconcile low expectations</li> </ul>
Knowing your family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being a guinea pig - in vivo</li> <li>being different than your spouse</li> <li>being family oriented</li> <li>being from another country</li> <li>being on the same page with your spouse</li> <li>being told you will not inherit your family's money</li> <li>bouncing ideas off your spouse</li> <li>having a fearless younger child</li> <li>having children from different generations</li> <li>having children with different personalities</li> <li>having children with reversed roles</li> <li>having family that resides overseas</li> <li>having older parents</li> <li>having parents in high education</li> </ul>

investing time in your children  
knowing what your child is going to do  
knowing your child acts differently at school  
knowing your child is smart  
noticing differences in your children  
questioning your child  
realizing your family dynamic  
wanting to keep living at home

#### Knowing yourself

being a nonconformist  
being a self-starter  
being alienated  
being ambitious  
being anti-authority  
being assertive  
being curious about what students are thinking  
being different  
being independent  
being less proactive  
being multicultural  
being overt  
being predisposed to authority  
being shy  
being smart  
being surprised by your child  
choosing not to have children - student  
choosing what makes you happy  
coming from higher education  
drawing on personal experience  
feeling happy with how things turned out  
feeling overburdened  
feeling self-conscious  
getting overwhelmed  
having a hard time finding a passion  
having a support group  
having an approach to life  
knowing your academic history  
learning to deal with stress  
learning to follow orders  
losing control - students  
losing interest  
panicking  
providing examples  
reflecting on your path to success  
setting personal boundaries

taking aptitude tests  
taking time off from academics  
wanting to give up  
wanting to have children  
wanting to leave home  
wanting to stay close to home

#### Learning a pathway

being unclear about graduation requirements  
changing extracurricular activities for college  
changing systems and requirements  
defining the pathway  
exploring different college entrance requirements  
focusing on a-g  
focusing on four-year universities  
focusing on universities  
getting credits  
getting to know college applications  
having a checklist  
having a check sheet  
having a clear path  
having a plan  
having check-up sheets  
having real world experience - in vivo  
knowing that the SAT is different now  
knowing UC 'a-g'  
learning about college eligibility requirements  
learning about college entrance requirements  
learning about federal aide  
learning about financing  
learning about high school graduation requirements  
learning about scholarships  
learning about state colleges  
learning about UC 'a-g'  
learning about what you need to do  
learning about what you want to do  
learning new college requirements  
meeting UC 'a-g' requirements for classes  
planning for a career  
qualifying for UC schools  
seeking out college information - parents  
taking a foreign language  
taking the SAT multiple times  
talking about graduation requirement variations  
talking about 'a-g' in advisory  
understanding requirements

visiting where your siblings went to college  
 waiting for clear choices  
 working on college applications

Learning from failure

- being afraid of failing
- being too scared to try
- failing by not trying
- failing many times before
- failing to be the best
- getting punished
- having a design that doesn't work
- knowing how to fail
- learning as part of succeeding
- learning from mistakes
- learning through failing
- missing the point
- missing the right equipment

Replenishing agency

- being assured
- being encouraged to earn a bachelor's degree
- being inspired
- being nurtured
- being proud of your child
- being supportive
- being with people you like
- discussing a spectrum of agency affirmation levels
- encouraging our children
- feeling connected to your family
- finding resilience
- getting feedback from advisors
- getting feedback right away
- getting supports
- having a cheerleader
- having current college students speak with kids
- having peer mentors
- having people with shared interest
- hearing it's possible
- learning from others
- needing to be urged
- parenting someone else's kids
- providing a safety net for children
- relaxing after school
- remembering taking the sat as a student
- seeing firsthand - in vivo
- seeing successful people that look like you

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>starting with why</li> <li>understanding why</li> </ul>
Seeking consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledging differences in advisory experiences</li> <li>aligning words and actions</li> <li>answering questions</li> <li>asking why</li> <li>being afraid of change</li> <li>continuing presentations of learning</li> <li>having concerns</li> <li>having concerns about a charter school</li> <li>having students take charge of learning</li> <li>keeping teachers</li> <li>making assumptions</li> <li>needing consistency of beliefs</li> <li>seeing trends in cohorts</li> <li>staffing changes</li> <li>varying learning programs</li> <li>wanting the same advisor</li> <li>worrying about changes</li> </ul>
Setting goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating goals</li> <li>forming goals</li> <li>forming high school goals</li> <li>having achievable goals</li> <li>having an academic plan</li> <li>having specific goals</li> <li>setting goals</li> <li>setting goals for high achievers</li> <li>setting higher goals</li> <li>taking AP exams</li> <li>talking about goals</li> </ul>
Wanting more for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>avoiding previous hardships</li> <li>becoming disconnected from the world</li> <li>becoming emotionally disconnected</li> <li>being a traveler in your life</li> <li>being concerned</li> <li>being concerned about a start-up school</li> <li>being concerned about charter schools</li> <li>being disappointed in state graduation requirements</li> <li>being protective of children</li> <li>being surprised at lower graduation requirements from state</li> <li>disturbing lack of parent involvement</li> <li>earning an AA</li> </ul>

ending up in rehab  
fearing your child will miss out in the future  
fulfilling your potential  
having choices for your child  
having different definitions of success  
having doubts  
having flexibility  
missing the whole picture  
needing a why  
needing ambition  
needing permission  
needing permission to act  
observing life  
putting your fears on first child  
realizing that your child doesn't want to go to a university  
trying to keep your kid grounded  
waiting to be ordered  
wanting a better life for children  
wanting to be fearless  
wanting to support your child more  
wanting you child to go to a university  
wanting your child to be happy  
wanting your child to find success  
wanting your child to have a passion  
wondering what path your child will take next

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APPENDIX V

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS BY THEME

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Week	Theme
1	On teaching as a vocation
2	On building culture
4	On making progress
5	On failing a class
6	On respect and culture
7	On making a mistake
8	On hope, part 1
9	On hope, part 2
10	On practice
11	On education as the future
12	On resolve
13	Upon reflection
14	On systems design
15	On loss
16	On planning
17	On organizational attributes, part 1 of 5
18	On organizational attributes, part 2 of 5
19	On organizational attributes, part 3 of 5
20	On organizational attributes, part 4 of 5

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APPENDIX W  
STUDENT ASSENT FORM

**Student Assent Form**

**HOPE AS STRATEGY: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INNOVATION OF THE MIND**

I have been informed that my parent(s) have given permission for me to participate in a study concerning supporting high school students and their levels of hope for academic and career success.

I will be asked to be part of an interview that will be recorded. It will take about 30 minutes. My answers will be confidential, and my name will not appear in the study.

My participation in this project is voluntary and I have been told that I may stop my participation in this study at any time. If I choose not to participate, it will not affect my grade in any way.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your participation in this study, please call me, Shawn Loescher at [shawn.loescher@asu.edu](mailto:shawn.loescher@asu.edu) or (619) 288-1009 or Dr. Craig Mertler at (602) 543-2829.

Sincerely,



Shawn T. Loescher, Doctoral Candidate  
EdD in Leadership and Innovation  
Craig A. Mertler, PhD., Director of Leadership and Innovation Graduate Studies

APPENDIX X

PARENTAL LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Parent:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Craig Mertler, Ph.D., in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate how to support high school students and their levels of hope for academic and career success.

I am inviting your child's participation, which will involve talking in an interview that is anticipated to take 30 minutes. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to have your child participate or to withdraw your child from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your child's grade or educational services. Likewise, if your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be published, but your child's name will not be used.

Although there may be no direct benefit to your child, your child's participation would support the design of new educational programs and services that serve all students. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your child's participation. Responses will be confidential.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your child's participation in this study, please call me, Shawn Loescher at [shawn.loescher@asu.edu](mailto:shawn.loescher@asu.edu) or (619) 288-1009 or Dr. Craig Mertler at (602) 543-2829.

Sincerely,



Shawn T. Loescher, Doctoral Candidate  
EdD in Leadership and Innovation  
Craig A. Mertler, PhD., Director of Leadership and Innovation Graduate Studies

By signing below, you are giving consent for your child (print name here): \_\_\_\_\_  
to participate in the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Printed Name

Date

If you have any questions about you or your child's rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you or your child have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

APPENDIX Y

PARENT PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Dear iCCR Parent Workshop Participant:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Craig Mertler, Ph.D., in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate how to support high school students and their levels of hope for academic and career success. The purpose of this study is to better understand the adoption of an innovation to foster future plans and hope might be effective for our students.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in a focus group concerning your knowledge, experiences, and beliefs about the implementation of the iCCR at our school. We anticipate this interview to take no more than 30 minutes. I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the focus group to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. The interview will be transcribed, and you will have the opportunity to member check the transcription and provide any clarifications or changes about what you have said. This member check should not take more than an additional 30 minutes of your time. The transcription will be provided to you for a member check within one week of the interview.

Only the research team will have access to the recordings of your interview. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. To protect your identity, please refrain from using names or other identifying information you do not want to be used during the interview. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about student preparedness for the adult world as expressed through current graduation requirements. Interview responses will support refinements in the iCCR and future parent workshops. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of our students, community, faculty, staff, and administration. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Do to the nature of the group setting of a focus group, your confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Craig Mertler, Ph.D. at [craig.mertler@asu.edu](mailto:craig.mertler@asu.edu) or (602) 543-2829 or Shawn Loescher at [shawn.loescher@asu.edu](mailto:shawn.loescher@asu.edu) or (619) 288-1009. If you have any 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 Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study. By signing below, you are giving consent for your participation in this focus group interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Sincerely,



Shawn T. Loescher, Doctoral Candidate  
EdD in Leadership and Innovation

APPENDIX Z  
STAFF CONSENT FORM



Dear Colleague:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Craig Mertler, Ph.D., in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate how to support high school students and their levels of hope for academic and career success. The purpose of this study is to better understand how the implementation of an innovation may influence levels of hope and goal setting for our students.

We are asking for your help, which will involve your participation in an interview concerning your knowledge, experiences, and beliefs about the implementation of the IDEATE High School Academy College and Career Ready coordinated advisory program and parent education workshops (iCCR) at our school. We anticipate this interview to take no more than 60 minutes. I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

The interview will be transcribed, and you will have the opportunity to member check the transcription and provide any clarifications or changes about what you have said. This member check should not take more than an additional 30 minutes of your time. The transcription will be provided to you for a member check within one week of the interview.

Only the research team will have access to the recordings of your interview. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous. To protect your identity, please refrain from using names or other identifying information you do not want to be used during the interview. Your job title will not be used without your consent. *Your participation in this interview is in no way connected to your job status or will be used in any performance evaluation.*

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate. The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about student preparedness for the adult world as expressed through current graduation requirements. Interview responses will support refinements in the iCCR. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of our students, community, faculty, staff, and administration. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Craig Mertler, Ph.D. at [craig.mertler@asu.edu](mailto:craig.mertler@asu.edu) or (602) 543-2829 or Shawn Loescher at [shawn.loescher@asu.edu](mailto:shawn.loescher@asu.edu) or (619) 288-1009. If you have any 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 Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study

Thank you for your time and consideration of my research request.

Sincerely,



Shawn T. Loescher, Doctoral Candidate

EdD in Leadership and Innovation

Craig A. Mertler, PhD., Director of Leadership and Innovation Graduate Studies

\*\*\*\*\*

By signing below, you are giving consent to participate in the above study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date