Co-Constructing College-Going Capital in a Rural High School English Class

by

Carissa Morrison

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Ray R. Buss, Chair
Stanley Zucker
Jean Boreen

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ABSTRACT

Compared to their urban and suburban counterparts, rural students have lower college enrollment rates. Despite many school and community benefits including small class sizes, close student-teacher relationships, and strong connections among community members, many rural high school students' post-secondary educational opportunities are constrained by factors such as: fewer college preparatory courses, narrow school curriculums, geographic isolation, high poverty rates, and limited access to college and career counseling. This action research study was conducted to examine how and to what extent underserved rural high school students constructed college-going capital through their participation in an English class designed to supplement their school's limited college-access services. The study took place over a 19-week semester at Seligman High School, a small rural school comprised of approximately 55 students. To support their construction of college-going capital, students' junior- and senior-level English class curriculums blended traditional college preparation activities with college-level reading and writing assignments focused on the U.S. educational system and its college-access inequities. The theoretical perspectives that framed this study included: social cognitive career theory, sociocultural theory, and critical literacy. Further, research on perceived post-secondary educational barriers and supports, dialogic discourse, and college access informed the study. By using a concurrent, transformative mixed methods research design, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously. Then, while maintaining an advocacy stance, the data were analyzed separately and brought together to determine convergences and divergences. Drawing data from student surveys, student and researcher journal entries, student and college coach interviews, dialogic discussion

transcripts, and an image elicitation process, this study showed that, through their participation in an English language arts college-going class, students developed college-going skills, knowledge, self-efficacy, and critical literacy. The study also revealed the following: students acquired varying levels of critical consciousness; students benefited from adult mentors coaching them about college-going; and students did not experience significant changes in their perceptions of barriers to and supports for college-going during their participation in the course.

DEDICATION

       This dissertation is dedicated to the students of Seligman High School, who have taught me more than I them, and to my husband Kevin McElwee, whose unwavering commitment to our family and selfless support of this study have been inspiring.

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The Spanish poet Antonio Machado wrote, "Wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking." These lines of poetry have always resonated with me, yet over the past few years while conducting classroom action research, Machado's words have taken on deeper meaning in my life. This is because action research is not neat and orderly, nor is it able to be fully planned. Rather, people are complex and their interactions unpredictable. This can result in the "road" of action research being one that is winding, full of the unknown, and constantly in-the-making. Thankfully, as I traveled down this sometimes confusing path, I had many exceptional teachers who believed in me, guided me, and helped me construct the road of my action research study. To these people, I owe sincere gratitude.

First, thank you to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Ray Buss. Without your intelligence and constant kindness, Dr. Buss, I would not be graduating on time with the rest of my cohort, nor would I understand half as much as I do about statistical analysis. Your calm encouragement was a much-needed steadying force for me throughout the past two years. Next, thank you to my dissertation committee members, Dr. Stanley Zucker and Dr. Jean Boreen. Dr. Zucker, your questions, straightforward advice, and attention to detail strengthened my dissertation. Dr. Boreen, your dedication to the English language arts profession is inspiring, and your belief in my teaching practice and my classroom research means more than you know. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Daniel Liou for encouraging me to follow my professional heart and helping me see that it need not be at odds with other, pragmatic constraints. And, finally, thank you to Dr. Paul Thomas who graciously assisted me in refining my ideas so they best reflected my critical values.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter One: Introduction

"It is the political task of the social scientist—as of any liberal educator—

continually to translate personal troubles into public issues."

—C. Wright Mills

Ballerina, astronaut, waitress, *and* president. As a child, this was the list that I would confidently rattle off whenever a family member asked me that question so often posed to young children: What do you want to be when you grow up? When families ask this question, it reveals a belief in their children's potentials and optimism for their futures. For me, this was an easy question to answer, and—as a child—thinking about my adult self and future dreams was an exciting exercise in the imaginative and abstract. Unfortunately, abstract is the word that characterized my future career and academic goals for far too long.

As I made my way through middle school and high school in rural Pennsylvania, translating my somewhat fuzzy future goals into specific actions proved to be complicated. I excelled as a high school student and wanted nothing more than to attend and graduate from college, yet achieving my post-secondary educational goals was more difficult than I expected. There were a multitude of decisions and details that required attention if I wanted to realize my dreams, and I was uncertain about how to proceed. I clearly remember the entire college-going process as being one of the rare times during my high school career when I was unable to help myself. My immediate family was also unable to provide the specific assistance I needed. Although they valued education and had high aspirations for me to earn a college degree, no one in my immediate family had done so themselves. So while they fully believed in my potential, they were uncertain

1

how to follow up their original hopeful question of "What do you want to be when you grow up?" with practical guidance on how to navigate the educational system.

My story is not uncommon. The path from adolescent aspirations to post-secondary educational enrollment and attainment is complex and frequently interrupted. This is especially true for first-generation college students, low socioeconomic-status youth, and students of color (Deil-Amen & Turley, 2007). Although data demonstrate that these underserved groups' post-secondary aspiration levels are rising, they still continue to hold aspirations below those of other youths (NCES, 2006). Further, underserved students continue to lag behind other groups in pursuing their post-secondary educational aspirations as evidenced by immediate college enrollment rates (NCES, 2013). For example, regarding immediate enrollment in a two- or four-year college by high school completers in 2011, only 52% of low-income youth enrolled compared to 82% of high-income youth and 66% of middle-income youth (NCES, 2013). These statistics, as well as extensive social science research evidence, support the claim that, despite gains in post-secondary educational opportunities and outcomes, a stratified system of unequal access remains (Koyoma, 2007; Louie, 2007).

This stratified system challenges the long-embraced American myth that education is the great equalizer. Although research results show that post-secondary educational attainment can lead to higher lifetime earnings—as well as other, non-economic quality of life benefits—the majority of U.S. citizens never realize these benefits. In terms of college participation, the United States has slid from first in the world to 16th, and only about one-third of its young people obtain a college degree (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Among these individuals, there are great disparities in terms

2

of *who* enrolls in college and *who* completes their college education. A targeted examination of post-secondary education participation and attainment rates for the nation's low socio-economic status youth and students of color exemplifies these disconcerting disparities. Despite these students' general increases in college enrollment over the past four decades, their numbers and proportional representation in college still lag considerably behind the college-going rates of Caucasians, certain Asian American groups, and higher-socioeconomic youth (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Deil-Amen & Turley, 2007; Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2005). Further, those who do enter college struggle to attain degrees. Statistics from the past decade show that, on average, only 17% of African Americans and 11% of Hispanic or Latino youth between the ages of 25 and 29 had attained a college degree, as compared to 34% of Caucasian youth in the same age range (Darling-Hammond, 2010). These differences in post-secondary educational enrollment rates and outcomes indicate that accessing and succeeding in post-secondary education is not as smooth an endeavor for our nation's underserved students as it is for their more privileged high school counterparts. Simply put, the pipeline to—and through—college is broken and needs repair.

I witness this broken pipeline on a regular basis in my current role as a high school English teacher at a small rural school with many potential first-generation college students, low socioeconomic-status youth, and students of color. Now, the struggles to achieve my own adolescent aspirations are reflected back to me in the faces of my students. One day, a young woman excitedly tells me of her plans to move out of state and attend a four-year university; another day the same 17-year-old laments that her dreams will never happen, and that college is not for "people like her." On another day, a

relatively recent graduate who had planned to attend a local community college returns to my classroom, frustrated. She has not enrolled yet. She needs help filling out her impossibly complex financial aid forms, and can I help her? She explains how she was sidetracked from her goals, but now—once this overwhelming paperwork is completed—she is ready for college. On yet another day, a former student spots me in the bleachers at a basketball game. He comes and sits down next to me, we catch up on recent events, yet he seems reluctant to tell me that his vocational education plans are at a standstill. My students' frustrations with translating aspirations into realities are not surprising considering the circumstances at our school.

During the six years that I have been teaching at my rural high school, the guidance-counseling role has been filled by a variety of individuals, none of whom were full-time guidance counselors. First, there was the part-time science teacher/part-time guidance counselor. After he retired from education, there was the middle school writing teacher/course recovery teacher/guidance counselor. Finally, last year, the guidance counseling role was given to the school's behavior support specialist, who was also responsible for monitoring course recovery classes, operating the in-school-suspension center, organizing the district's safety plan, coaching the middle school cheer squad, and the list goes on. This year, the guidance counseling role became more fragmented as the behavioral support specialist returned to the classroom full time as one of the district's three main middle school teachers. Although this multiple-hat-wearing is common in small schools, for this vital role, our students deserve better.

Our school is not alone in its inadequate guidance services. Many rural school students have limited access to career and college counseling (Griffin, Hutchins, &

Meece, 2011). This lack of adequate guidance services results in discrepancies among students in terms of their knowledge about career opportunities, financial aid, and college-going in general. This is noteworthy because longstanding research shows that the more information and guidance students have, the more likely they are to enroll in college (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; King, 2004; Perna, 2004). In addition to inadequate counseling services and its potential negative influence on college enrollment, our students—like other rural students—face many other challenges that can constrain their aspirations and limit their post-secondary educational opportunities. Among these challenges are: limited access to college preparatory courses, a narrow school curriculum, geographic isolation, and high poverty rates (Griffin et al., 2011; Meece et al., 2013).

These challenges to rural students accessing post-secondary educational opportunities is significant for the entire nation considering that 9.6 million students in the United States attend rural school districts. Another 1.8 million students are enrolled in rural schools located in districts that are not classified as rural (Strange, Johnson, Showalter, & Klein, 2012). Therefore, 11.4 million students attend rural schools, and this means that there may be added difficulties in attending college for more than 23% of K-12 public school students.

It is clear that my students' stories are part of a larger narrative of unequal access to post-secondary education that is currently unfolding in too many of our nation's schools. Considering the potential benefits of post-secondary education, such as higher lifetime earnings, better health, greater civic engagement, and higher rates of employment (Baum & Ma, 2007; Perna, 2006), this narrative is one of social injustice. Because secondary schools are one of the main venues where high school students' future stories

are shaped, they should also be primary sites for disrupting the negative master narratives being experienced by too many underserved students.

Local Research Context

The setting of this study was Seligman High School, located in the small, rural Northern Arizona town of Seligman. Depending upon the governmental organization and the classification scheme referenced, there are several ways to define rurality (Coladarci, 2007; Farmer, 1997). Further, these various criterion-referenced schemes and their definitions of rural are more complicated when considering the less quantifiable—yet some argue more meaningful—aspects of rural places (Howley, 1997). Regardless of which classification scheme is used or which nontraditional constructs are considered, Seligman, Arizona—with its population of less than 500 residents, its main street without the need for even one stoplight, and its wide-open fields and ranches—is undoubtedly rural. To be specific, using the National Center for Education Statistics' school locale definition, Seligman is classified as rural remote, which means it is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster (NCES, 2000).

Seligman High School is part of Seligman Unified School District #40 (SUSD #40), a K-12 district with one campus and an annual enrollment ranging from 140 to 180 students. SUSD #40 serves the people of Seligman as well as residents in outlying areas. Approximately 1,200 people live in the 1,080-square-mile district. The large geographic area that comprises the district means that many students travel long distances every day to arrive at school. Additionally, SUSD#40 serves some students from the Hualapai Nation, which is located approximately 40 miles from the school. These students and their families also commit a significant amount of time and resources to commuting.

6

In 2009, Seligman High was labeled a failing school due to poor attendance and graduation rates, as well as chronically low academic performance as measured by the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) tests. At that point, the school received a school improvement grant from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). This grant signaled the implementation of the Turnaround Model of school improvement. Over the next four years, with an influx of resources and stabilization of highly qualified staff, the school experienced dramatic improvement. It transitioned from underperforming/failing school status to being awarded a school letter grade of "A" by the ADE in the summer of 2013. In the 2014-15 school year, students and staff were proud of the fact that, for a third straight year, every senior had passed all their AIMS tests and met all credit requirements to graduate on time.

In addition to recent academic successes, Seligman High has many other positive attributes. Like many rural schools, Seligman High benefits from small class sizes, low rates of behavior problems, and close student-teacher relations. Further, the community, despite lacking strong economic capital, has valuable social capital in the way of strong connections among families, businesses, religious organizations, and other groups.

Issue of Concern

Despite the strong community social capital, many small-school benefits, and substantial growth among Seligman High students' academic achievement levels, there remains a disturbing trend concerning students' post-secondary educational outcomes. The majority of Seligman High graduates do not continue on to any form of post-secondary education. Seligman High's immediate college enrollment rate consistently falls far below the national average, even when restricting the comparison to the rates of

7

students belonging to the nation's lowest income quintile. An average of Seligman High's five most recent graduating classes demonstrates an immediate college enrollment rate of 32%. This stands in stark comparison to the most recent national average of 68% for all students and 52% for students in the lowest socioeconomic quintile.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this action research study was to understand how my underserved rural high school students construct college-going capital and to assist them in doing so, which allowed me to advocate for improvements in their college access services. Informed by a review of the literature and information-gathering from students and the community, I define college-going capital as including, but not limited to, the following: college-going competency, college-going efficacy, and college-going critical literacy. To support my students' construction of college-going capital, this action research study's innovation featured a curriculum that blended traditional college preparation activities with college-level reading and writing assignments focused on the U.S. educational system and college access inequities. Using a concurrent, transformative mixed methods research design, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously. Then, while maintaining an advocacy stance, the data were analyzed separately and brought together to determine how and to what extent students constructed college-going capital through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum.

Research Questions

To better understand the complex ways through which my students constructed college-going capital, I framed this study with the following research questions:

1. How and to what extent do underserved rural high school students construct college-going capital (competency, efficacy, and critical literacy) through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum?

2. How and to what extent do underserved rural high school students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports change during their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum?

3. How can high-status, non-family adults (institutional agents) best support underserved rural high school students as they construct college-going capital?

Chapter Two: Theoretical Perspectives and Supporting Scholarship

"Theory is useful because it has the power to guide and shape practice.

It is empowering when those who employ it understand how it can be used

to not only describe how things are, but how things could and ought to be."

—Rebecca A. Goldstein and Andrew R. Beutel

I first understood the future-focused, transformative power of theory that is described above during my first semester as a graduate student. It was the fall of 2006, and I was pursuing my master's degree in English while also teaching first-year composition at Northern Arizona University. As a novice composition instructor, I was required to take English 601, a course where we composition instructors co-investigated the intersections of theory and practice. There were times during that semester when theory provided deep, explanatory models for what was occurring in our classrooms. However, there were also many other times when our lived experiences in the classroom did not align with the some of the composition studies and educational theorists we were reading. Although this was disheartening and confusing at first, these dissonant moments were ultimately inspiring. When my college composition students resisted engaging in dialogue, or when they looked to me as the sole possessor of knowledge and disregarded each other, reading the words of Freire, Shor, and Delpit helped me imagine a way of reinventing both my teaching self and my classroom. These theories allowed me to see past the limitations of what was and conceive "what could and ought to be" (Goldstein & Beutel, 2007, p. 8).

Theory's powerful ability both to explain our material world and to inspire change informed my approach to using theory in this project. The theories and supporting

scholarship from which I drew were explanatory, confirming my school's and students' current situations, yet they were also generative, prompting me to envision other ways that the situation *could* be. In this chapter, I outline the theories and research that were most relevant to my project. First, to explain the current circumstances of college-going for underrepresented students, I present social cognitive career theory (SCCT), as well as literature on post-secondary aspirations and perceived educational barriers. SCCT and the related literature help to explain the complex interactions that can support or constrain students' college-going. Then, I describe the theoretical perspectives and supporting scholarship that inform this project's change initiative. These include: sociocultural theory, critical literacy, literature on dialogic discourse, and literature on college access. All of these various perspectives served as *a priori* frameworks. However, during the study, I remained open to all data that naturally emerged. These naturally emerging data worked in a dialectical manner with the preselected perspectives outlined in this chapter to ensure that the perspectives themselves did not become a "container into which the data must be poured" (Lather, 1986, as cited in Creswell, 2014, p. 67).

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was one of the major theories that influenced this action research study. By integrating conceptual convergences among various academic and career choice theories, Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) designed SCCT to more fully explain how people develop, modify, and pursue their academic and career interests. SCCT, derived from Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, emphasized the complex ways that people's thought processes interact with other individual variables and their environments. When it was developed, SCCT reflected a

11

significant shift in vocational psychology by highlighting the powerful role of individuals' thought processes and how they shape their academic and career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Although previous, more traditional career theories recognized the influence of people and their contextual environments on one another when developing academic and career interests and goals, these theories relegated people's behaviors to outcomes. In contrast, SCCT posited that behaviors, contextual factors, and personal attributes—both physical characteristics and cognitive states—can *all* affect one another and influence academic and career development (Lent et al., 2002). SCCT's triadic relationship attributed more agency to individuals in their academic and career development because it valued how people's own behaviors can affect their thinking, which can then influence their subsequent actions. Therefore, within the SCCT framework, people can be both "products and producers of their environment" (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 362, as cited in Lent et al., 2002).

In SCCT's personal-attribute construct, Lent and colleagues (1994) included three main cognitive variables that can be influenced by (as well as have influence on) the other two constructs. These three cognitive variables include: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (Lent et al., 1994, 2002). Authors of SCCT explained that, through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and mental and affective states, individuals can develop confidence in their abilities to accomplish specific tasks. Then, they can form expectations about how continuing these accomplishments could influence their futures and establishment of personal goals (Lent et al., 1994, 2002).

The three cognitive variables discussed above, and their ability to positively shape education and career outcomes, can be enhanced or constrained by contextual factors (Lent et al., 1994, 2002). Lent and colleagues termed positive contextual factors supports; they termed negative contextual factors barriers. For a student striving to attend college, some examples of positive contextual factors, or supports, can include: academic success, high quality educational experiences, and adequate financial support. All of these can support that student's development of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting. Conversely, the following can be negative contextual factors, or barriers, for a student striving to attend college: academic difficulties, poor-quality education, and inadequate financial support. All of these can impede that student's development of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting. A clear understanding of contextual supports and barriers is crucial as they have been cited as among the most powerful predictors of academic and career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

According to SCCT, academic and career development could be affected by both real, objective supports and barriers, as well as perceived supports and barriers (Lent et al. 1994, 2000). Therefore, an objective barrier could potentially affect one's academic development, whether the individual is aware of it or not. However, the influence of a specific objective barrier depends partially on how an individual perceives and responds to it. As Ali and Saunders (2009) illustrated, it is not necessarily the absence of a college-going role model or lack of finances that determines the post-secondary aspirations of a high school student, but the student's appraisal of not having a role model or sufficient finances. So, although individuals can definitely be negatively or positively

affected by many factors, how individuals make meaning of these factors greatly shapes those factors' ultimate influence on academic and career development.

Post-secondary aspirations and perceived educational barriers. Within the SCCT framework, understanding post-secondary aspirations and perceived educational barriers is especially critical. It is important because perceived barriers can prevent students from developing (never mind pursuing) the post-secondary aspirations that are critical to post-secondary educational attainment (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Brown & Lent, 1996; Lent et al., 1994). Aspirations represent an ideal, or hope, for the future. Students' post-secondary aspirations are a critical precursor to their developing expectations and goals for their futures. As Cooper (2009) pointed out, "people cannot achieve what they do not dream" (p. 616). Many factors can influence young adults' post-secondary aspirations, including teachers' and parents' expectations, varying school contexts, perceived supports and barriers, and levels of self-efficacy. Importantly, data have demonstrated that across all adolescent demographic groups, aspiration levels have been steadily increasing since the 1950s (Louie, 2007).

Although different student groups' aspiration levels are all increasing, there are still disparities among groups with respect to the stability and strength of their aspirations (Byun, Meece, Irvin, & Hutchins, 2012; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Meece et al., 2013). Typically, lower socio-economic youth and students of color experience greater fluctuation in aspirations throughout their high school years. Frequently, younger high school students, who are still forming a sense of their future identities, will have loftier aspirations. Then, as these students progress through school, the "future" comes nearer, and educational barriers, which are often the result of inequitable opportunity structures,

seem more concrete. Frequently, this leads to many students reducing their post-secondary aspirations (Byun et al., 2012; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Meece et al., 2013). In addition to fluctuating aspirations, many underserved high school students do not have the specificity of aspirations that their more privileged high school counterparts possess. Bloom (2008) explained how variations in access to experiences could constrain the specific degree to which some students can imagine their futures. Providing more college-going opportunities to these students so that they can richly articulate their futures could support maintenance of their aspirations.

As important as high aspirations are, they do not always translate into expectations and outcomes. Investigating individual differences in perceived barriers of rural students is particularly important as research has shown that although their aspirations are increasing, rural students encounter many challenges to developing and actualizing their educational goals (Irwin, Byun, Meece, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2012; Meece et al., 2013). Unfortunately, despite the fact that the United States has over 11 million rural students, the majority of studies examining individual differences in perceived barriers have not focused on rural youth. Recently, however, Irwin and others (2012) examined the perceived educational barriers of 7,076 rural high school students. The study was part of a larger national study and included ethnically diverse students from a variety of rural settings.

Although the rural schools and communities involved in the study were diverse, results showed that there was no variation in perceived educational barriers across schools or different types of schools and communities (Irwin et al., 2012). One important finding of this research extended the findings of previous studies indicating that youth

from Hispanic or Latino and African American backgrounds perceived more educational

barriers (e.g., Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, Torres, Salgado, & Valdez, 2007).

The study by Irwin and colleagues demonstrated that the same was true for rural youth of

similar ethnicities and races. The other important findings included: both rural youth

whose parents have less education and rural youth from lower socioeconomic

backgrounds perceived more educational barriers. In fact, the contextual difference of

lower socioeconomic status was one of the variables that most strongly predicted

perceived barriers among the rural youth in the study (Irwin et al., 2012).

Sociocultural Theory

In addition to SCCT, sociocultural theory also informed the theoretical foundation

for this study. With its focus on the interplay between internal mental processes and

multiple external contexts, sociocultural theory provided a foundation for this study's

curricular innovation.

Lev Vygotsky's approach. Because Lev Vygotsky and his colleagues were the

first to systematize and apply sociocultural approaches to learning and development, an

examination of sociocultural theory should begin with exploring Vygotsky's work.

Throughout his short life, Vygotsky rejected the Cartesian dualism between mind and

matter, the internal and external; rather, he embraced a dialectical method that integrated

diverse elements to create unity. With this dialectical logic, Vygotsky differed from

many of his time who focused on either the internal thought processes or the external

behaviors of individuals (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Rather than subscribe to an either/or philosophy of human development,

Vygotsky (1978) posited that human development—including higher mental

16

functioning—could best be understood by locating it within the social, cultural, and historical contexts that shape it. According to Vygotsky, knowledge construction occurs within these many contexts, which are shaped by, and shape, those who are part of the contexts. Ultimately, Vygotsky's work, as well as the various interpretations and applications of it, emphasized that individual and social processes are interdependent; both individuals and society are mutually produced and reproduced (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Wells, 2000).

Another central tenet of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was that human development and knowledge construction are mediated by language and other semiotic tools such as symbols, art, maps, and all types of conventional signs (Vygotsky, 1981). Language and these other meaning-making tools, which are products of sociocultural evolution, connect the external to the internal, the social to the individual. Therefore, individuals' knowledge is not internalized directly, but rather is accessed through active engagement with the practices and semiotic tools of their various social communities (Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1991).

In addition to highlighting the interdependence of the individual and the social and the importance of semiotic tools for connecting these two planes, Vygotsky's work underscored the need to attend to studying processes as well as products during research. He termed this process of examining the origins and historical developments of phenomena as genetic analysis (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky claimed that to "study something historically means to study it in…all its phases and changes…for it is only in movement that a body shows what it is" (1978, pp. 64-65). This methodological

framework dismissed a cause-and-effect, experimental approach to explaining human development and promoted more emergent, process-oriented methods.

Sociocultural versus cognitive approaches to literacy. Vygotsky's ideas were not widely influential in the United States until the 1960s and 1970s. One area strongly influenced by sociocultural theory was the field of literacy. Although no *one* sociocultural literacy theory developed, many different approaches such as New Literacy Studies, multiliteracies, and critical literacies developed and united under the sociocultural umbrella (Perry, 2012). As these sociocultural approaches to literacy gained traction, they increased the fissure in the literacy field, which has long been divided along cognitive and social lines (Janks, 2010; Reyhner, 2008).

Both the cognitive and sociocultural perspectives of literacy, along with their many nuanced theories, developed their own interpretations about what it means to be literate, how individuals acquire and develop literacy, what the best methods are for literacy instruction, and how sociocultural practices and identities inform literacy. Sociocultural literacy supporters have continued to view literacy similarly to how Vygotsky conceptualized all knowledge construction—as being shaped by and inextricably entwined throughout social and cultural practices. For those embracing this perspective, language and language learning always come "fully attached to 'other stuff': to social relations, cultural models, power and politics, perspectives on experience, values and attitudes, as well as things and places in the world" (Gee, 1996, p. vii). By comparison, those viewing literacy through a cognitive lens have focused mostly on learning to read, write, and communicate as skills development. Moreover, individuals

aligned with a cognitive literacy perspective have attended primarily to academic forms of literacy and how they develop in schools (Purcell-Gates, Jacobsen, & Degener, 2004).

Those adopting a sociocultural literacy stance have critiqued the cognitive viewpoint as being too narrow, skills-driven, and technical. On the other hand, proponents of the cognitive literacy perspective have argued that the sociocultural position focuses too much on the local and how language is used, almost ignoring instruction and how literacy sub-skills are developed in the first place. Despite their different orientations to literacy, cognitive and sociocultural approaches do not have to be treated as mutually exclusive perspectives. Nevertheless, as history has shown, the cognitive and sociocultural literacy approaches certainly have not been widely viewed as complementary frameworks (Janks, 2010; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004).

A brief history of the literacy divide. In the United States, the beginning of this literacy divide could be seen as early as the 19th century. Then, initial stirrings of what has become known as the "reading wars" positioned advocates of a whole-word reading approach against those who valued the dominant phonic model of basal readers. The social-oriented, whole language proponents claimed that individuals learned to read best through a whole language approach, which entails constructing textual meaning by identifying whole words and drawing from prior knowledge. By comparison, phonics-based advocates proposed that people best developed literacy by a phonics method, gradually improving their phonemic awareness and decoding skills. This division between the social, whole word approach to reading and the cognitive, phonic literacy lens widened throughout the 20th century, as the two camps argued for their respective

19

philosophy in the nation's academies, legislatures, and classrooms (Kim, 2008; Reyhner, 2008).

Although each camp has held favor within our educational system at various times, more recently the K-12 literacy practice-and-policy pendulum swung away from the social perspective and toward the cognitive worldview. During the 1980s, the Whole Language movement lost its position of prominence due to a lack of large-scale quantitative data sets to support the social literacy approach. As the pendulum swung back to a more skills-driven approach regarding reading, those in the cognitive literacy camp made certain to support their perspective with substantial data, including reports from the following organizations: the National Institute of Education in 1985, the National Academy of Sciences in 1998, the National Reading Panel in 2000, and the National Early Literacy Panel in 2008 (Perry, 2012; Purcell-Gates et al., 2004). These reports advanced a cognitive approach to literacy, with emphasis on discrete skills such as phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension and have influenced recent state and national K-12 standards.

Since the 1980s, sociocultural literacy research and theories have had some influence on K-12 policy and instructional practices. For example, some reading research of the 1980s that focused on critical reading and higher-order skills made its way into classrooms. This type of critical reading defined literacy as "an internal cognitive process reliant upon readers' background knowledge" (Luke, 2012, p. 6). Additionally, beginning in the 1980s, many language arts classrooms incorporated Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory into classroom practices. These proponents of reader-response

theory asserted that literary texts can produce diverse meanings, dependent upon various readers' interactions with and affective responses to the same texts (Luke, 2012).

Although both critical-reading- and reader-response-inspired practices moved beyond a strict cognitive literacy approach by considering learners' individual and cultural selves and their influences on the understanding of texts, they were not sufficient. They did not adequately address the primary principles of sociocultural literacy such as: understanding how people use language in their everyday lives, making literacy instruction relevant by incorporating out-of-school ways with language, and decreasing achievement gaps for students whose home languages differ from mainstream languages of power (Perry, 2012).

Many sociocultural literacy experts have recognized that, although valuable, critical-reading and reader-response practices do not adequately advanced the central tenets of sociocultural literacy. This has been disconcerting, especially knowing the potential benefits of sociocultural approaches for historically marginalized students. Despite this knowledge, it is questionable whether an expansion of sociocultural literacy practices within our schools is likely, given the current educational climate's focus on cognitive literacy practices, test-driven approaches to school reform, and high-stakes teacher accountability measures. Regardless—and as a result—of this political reality, many scholars and practitioners have argued the need for an expansion in sociocultural literacy research and approaches, especially critical literacy (Lewis, Enisco, & Moje, 2007; Gutiérrez, 2007; Morrell, 2005)

Critical Literacy

Derived from critical theory—and one of the main pillars of critical pedagogy—critical literacy is located under the larger sociocultural literacy umbrella. Since its infancy, critical literacy has reflected its critical heritage by questioning mainstream cultural values and advocating for the re-appropriation of dominant knowledge to effect change. Critical literacy has rejected a strictly cognitive, technical view of literacy. For critical literacy theorists and practitioners, being literate is much more than mastering the mental and mechanical aspects of reading and writing (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Although critical literacy has promoted mastery of these skills, it has served as a "means to broader human agency and individual and collective action—not as an end in itself" (Luke, 2012, p. 6).

Proponents of critical literacy have recognized the inherent power relations in society and how dominant literacy discourses have been tied to narrowly conceived economic interests and dominant cultural traditions. In fact, these dominant literacy discourses have served only to reproduce existing social conditions (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1987; Morrell, 2004; Shor, 2009). These damaging aspects of a restrictive approach to literacy are one side of literacy's double-edged sword. According to Gramsci, this side of the literacy sword has been used "for the perpetuation of relations of repression and domination" (as cited in Giroux, 1987, p. 2). However, there is another, humanizing side to the literacy sword, and it is the critical component of literacy that can be wielded for personal and societal development. Gramsci's literacy-as-sword metaphor illuminated the power of language to repress, but also to inspire transformation. For as Shor (2009) aptly noted, destructive discourses do not have to be destiny. In fact, using

language to re-envision one's and society's destinies has been a central tenet common to critical literacy's many incarnations.

Despite there not being *one* exclusive theory or method of "doing" critical literacy, several principles have been shown to be foundational to any critical literacy approach. First, being critically literate requires the ability to access and critique texts to illuminate power relations in society (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Luke & Woods, 2009; Luke, 2012). "Texts" in this instance are not limited to cultural artifacts such as books, films, advertisements, etc., but also include the norms, systems, and social practices that govern society. As Freire and Macedo (1987) articulated, reading the word entails reading the world, as well as understanding the complex relationship between both. This understanding of the relation between words and the world leads to a second defining feature of any critical literacy approach: being critically literate involves being conscious of the relationship between dominant language uses and social injustice (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Janks, 2010; Morrell, 2004). Finally, being critically literate includes producing new "texts" that delegitimize those dominant texts that are unjust, as well as creating new "texts" that inspire personal and societal transformation (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1987; Janks, 2010; Morrell, 2004; Shor, 2009). Considering all of these principles, "critical literacy can be thought of both as a social practice in itself and as a tool for the study of other social practices" (Shor, 2009, p. 290).

It is important to recognize that critical literacy has not been used merely as a theoretical construct for analysis purposes, but has been a thriving educational practice. In its many forms (and to varying degrees), different approaches to critical literacy have been developed and implemented in schools throughout the world, including those in the

23

United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and the United States (Luke & Woods, 2009). Many curricular inclusions of a critical literacy approach have been found in the areas of reading, writing, English, language education, and language arts (e.g., Comber & Simpson, 2001; Gildersleeve, 2010; Luke, 2000; Morrell, 2004; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Vasquez, 2001). One of the most notable proponents of including a critical literacy approach in the English language arts classroom is Columbia University professor and former National Council of Teachers of English President Ernest Morrell. Based upon his own critical literacy successes with urban high school students, Morrell (2005) articulated a radical transformation of the English language arts discipline to what he termed a Critical English Education. Morrell has explained that Critical English Education includes re-envisioning the curricular content of secondary English classrooms, changing pedagogical practices and textual consumption/ production, and supporting teachers' growth as activists and public intellectuals (Morrell, 2005). Morrell's and others' research—along with varied critical literacy curriculums— have demonstrated the resilience, plasticity, and significance of this approach's progenitor, Paulo Freire, and his problem-posing education.

Freire's problem-posing education and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Informed by his literacy work with adults in Latin America, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire established the notion of a problem-posing education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This problem-posing education was a direct critique of and response to the dominant type of education, what Freire termed the "banking model of education." Freire (1970) asserted that, in the too-common banking model, students are merely empty vessels, waiting to be filled with a teacher's superior knowledge. In this Freirean metaphor,

students are empty bank accounts who only gain their worth when teachers make curricular "deposits." Freire explained that, in this type of system, the teacher is the active, agentive subject who narrates meaning into the passive, patient objects—or students. Freire theorized that the banking model approach strips individuals of their agency and prevents them from realizing their first, true vocation: humanization. Instead, this unjust education could only result in dehumanization and oppression. (Freire, 1970). In contrast, Freire asserted that, in a problem-posing style of education, knowledge and curricular content is neither a gift nor an imposition, but the "organized, systematized, and developed 're-presentation' to individuals of the things about which they want to know more" (Freire, 1970, p. 93).

Situated in the specific issues of the oppressed, a problem-posing education propels individuals to reclaim their humanity by achieving *conscientização*, or critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). Critical consciousness occurs when individuals understand the social, political, and economic injustices that exist and are ready to act against these forces to effect personal and social transformation. True critical consciousness does not result only in changes to people's material conditions, but also in their abilities to question, wonder, create, and (re)name their world. To foster critical consciousness, Freire argued that a problem-posing education must include dialogue, praxis, and a dissolution of traditional teacher and student roles.

In a problem-posing education, teachers are no longer the sole creators of knowledge; rather, students learn from their own vested critical inquiries, as well as from the experiences of their peers and the expertise of their teachers. Student is now teacher and teacher is now student. For this type of reciprocal humanist education to flourish,

25

teachers must have a profound trust in students' abilities and their ability to reason

(Freire, 1970). A humanist, radical educator "can be identified more by his trust in the

people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor

without their trust" (Freire, 1970, p. 60). To achieve trust in students—and to work

beside them, not for them—radical teachers must have both ethical and political clarity

(Freire, 1970).

Another problem-posing education component that Freire established as vital for

attaining critical consciousness is dialogue. Dialogue cannot be reduced to a teaching

technique or strategy to be used by educators to involve students in a task or as an end in

itself. Rather, Freire suggested that true dialogue is a way in which people, by speaking

their words and naming their world, can transform their reality. Dialogue reveals that

learning and knowing is more than merely an individualistic enterprise; it is a social

encounter in which individuals' understandings of objects of knowledge are heightened

as they share their experiences and theorize together. In a problem-posing model of

education, dialogue must include humility, trust, hope, and critical thought (Darder, 2002;

Freire, 1970).

Even though dialogue is essential, it alone cannot ensure change. For individuals

to achieve critical consciousness, praxis must be present in a problem posing education.

Praxis is the back-and-forth dynamic between reflection and action upon the world in

order to change it. Freire (1970) emphasized that both reflection and action are

absolutely necessary. Without action, "reflection automatically suffers … and the word

is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism, into an alienated and alienating 'blah'"

(Freire, 1970, p. 87). Simply denouncing or critiquing the world without acting to

improve it can result in demoralization. Similarly, depriving action of reflection can result in thoughtless activism, action merely for the sake of action.

Dialogic discourse and instruction. Over the past 50 years, Freire's notion of the power of dialogue has been echoed by many communication and literacy experts who have aimed to increase the practice of what they term dialogic discourse. Dialogic discourse is in many ways the opposite of monologic discourse. As opposed to the closed-nature and "correct," known answers that characterize monologic discourse, dialogic discourse allows participants in the discussion to construct meaning, explore multiple perspectives, and seek answers to questions that are fundamentally open or divergent (Alexander, 2004; Barnes, 1976; Nystrand, 1997). Synthesizing the studies on dialogic research in the past decade, Reznitskaya (2012) summarized the key characteristics of dialogic discourse in the classroom. First, in a dialogic classroom, power relations are flexible, and "authority over the content and form of discourse is shared" (Reznitskaya, 2012, p. 447). Second, questions are open-ended and serve to inspire meaningful exploration and new interpretations. Third, students engage in the collaborative co-construction of knowledge: listening and reacting to each other, building upon one another's ideas, and supporting opinions with sound reasons. Finally, students engage in meta-level reflection on the process of discussion.

Although monologic discourse and approaches to teaching have continued to dominate in our classrooms, research findings over the past four decades have demonstrated the limitations of such an approach. The importance of dialogic discourse and the benefits it provides students cannot be overstated. First, students' independent literacy skills are enhanced when classroom experiences emphasize dialogic-discussion-

27

based approaches (Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, & Gamoran, 2003). Second, Ranson (as cited in Rudduck & Fielding, 2006) reported that, when students have the opportunity to contribute ideas and share their voices, their identities are challenged and strengthened. In addition to enhanced literacy and identity development, robust class discussion can result in confronting and managing a variety of conflicts—internal, interpersonal, and societal (Lensmire, 1998). Further, dialogic discourse has been shown to promote student agency. This last benefit—student agency—has resulted when students are active in the design and implementation of student voice projects and discussions, as opposed to being mere "objects of elite adult plans" (Gunter & Thomson, 2007).

Increasing College Access

In addition to being informed by dialogic discourse, this study's innovation was influenced by the literature on successful college access programs and practices. To address the college access inequalities between different student groups, a variety of college access programs have been developed over the past generation (Tierney et al., 2005; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). These programs have varied in range from high-school sponsored initiatives to community outreach activities to university-sponsored efforts to state and federally funded programs. Regardless of differences in sponsorship and content focal areas, the vast majority of college access programs have shared similar goals: enhance high schools' current educational activities, opportunities, and supports to assist low-income youth and students of color access and succeed in college. Synthesizing information from a wide variety of these programs and other college-access research demonstrated specific elements that have been valuable for high schools to include in their college-access improvement efforts. These elements include: creating a

28

college-going culture, strengthening academic curriculum and improving teacher quality, promoting multicultural college-going identities, incorporating inquiry-driven approaches to college-going, and fostering connections among schools and families (Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Oakes, 2003; Tierney et al., 2005).

One of the most important elements needed to increase college access is a college-going culture (Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Oakes, 2003). A high school with a college-going culture involves: staff members who are dedicated to preparing *all* students for post-secondary education; the inclusion of specific college-preparation interventions and college-readiness information; students who perceive themselves as "college material;" and clear structures and experiences to support students, both logistically and socio-emotionally, through the college search, application, and enrollment process (Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Oakes, 2003). One of the main impediments to schools developing strong college-going cultures has been isolated and fragmented college services. This occurs when the responsibility for college guidance rests exclusively with overburdened college counselors and there is no coordinated effort to reinforce college-going goals among counselors, teachers, staff, and families (Cooper, 2009; Corwin & Tierney, 2007). To foster a college-going culture and achieve maximum effects on students who may experience exclusion from traditional college counseling efforts, Cooper (2009) recommended that college-access practices "must be seamlessly woven into classroom activities" (p. 643). Including everyday classrooms and teachers in promoting a college-going culture is necessary considering that some research results have demonstrated that students talk as much, if not more, with teachers as counselors about their post-secondary plans (Griffin et al., 2011; Roderick et al., 2008).

29

In addition to a college-going culture, improving college access requires strengthening schools' academic curriculums and increasing students' access to experienced and certified teachers. The difficulty level of courses that students take also has an enormous influence on their college success, especially their chances of completing a four-year degree program (Oakes, 2003; Tierney et al., 2005). Likewise, teacher quality has been one of the most influential elements on students' academic success and, therefore, college-access opportunities. Specifically, teacher quality has been especially vital for improving achievement outcomes for historically marginalized students (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Oakes, 2003).

Another vital element shown to increase college access for underserved students are opportunities to develop multicultural college-going identities (Oakes, 2003; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002). Students with multicultural college-going identities are able to view going to college as an integral part of who they are. Further, students who possess a multicultural college-going identity do not feel like they need to sacrifice their own language, culture, values, and community connections to pursue post-secondary education. In this way, supportive school environments are vital to promoting college access. Studies have shown that students who felt culturally validated by others at school—what is known as positive public ethnic regard—had more self-efficacy with college planning; students who perceived lower social regard had lower career outcome expectations (Gonzalez, Stein, & Huq, 2012; Thompson, 2013).

One other component shown to effectively increase college access for undeserved students is incorporating inquiry-driven approaches into programming efforts (Oakes, 2003). Like inquiry methods in science, mathematics, and history which have fostered

30

significant learning gains, college preparation activities can benefit from this more personalized approach. This type of approach acknowledges that building college-going capital is a personal, social, and relational process that is rarely achieved through transmission methods and direct instruction approaches (Bloom, 2008). Sustaining aspirations and pursuing post-secondary education is unlikely to result from lectures on the benefits of college, lessons on application procedures, and motivational speeches alone. Rather, students need to become "actors and owners of their own [college] transition process" (Bloom, 2008, p. 6).

Finally, to be successful, college access efforts must involve families (Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Hooker & Brand, 2009; Tierney et al., 2005). Results from research have demonstrated repeatedly the enormous influence that students' families have on every aspect of their college-going process—aspiration development, college search and choice processes, and provision of ongoing support during college enrollment and on through completion. When families have been overburdened or excluded from the college-going process, students have been adversely affected. In these situations, students are apt to find themselves without enough help or torn between conflicting advice. It has been recommended that schools should engage families early and continue to seek them out as important assets in students' development of college-going capital.

Chapter Three: Method

"Science is a great and worthy mistress, but there is one greater

and that is Humanity which science serves."

—W. E. B. DuBois

DuBois's words have been embraced by a host of researchers who believe that

scientific inquiry should promote social justice and improve the human condition (see

Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mertens, 2007, 2009). I align

myself with this inquiry approach because it recognizes that research—and the

knowledge it yields—is never neutral; rather, inquiry occurs in and is shaped by

historical, political, economic, and social contexts. Further, it is conducted by

individuals, who inevitably have their own biases. Considering the social inequalities

that persist today, and the fact that "the potential to further human rights through a

research agenda has not been fully realized" (Mertens, 2007, p. 212), it is vital for

researchers to adopt an explicit stance directed toward the creation of a more just and

equitable society. In this chapter, I elaborate on this type of justice-oriented research

stance, namely a transformative research paradigm, and explain how it framed this study.

After describing the transformative paradigm, I provide the following: a description of

the study's setting, participants, and the role of the researcher; a presentation of the

innovation; a description of the data collection sources and analysis procedures; and a

review of efforts taken to enhance the study's validity and trustworthiness.

Transformative Research Paradigm

To explore the phenomenon of how my students constructed college-going

capital, I employed a transformative research paradigm. The transformative research

paradigm is an inclusive framework that reflects an advocacy worldview and permeates the entire research process—from formulating the issues of concern, all the way through the drawing of conclusions and the use of results (Mertens, 2003, 2009). Based on the need for scientific inquiry to address human rights, the transformative research paradigm introduces a shift in the principles that guide research. Some of the central principles informing this paradigm are: respecting the lives, experiences, and voices of communities that have been historically marginalized; challenging deficit perspectives by focusing on participants' strengths; attending to asymmetrical power relations and the tensions that arise from them during the research process; connecting research results to social action; and using a transformative theoretical lens to develop the overall inquiry approach (Mertens, 2007, 2009).

　　　　Concurrent mixed methods. Within the transformative research paradigm, I employed a mixed methods design. Mixed methods research involves combining the techniques, processes, and languages of both quantitative and qualitative research into a single study (Creswell, 2014; Greene, 2007). A mixed methods design can be used to discern overall trends and patterns, as well as affording a more nuanced understanding of how participants experienced the process (Greene, 2007). This ability of mixed methods research to represent a variety of participants' perspectives makes it particularly well suited for the transformative research paradigm, which strives to accurately reflect those whose voices have been traditionally excluded or silenced (Mertens, 2007, 2012; Sweetman, Badiee, & Creswell, 2010). Ultimately, a mixed methods design provides "multiple ways of making sense of the social world… [and] actively engages us with

33

difference and diversity in service of both better understanding and greater equity of voice" (Greene, 2008, p. 20).

Within the mixed methods design, there are various models or approaches (Creswell, 2014). This action research study fell under the convergent approach. Following the convergent approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously during the same cycle of research. Then, each data set was analyzed separately, the results of which were brought together to determine convergences, divergences, or a combination of both. Ultimately, using a mixed methods design allowed me to draw from the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods while minimizing the weaknesses of each (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Setting

Seligman High School, the only secondary school in SUSD #40, was the setting of this action research study. Seligman High School has an annual enrollment ranging anywhere from 45 to 75 students. In the 2014-15 school year, Seligman High enrolled 55 students, many of whom have attended class together since grade school. Further, during the 2014-15 school year, 63% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. The racial composition of the student body during the 2014-15 school year was as follows: 45% Caucasian, 42% American Indian, 10% Latino, and 3% Bi-racial. Additionally, 18% of the students were on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and received special education services.

Due to the school's small enrollment, students in the same grade typically attend the majority of their classes together. Depending upon a particular cohort's group dynamic, academic class culture, etc., this can be either advantageous or disadvantageous

to students' success. Unfortunately, compared to larger schools, few electives and no advanced placement courses are available for students because each academic discipline has only one teacher who teaches all of that content area's classes. Likewise, there are limited extracurricular activities available for students. Two notable exceptions to this are Seligman High's various sports teams and the Future Farmers of America.

Although Seligman High's low enrollment poses various challenges for students, there are certain benefits that warrant discussion. Students attending Seligman High have extremely small class sizes—typically no more than 15 students per class. With such low student-to-teacher ratios, students are able to receive individualized instruction on a regular basis. Another positive aspect of attending such a uniquely small school is the quality of relationships that often develop between students and staff. From administrators to teachers to maintenance staff, adults within the school know students by name and care about them as individuals. This is affirmed consistently on the annual student climate survey, in which the open-ended question "What do you like most about your school?" frequently yields responses discussing positive student-staff relationships.

Participants

The participants of this action research study included 14 students from my 11th- and 12th-grade English classes (seven 11th graders and seven 12th graders), five college coaches, and me, the action researcher. My 11th- and 12th-grade students were purposively selected to participate in the study. Purposive sampling allows researchers to strategically select the study's participants to best "obtain insights into a phenomenon, individuals, or events" (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 242). Working with my juniors and seniors, during a period in which high school students typically intensify their

college-going explorations and efforts, allowed me to better understand how my rural students constructed college-going capital. Within the purposive sampling framework, Teddlie and Yu (2007) outlined three broad categories: sampling to achieve representativeness or comparability, sampling special or unique cases, and sequential sampling. In this action research study, the purposive sample of the school's juniors and seniors fell under the category of sampling to achieve representativeness or comparability. The juniors and seniors were mostly representative of the entire school's overall demographic profile.

Seligman High's class of 2015 and class of 2016. Seligman High's classes of 2015 and 2016 had a total of 22 students at the beginning of this study. While all 22 students took part in the English language arts college-going class, 14 students participated in the action research study. The 14 participants mostly mirrored the school's overall demographics. Of the 14 participants, 8 were female and 6 were male. Similar to the school's overall racial composition, the study was comprised of 6 Caucasian students, 5 American Indian students, and 3 Latino students.

Examination of the students' academic records showed that seven of the students had a grade point average (GPA) between 3.0 and 4.0. Another six students had a GPA between 2.0 and 3.0. Finally, one student had a GPA below 2.0. As whole cohorts, the senior students who participated in the study were more academically high achieving than the junior class as evidenced by their average GPA. With five of the seven 12th-grade students having a GPA that is 3.0 or higher, they had a substantially larger percentage of students than the 11th-grade participants who qualified for admission into the state's four-year universities. The junior class, on the other hand, demonstrated lower GPAs as

a group; only two of seven 11th-grade students had a GPA of 3.0 or higher. It is noteworthy, however, that the 11th graders still have their entire senior years to improve their on-paper academic profiles.

This factor of time will be important for many of the juniors as they work toward realizing their post-secondary educational aspirations. According to the College Capital Needs Assessment Survey that I administered school-wide in May, 2014, 86% of the Class of 2016 (this study's 11th graders) had college aspirations: 21% aspired to obtain an associate's degree, 50 % a bachelor's degree, and 15% a master's or doctoral degree. Likewise, the survey demonstrated that 80% of the Class of 2015 (this study's 12th graders) also had college aspirations: 10% of the 12th graders aspired to obtain an associate's degree. 60% a bachelor's degree, and 10% a master's or doctoral degree. Together, Seligman High's class of 2015 and class of 2016 had more than 80% of their students, not only aspiring to enroll in, but to complete, a college degree program. These aspiration levels stood in stark contrast to Seligman High's past immediate college enrollment, never mind completion, rates—with the past five graduating classes having averaged 32% of students enrolling in a post-secondary college program the fall semester after graduation.

College coaches. Four high school teachers and the district's athletic director served as college coaches in the study. Each college coach worked with four to five Seligman students (two to three of the study participants) throughout the semester-long class. Although they were diverse in their backgrounds and experiences, these individuals all committed to assisting Seligman High students pursue their post-secondary educational goals.

The first person who volunteered as a college coach was Dan Lopez, who has been Seligman High's physical education teacher, boys' basketball coach, and the Class of 2016 sponsor. Dan Lopez, a veteran Latino teacher with roots in Seligman, has been teaching for 30 years, including the past five years at Seligman. Throughout the past few years, he has been diligent in collaborating with me to infuse his health class curriculum with substantial reading and writing components. He has also regularly volunteered his time during after-school hours, whether it be to co-chaperone a college information night at another school or to travel to the Hualapai Nation for community outreach.

Another teacher eager to volunteer as a college coach was Miraj Wallace. A young, dedicated African American teacher, Miraj Wallace is the school's Agriculture Education teacher and Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter advisor. She has almost five years teaching experience, all at Seligman High School. During her short time at Seligman, she has initiated student-home visits, chaperoned FFA students on out-of-state field trips, and sparked student interest in welding and other trades.

The next two college coaches that I recruited were Mary Ellen Kirkedahl and April Keller, Seligman High's art teacher and mathematics interventionist, respectively. Both of these women are Caucasian and both are veteran teachers—each with over 20 years of experience in education. Although both Mary Ellen Kirkedahl and April Keller are newer to Seligman Schools, through their actions over the past few years, they have demonstrated an eagerness to serve as advocates and role models for our students. Each has had a positive influence on students at the school.

The last college coach I recruited was Joanne Curley, the district's current athletic director and girls' basketball coach, and former kindergarten teacher of approximately

three decades. Joanne, a veteran Latino educator, has strong ties to Seligman High

School. She and her daughters were graduates of the school, and her grandson was one

of the 12th-grade participants in this action research study.

Role of the Researcher

Within the transformative paradigm, the role of the researcher is reframed to

include being "one who recognizes inequalities and injustices in society and strives to

challenge the status quo…and who possesses a shared sense of responsibility" (Mertens,

2007, p. 212). Having taught English language arts at Seligman High School for almost

six years now, I have had substantial time to recognize the inequalities in college-access

opportunities that exist between our students and those who attend more privileged high

schools. To challenge this status quo, throughout the study, I harnessed many non-

economic forms of capital to promote students' construction of college-going capital.

These resources included: the students' aspirations, the school staff's knowledge of

college-going, community member's willingness to share their college-going

experiences, and my own abilities to leverage social networks. This utilization of various

non-economic forms of capital draws conceptually from Yosso's (2005) community

cultural wealth model. This model challenges traditional, deficit views of cultural capital

by focusing on the various assets that historically marginalized communities possess.

These various resources were of tremendous help during students' construction of

college-going capital.

In addition to disrupting the status quo, the transformative paradigm requires

researchers to have a shared sense of responsibility to the community that the research

serves. This responsibility to the community is one that inevitably many small-school

39

educators adopt quickly. Due to the sheer shortage in staff numbers, almost all small-school teachers are club sponsors, athletic coaches, department heads, committee members, professional development presenters, student event chaperones, and the list goes on. Such investment of time and passions either solidifies one's dedication to and vested interest in the school or encourages one to look for a position elsewhere. I am no exception to other committed small-school teachers, and possess a strong sense of responsibility to Seligman High School, the surrounding communities, and my students' personal and academic goals. Considering that I work with every student in the school on a daily basis, it is difficult to imagine *not* feeling responsible to the community. My ethical responsibility to the community permeated this action research study.

At Seligman High, I work with every student because, as it is so small, there is only one teacher per content area. This means that I provide English instruction for all of the school's students and teach every grade level. This is the ultimate form of "looping," a practice employed more frequently in earlier grades where teachers progress with one cohort of students to the next grade level. With the exception of students who transfer in or out of our district, the same students who are in my ninth-grade English class one year are in my sophomore English class the next year, then in my junior English class, and then with me again in senior English.

I note this unique aspect of my role as a practitioner-researcher because it has consequences for my role as a researcher. Most of the juniors and seniors who were the primary participants in this action research study had already been my students for two or three years. We had developed relationships. I knew each student's academic strengths and weaknesses. I knew their passions and their sensitivities. I knew many of their

families. In short, we had history together. As a practitioner this has its advantages. Because I have been working with the majority of these students since they started high school, relationships had already been established and I was able to encourage their aspirations in a personalized manner. As a researcher, these established ties with students could have proved disadvantageous as I attempted to understand students' construction of college-going capital with a fresh and open perspective. This was one of the challenges to which I was continually alert.

Besides remaining cognizant and reflective of my insider status, my role as an action researcher also involved developing and implementing the many facets of the English language arts college-going curriculum. This included selecting course reading content, designing lessons plans and learning opportunities, organizing college campus visits and guest panels, and facilitating the college coaching partnerships.

In addition to these curricular innovation responsibilities and the obvious data collection and analyses that I conducted, my role as an action researcher also entailed facilitating meetings throughout the semester with a community advisory group. Mertens (2009) suggested the inclusion of a community advisory group as a useful way to ensure that transformative research is responsive and attentive to the community it is intended to serve. At the outset of the school year, I invited volunteers to join this group; I focused my invitations on students, parents, and community members. The advisory group included two current Seligman High students, one recent Seligman High graduate, one college coach, two parents of Seligman High students, and two community members.

41

Innovation

The innovation was designed to support my rural high school 11th- and 12th-grade students' construction of college-going capital. Informed by a review of the literature and information-gathering from students and community members, college-going capital is considered a multifaceted concept. Taking into account both the scholarly literature and the community's insightful contributions, college-going capital includes, but is not limited to, the following: development of the discrete procedural knowledge and skills needed to access college (college-going competency); exposure to and success with college academics and experiences (college-going efficacy); and a strategic reimagining of self in which students critically examine perceived and real barriers to college, then reflect on the supports available to transform their perceptions and futures (college-going critical literacy). Seeking to help students develop these three college-going capital components—competency, efficacy, and critical literacy—spurred the creation of the innovation in this study. The innovation was a semester-long English language arts college-going curriculum. A description of the curriculum and a detailed outline of its scope and sequence is provided in the next section.

English language arts college-going curriculum. The curriculum blended three main elements. First, the curriculum included traditional career exploration and college search activities intended to increase students' knowledge and skills for accessing college. This part of the curriculum featured activities common to many college preparation programs that conceive of college access as a knowledge-oriented, developmental process (Tierney et al., 2005). Some examples of this part of the curriculum included: investigating possible academic majors and their relations to future

careers; evaluating various post-secondary educational options; and learning how to complete college admissions and financial aid applications.

The curriculum's second part focused on increasing students' exposure to and success with college academics and experiences, with the aim of fostering college-going efficacy. This part of the curriculum featured the following: college campus visits; panel presentations by current college students and college graduates; and a modified course of study adapted from the first-year English composition course at Northern Arizona University (NAU). This last feature, the modified NAU composition course, allowed students to engage in college-level analysis and research assignments and attend a class meeting of NAU's English 105 course.

Finally, the third piece of the curriculum went beyond the first two, more traditional aspects of the innovation. This curricular component assisted students to develop the criticality necessary to examine college-going inequities and then strategically deploy their critical understandings toward the objective of college-going. This critical component necessarily complicated the idea that developing college-going capital is a one-size-fits-all proposition and that possessing relevant information and participating in college-like activities automatically results in college-going. This curricular component acknowledged that accessing college is a power-laden process for low-socioeconomic status students and students of color; it recognized that adept navigation is required for these students to succeed in the college-going process (Gildersleeve, 2010).

To interrogate the inequities surrounding college access and reimagine a different future for themselves, students read, wrote, discussed, and explored their own personal

barriers to and supports for college within a broader socio-historical framework. This encouraged students to recognize the supports and strengths they already possessed in order to intervene in their own futures. This component, which is focused on agentic identity development, was intended to develop students' college-going critical literacies.

Throughout the semester, students read various texts that illuminated inequities in our society. A majority of these texts were about the U.S. educational system. These texts were not limited to traditional conceptions of texts in the form of essays and books, but also included YouTube clips, speeches, films, and the norms, systems, and practices that govern our society. Further, the "reading" of these various texts extended beyond the basic decoding, comprehension, and mechanical aspects of reading; reading also meant discussing and critiquing the injustices revealed by these texts.

Although each part of the curriculum was included to primarily address one of the three components of college-going capital, the inputs and outputs were not always neatly isolated or mutually exclusive. For example, the question and answer panel with college students could have influenced any of the three college-going capital components. When a speaker offered advice about applying for scholarships, it could have enhanced students' knowledge about how to access college (competencies). Or, when a speaker shared how she had doubted her ability to transition to a large campus (but had ultimately succeeded), it could have vicariously improved students' belief in their own potentials (self-efficacy). Finally, this same innovation input of the panel could have influenced the development of students' college-going critical literacies when a speaker with the same socio-economic background discussed their first-year success. This could have affirmed for students that individuals like themselves can succeed in college.

It should be noted that, throughout my six years teaching at Seligman High, I had previously addressed some areas of the English language arts college-going curriculum either in smaller lessons and assignments during class or when working with students individually outside of class. For example, in previous senior-level classes, students had learned what comprised strong scholarship essays and practiced this writing genre in workshops devoted to these types of essays. And, of course, in all my English classes, students have had opportunities to write formal research essays. In addition to having included some of these assignments in prior courses, I have also previously helped students one-on-one when they needed assistance with college applications or financial aid forms.

The difference between the above discussed fragmented lessons and activities and the cohesive English language arts college-going curriculum was twofold. First, previous to the college-going class, I did not systematically address the college search and choice processes and all of their associated components in any English class. I had always helped students who sought me out for college-going advice, but I had never considered making college-going an integral part of *English* class. Second, although I have taught the scholarship essay and the research process previously in bits and pieces in other courses, the college-going class provided students a more comprehensive and accurate experience with college-level work. The college-going class featured more rigorous academic demands and faster pacing than students had previously experienced.

Curriculum scope and sequence. The English language arts college-going curriculum spanned the entire 19-week semester. The curriculum's scope and sequence is outlined on the next page in Table 1.

45

Table 1

English Language Arts College-Going Curriculum Scope and Sequence

Period	Curricular Focus Highlights
Weeks 1-2	• Complete personality and interest/career inventories; determine Holland's Occupational Themes • Connect results of inventories to post-secondary educational options • Explore post-secondary educational benefits and options
Weeks 3-4	• Review college admission requirements • Identify and explore barriers to and supports for college-going • *First in the Family,* Chapters 1-2 • Write scholarship essays
Weeks 5-6	• Explore college life (dorm living, extracurricular activities, etc.) • Introduction to rhetorical analysis via contemporary issues and texts • Dialogic Discussion #1—Ray Rice Controversy • *Panel of Experts: College Coaches Share Their College Experiences*
Weeks 7-8	• Financial aid overview • Read and analyze texts about educational equity and college access • *First in the Family,* Chapters 3-5 • *Campus Visits: CCC and NAU/Attend English 105 Class*
Weeks 9-10	• Research and apply for 2 college scholarships • Read and analyze texts about educational equity and college access • Dialogic Discussion #2—Opportunity Gap: Comparing Schools • Write rhetorical analysis essays
Weeks 11-12	• ACT/SAT test review and preparation • Read and analyze texts about educational equity and college access • *First in the Family,* Chapters 6-7 • Dialogic Discussion #3—Opportunity Gap: *The Flat World…* • *Campus Visits: Yavapai College and ASU*
Weeks 13-14	• Introduction to Research Project: Examining an Creating Awareness About an Educational Issue of Importance • Read and analyze texts about educational equity and college access • Dialogic Discussion #4—*Born with a Wooden Spoon: Welcome to Poverty U.S.A.*
Weeks 15-16	• Read and analyze texts about educational equity and college access • Write argumentative research essays • Dialogic Discussion #5—Contemporary Student Protests
Weeks 17-19	• Complete college and scholarship applications • Write argumentative research essays • Public Outreach Project: Create awareness about issues • *Panel of Experts: College Students Share Their College Experiences*

During the first month of the semester, students had opportunities to complete traditional career and interest inventories and then explore how their interests related to different educational paths. During this month, students also investigated post-secondary educational benefits and heard from college coaches about their college experiences. This first month's activities are typical ones for what Hossler and Gallagher (1987) termed the predisposition stage of the college choice process. During this stage, students explore the idea of college and consider if they even want to pursue a college education.

As the semester progressed into its second and third months, students researched more specific information about different post-secondary educational options, visited four college campuses, and learned about financial aid. These types of activities are typical for the search process, which is the second phase of Hossler and Gallagher's college choice model. During this time, which for many students occurs between 10th and 12th grades, students gather information and determine which types of post-secondary options best match their interests, needs, and circumstances (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). Importantly, it was also during these second and third months of the class that students began to explore their own barriers to and supports for attending college. Additionally, the class's critical reading and writing assignments intensified during this time.

During the last four to six weeks of the semester, students who were ready applied for college admission. Others, specifically juniors and those seniors who were uncertain about if (and where) they wanted to apply to college, continued researching colleges and practiced applying for college and financial aid. For these students, these activities replicated the last stage of Hossler and Gallagher's model: choice. This stage is when students narrow their college choices and apply for admission (Hossler & Gallagher,

47

1987). Finally, the semester concluded with students researching, writing formal papers, and creating awareness about an educational injustice issue of personal importance.

College coaches as institutional agents. In an attempt to think more broadly and connect the English language arts college-going curriculum with the development of a college-going culture at Seligman High, college coaching mentors were an additional element of this curricular innovation. The American Youth Policy Forum found that, in their study of 23 college-access programs, mentoring was one of the most cited factors contributing to students' college-going (Hooker & Brand, 2009). In this action research study, college coaches served as institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 2010). Institutional agents are non-family adults who are situated in an adolescent's social network and who occupy one or more positions of relatively high-status and authority. An institutional agent fulfills his or her role when, on the adolescent's behalf, "he or she acts to directly transmit, or negotiate the transmission of…those *resources*, *opportunities*, *privileges*, and *services* which are highly valued, yet differentially allocated within any organization or society" (Stanton-Salazar, 2010, p. 1075). College coaches served this role as they met with students to assist with specific, predetermined class assignments, as well as to guide each student according to his or her individual needs.

Data Collection Resources

Recognizing the value that a mixed methods design brings to social science research—where problems are rarely neat and one-dimensional—this study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to explore the influence of the constructing college-going capital innovation. Two quantitative data tools and a total of six qualitative data tools were used to collect data. Each of the eight data collection tools

48

provided insights about one or more of the research questions detailed in Chapter 1. An

inventory of all eight tools is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2

Quantitative and Qualitative Tools

Type	Data Tool	Detail
Quantitative	College-Going Capital Survey	• Pre/Post Innovation • Pre-Post-Then Design • Matched Responses by Participants • 6-Point Likert-Scale • 3 Constructs • 30 Items
Quantitative	Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey	• Pre/Post Innovation • Pre-Post-Then Design • Matched Responses by Participants • 6-Point Likert-Scale • 2 Constructs • 30 Items
Qualitative	Student Journal Responses	• 12 Prompts Total • 14 Students • Varied in Topics
Qualitative	Dialogic Discussion Transcripts	• Weeks 6, 8, 10, 12 & 14 • 5 Discussions
Qualitative	Image-Elicitation	• Pre/Post Innovation • Week 2 & 18 • 14 Students
Qualitative	1:1 Semi-Structured Interviews	• Weeks 17-19 • 14 Students • 5 College Coaches
Qualitative	College Coach Memos	• After Coaching Sessions • Structured Format • Open-Ended Response
Qualitative	Researcher Journal	• Ongoing • Field Observations; Study Reflections; Advisory Board Summaries

Quantitative data sources. This action research study utilized two different, yet related, survey instruments: the College-Going Capital Survey and the Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey. Each survey was administered both at the outset and at the conclusion of the curricular innovation. Additionally, one week after the post-innovation surveys were completed, students completed retrospective pre-test versions of each survey to assess their perceptions of their own college-going capital development (or lack thereof) and changes in their perceptions of supports and barriers to attending college.

A retrospective pre-test assessment, administered after an innovation or study, asks participants to assess what their knowledge, skills, or attitudes were prior to the study in a retrospective fashion (Lamb, 2005). Then, a comparison between the post-innovation survey results and the retrospective pre-test outcomes "then" results offers a more valid measure of innovation effectiveness. The retrospective assessment achieves this by reducing response shift bias, which can occur if participants approach questions on a traditional pre- and post-test design with different frames of reference (Lamb, 2005). In other words, survey participants often initially rate themselves too high on instruments because they have not internalized a specific standard. As the innovation progresses and their perceptions change, participants internalize a higher set of standards. This can result in them rating themselves the same, or even lower, on the post-test survey than they did on the original pre-test. In either case, an inaccurate shift in results occurs—a response shift bias—because the more-aware participants have imposed a new set of standards that affect their responses.

College-Going Capital Survey. The specific research question that this data collection tool attempted to answer was: How and to what extent do students construct

college-going capital through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum? The data collection instrument featured a 6-point Likert-scale survey, with response choices as follows: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Slightly Disagree*, 4 = *Slightly Agree*, 5 = *Agree*, and 6 = *Strongly Agree*. The survey contained three constructs, with ten questions per construct. The first construct measured students' college-going competency. Examples of two items that illustrate the nature of this construct were, "I know the differences among the various types of financial aid" and "I know the admission requirements for different types of colleges." The second construct measured students' college-going efficacies. Two items that represent this construct were, "I am confident that I can do college-level work" and "I am confident that I can obtain emotional and practical support from my parents to go to college." The third, and final, construct of this survey measured students' college-going critical literacies. Statements for this construct included "People like me go to college" and "I have personal strengths that will help me overcome challenges during college." See Appendix A for the complete pre- and post-innovation survey. See Appendix B for the retrospective-pre-test version of this survey.

  Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey. The specific research question that this data collection tool sought to answer was: How and to what extent do students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports change during their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum? The data collection instrument employed a 6-point Likert-scale survey with the same response choices as the College-Going Capital Survey described above. The Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey consisted of two constructs. The first construct measured students' perceived

barriers to attending college and included 10 items. Two items that exemplify this scale

are, "The cost of college will be a barrier to my attending college" and "A lack of

information about college will be a barrier to my attending college." The second

construct measured students' perceived supports for attending college and included five

items, each asking about four different support groups—parents, extended family

members, teachers, and peers. Therefore, the support construct had a total of 20 items.

Examples of items included, "My parents/family/teachers/peers expect me to work hard

in school" and "My parents/family/teachers/peers encourage me to think about my

future." See Appendix C for the complete pre- and post-innovation survey. See

Appendix D for the retrospective-pre-test version of this survey.

Qualitative data sources. This action research study utilized six different

qualitative data collection tools: student journal responses, dialogic discussion transcripts,

image-elicitation, 1:1 semi-structured interviews, college coach memos, and a researcher

journal. This variety of tools allowed me to more fully understand the phenomenon of

constructing college-going capital.

Student journal responses. This open-ended data collection tool informed all

three of the study's research questions. Throughout the semester, students had regular

opportunities to reflect on and make meaning of the class's readings, discussions, and

class activities. Although each journal prompt varied depending upon the particular

content covered during that time period, the prompts had two constants: they were always

open-ended and, in one way or another, they always offered students time to consider

their beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about college-going. The first journal prompt asked

students to respond to the following: "What do you think of when you hear the word

'college'?" and "How do you feel when you think of going to college?" A journal prompt later in the semester asked students to agree or disagree with a statement and then defend their stances. The statement was: "Teens can effect positive change in their world." See Appendix E for a sampling of the journal prompts.

Dialogic discussion transcripts. This open-ended data collection tool informed all three of the study's research questions. Further, this data collection tool offered particular insight into how students constructed college-going critical literacy. The class's dialogic discussions were critical conversations focused on course content (news articles, nonfiction essays, scholarly journal articles, films, etc.). A critical conversation is one that examines multiple perspectives, rejects truth as absolute, and encourages students to scrutinize power relations and societal inequities to effect change (Kincheloe; 2004; Mercer & Hodgkinson, 2008). These critical conversations, guided by student-generated questions, allowed students to explore their relations to college-access texts and ideas, as well as to critique their world and consider their roles in it.

Image elicitation. This data collection tool was used to answer the study's first two research questions and provided additional insights into students' thoughts and feelings about college-going, as well as elucidated their perceptions of educational barriers and supports. At the very beginning of the innovation, students gathered four images about their perceptions of college-going: two images that captured their general ideas about college-going, one image that represented a significant barrier to them attending college, and one image that represented a significant support for them attending college. Visual data like this can enhance inquiry and reflection in educational research (Fischman, 2001; Prosser, 2007). During image-gathering, students had the option either

53

to take original photographs, to select an image from the internet, or a combination of the two. Students used an image log to catalog their images and recorded brief descriptions of what the images meant to them. Then, at the end of the innovation, students repeated the image-gathering and cataloging process. See Appendix F for the image-elicitation log. Finally, during 1:1 semi-structured interviews, I asked students questions about their images, prompting them to explain the patterns, changes, and personal meanings they saw in them. This data collection strategy, known as photo-elicitation interviews, uses photographs, film, art, or other found images to stimulate ideas, memories, and discussion during an interview (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Harper, 2002).

 Semi-structured interviews. Both the student and college-coach interview protocols were designed to elicit responses that could inform any of the three research questions. Both interview protocols were semi-structured in nature, featuring a mix of pre-determined questions along with a variety of follow-up questions that could probe more deeply into the respondents' replies. The student interview protocol had ten predetermined questions. An example of one of these questions and its follow-up probes was "Have your ideas about college changed this semester? If yes, how? If no, why do you think not?" Another representative inquiry and its follow-up probes was "Please describe your college coaching sessions. How were they for you? Which parts of your college coaching session were … most helpful to you? least helpful?" See Appendix G for the entire student interview protocol.

 The college coach interview protocol had six predetermined questions. An example question from the college coach interview protocol was "In which college exploration activities did your student need the most support from you? least support?"

Another sample question was "In what ways could college coaching be improved?" See Appendix H for the entire college coach interview protocol.

   College coach memos. Like the student journals, this qualitative tool provided insight into all three of the research questions. After each meeting with their various student advisees, college coaches were asked to briefly reflect on the activities and interactions of their coaching session via a reflective memo. The coaches had an electronic template for the memo so that they could easily complete it and email it to me. To provide structure and cohesion to these memos, there were consistent prompts to which the coaches responded. An example of one of these prompts was "Please briefly describe your coaching session." Another example was "In what ways is your student progressing?...struggling?" At the end of the memo, there was an open-ended area which asked "Any other comments or observations?" See Appendix I for the college coach memo template.

   Researcher journal. This was another tool that provided insights into all three of the research questions. The journal took two forms, both a physical journal and audio recordings. Depending upon the situation, physically writing down observations or ideas was sometimes best; at other times, recording my thoughts into my phone during evening commutes home was more convenient. These audio recordings were later transcribed. Typically, I used the physical journal in the middle of the busy work day to briefly document observations made or ideas that developed while in the classroom. I used the audio-recording function on my phone to reflect on happenings of the advisory committee and the dialogic discussions, to note observations about student behaviors,

class climate, student reactions to curriculum, etc. The journal also provided me a space to organize and track my thoughts and "big ideas" about the research process.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

As data were collected with the eight different tools, analysis also began so that it could influence the course of the study, particularly with regard to modifying the innovation to make it more effective and responsive to students' needs.

Quantitative procedures. Both quantitative data sources, the College-Going Capital Survey and the Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey, were administered to junior and senior students via computer. The pre-, post-, and then-versions of both surveys were matched by the students' school identification numbers so that changes could be tracked and compared. All results were analyzed with a variety of descriptive and parametric statistical procedures.

College-Going Capital Survey. The initial pre-innovation survey was administered during the second week of English class, after students and parents had the opportunity to provide informed consent to participate in the study. The pre-innovation data survey was reviewed to guide the innovation. The post-innovation survey was administered during the 18th week of the semester. Finally, the "then" retrospective version of the survey was conducted in class, during the final, 19th week of the semester. Having students complete the post-test assessment at a different time from the then-test was done intentionally to yield the most valid then-ratings and the least biased measures of innovation effectiveness (Nimon, Zigarmi & Allen, 2011). The results for each pre-post-then version of the survey were entered into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics and repeated measures ANOVAs to examine the three components of college-

going capital—(a) competency, (b) efficacy, and (c) critical literacy. Upon further reflection on the survey's critical literacy construct, it was determined that only six of the ten items were sufficiently aligned with the concept of critical literacy. Therefore, only items 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30 were included in the final analysis.

Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey. The initial pre-innovation survey was also administered on the second week of class, to allow time for parents and students to provide informed consent to participate in the study. The pre-innovation data survey was analyzed to guide the innovation. The post-innovation survey was administered during the 18th week of the semester, on a separate day from the College-Going Capital Survey to avoid survey fatigue. Finally, the "then" retrospective version of the survey was administered during the final, 19th week of the semester—again on a separate day from the College-Going Capital Survey. The results for each pre-post-then version of the survey were entered into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics and parametric tests.

Qualitative procedures. To explain and describe the manner in which Seligman students constructed college-going capital, perceived college-going barriers and supports, and experienced college coaching, all six of the qualitative data sources were analyzed using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 1998). To facilitate the analysis of the qualitative data, HyperRESEARCH software (HyperRESEARCH 3.7.1, 2014) was used for initial coding as well as subsequent analysis.

Grounded theory. Using the systematic, iterative strategies of grounded theory, I moved back and forth between data to conceptualize it better and to construct interpretations of the data. Additionally, I moved back and forth among individual data

sets—as well as among different data sets—to make meaning of events, objects, and participants' thoughts, actions, and interactions. Although the grounded theory coding process is not one of sequential steps—but a dynamic and fluid practice—I describe them below as distinct parts for the sake of clarity.

First, whether the data were students' journal responses or my first week's field notes, I began each data source's analysis with an initial read through of the material and line-by-line open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach, without any firmly established a priori codes, promoted an initial understanding of the data that was open to all theoretical directions (Saldana, 2012). I broke down the data into discrete parts and labeled them with conceptual codes. Fracturing the data in this way and remaining open to all conceptual possibilities allowed me "to see the familiar in a new light, avoid forcing data into preconceptions, and gain distance from [my] own as well as participants' taken-for-granted assumptions" (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012, p. 45).

During open coding, I used three main methods of coding. The two primary methods I used were descriptive coding and process coding. Descriptive coding, which summarizes in a word or short phrase the basic topic of a section of qualitative data, is particularly appropriate for studies with a wide variety of qualitative data forms (Saldana, 2012). The other primary coding method I used was process coding. Process coding, which uses gerunds ("-ing" words) to capture action in the data, was an important analysis tool in this transformative research study. Employing process coding as much as possible allows researchers to stay close to the data, refrain from assigning static labels to participants, preserve the fluidity of participants' experiences, and conceptualize actions, interactions, and consequences (Charmaz, 2014). Specifically, process coding helped me

not to "ignore, gloss over, or leap beyond participants' meanings and actions" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 121). The third coding method I used was in vivo coding, and I used it much more sparingly than the other two methods. In vivo coding uses exact words or phrases found in the data as the code itself. In vivo codes are important when a researcher wants to prioritize and honor participants' voices (Charmaz, 2014; Saldana, 2012).

During first-round open coding, I continually considered new data in relation to already established codes. As the coding process continued, data were compared against, modified as a result of, and merged with other codes. This back-and-forth process of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) allowed me to form a more comprehensive explanation about how students constructed college-going capital, perceived college-going barriers and supports, and experienced college coaching. As the constant comparative process continued, I began to organize individual codes into larger conceptual categories.

As the open coding and conceptual categorizing drew to an end, I integrated the many categories through selectively coding all the categories into core themes. These core themes represented the central phenomenon of the study and grounded the generative interpretations produced by the overall data analysis (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). Lastly, I conducted final readings of the data sets to ensure theoretical saturation in which additional data collection and analysis revealed no new insights.

Throughout the entire coding process, two measures were used to enhance the rigor of qualitative analysis. First, I used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to explore similarities and differences among data and guard against biases as I challenged established concepts with new data. The method

was used to constantly compare concepts between various raw data, as well as between data and categories, to ensure a more nuanced interpretation of qualitative information. Second, I maintained theoretical memos to ensure "well elaborated and satisfying integrations of the analysis" (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). This tool allowed me to document questions, make speculations, and note emerging trends for further investigation.

Student journal responses. Initial reading and analysis of the student's journal entries occurred as I typed their responses into Microsoft Word. I continued analysis of the short student journal responses by conducting open coding on each journal data set. Then, as the study progressed, I conducted analyses across the different journal data sets.

Dialogic discussion transcripts. Throughout the semester, students participated in five dialogic discussions. These discussions were held during English class. Each of the five discussions was digitally recorded and then transcribed and analyzed. The transcripts were secured away from the school on a personal computer that was password protected. They were analyzed using grounded theory procedures also.

Image elicitation. This data source was analyzed in two ways. First, I used grounded theory procedures to analyze the students' pre-innovation images independent of any spoken interview reflections. This allowed me to gain a better understanding of students' baseline college-going conceptions and informed the innovation. Then, after conducting photo-elicitation interviews at the end of the innovation, I compared the images and interview transcripts for a richer analysis.

Semi-structured interviews. During the last two weeks of the semester, I interviewed the majority of the students. Due to scheduling issues and final exams, I had to conduct a few of the student interviews when students returned to school after winter

recess. I also interviewed the college coaches either at the end of the fall semester or immediately after returning from winter recess. The interviews were conducted at Seligman High School either during the last period of the regular school day or after the school day had ended. The interviews were digitally recorded and then subsequently transcribed. The transcripts were secured away from the school on a personal computer that was password protected.

College coach memos. These memos were collected on an ongoing basis, as coaches met with students and emailed or delivered their memos to me. The memos were compiled into one Microsoft Word document and maintained electronically on a password protected computer. I analyzed these memos as they were collected, and, at the end of the innovation period, I also examined each coach's set of memos for patterns and trends.

Researcher journal. I transferred my handwritten notes and observations from my researcher journal into a Microsoft Word document. The audio-recorded journal entries were transcribed and also added to this same file. The typed journal entries were maintained on a password protected computer. I regularly reviewed the collected entries so that the data could inform the study's development.

Rigor, Validity, and Trustworthiness

To ensure rigor in this study, I analyzed quantitative surveys for construct validity, maintained trustworthiness of the various qualitative data sources, triangulated data across the qualitative data sets, and checked for complementarity between the quantitative and qualitative data (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). Although strategies to

ensure statistical rigor of a study's quantitative components are more clearly established, methods to maintain rigor in this study's qualitative components deserve closer attention.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that trustworthiness is established when the study's findings reflect the meanings described by the participants as closely as possible. There are three ways in which I strove to promote trustworthiness and increase the rigor of the study. First, I used the strategy of reflexivity. Through individual reflection and dialogue with other critical friends, reflexivity involves researchers deconstructing how their beliefs, experiences, and identities intersect with those of their participants and influence the study (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). I tracked this process in my researcher journal. In addition to practicing reflexivity, I also kept an audit trail to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. This strategy involved maintaining clear descriptions of the research steps taken and the rationales for decisions made throughout a study (Lietz et al., 2006). Finally, to increase the trustworthiness of this study, I conducted member checks with five students and three college coaches. This entailed sharing the findings from my data analyses with these select participants. This process afforded participants the chance to confirm or challenge the accuracy of meanings ascribed to them and assisted in managing the threat of bias (Lietz et al., 2006).

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Results

The world, even the smallest parts of it, is filled with things you don't know.

—Gordy, from Sherman Alexie's

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

The words above, spoken by a fictional teenage bookworm, remind us of the limitless educative possibilities that exist in the many nooks and crannies of our world. For almost six years now, the center of my world has been the small physical space of Room 201 at Seligman High School. It is in that classroom that I have worked with—by and large—the same adolescents week after week, year in and year out. Throughout this time, in this small part of the world, I have gained amazing insights about teaching, learning, my students, and myself. However, since beginning classroom action research, these types of insights and discoveries have grown exponentially. The research process has afforded me the opportunity to infuse my traditional reflective practice with more purposeful examination and systematic sense-making of classroom life. In this chapter, I share new knowledge from a small part of the world: the results from investigating how and to what extent my students constructed college-going capital in our rural high school English class.

Results from this action research study are presented in the following two sections of this chapter. First, I present results from the quantitative data. Then, I share results from the qualitative data in the second section. For the qualitative data, assertions are presented and reinforced with themes, theme-related components, and quotes from participants. Prior to the presentation of results, a review of data collection processes and analyses procedures is provided.

Quantitative data included survey results from 13 students who completed retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation surveys. The surveys measured students' (a) college-going capital and (b) perceived barriers and supports with respect to college-going behavior. On the college-going capital survey, students responded to scales that assessed three constructs including (a) college-going competency, (b) college-going efficacy, and (c) college-going critical literacy. For the survey on barriers and supports, students responded to five scales. One of these scales assessed students' perceptions of barriers, whereas the other four assessed students' perceptions of supports including (a) parental support, (b) other family member support, (c) teacher support, and (d) friend support. I analyzed the quantitative data in several ways. First, reliability of the constructs was examined. Following the reliability analysis, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-test data to determine whether there were differences for these mean scores.

Qualitative data included student journal responses, dialogic discussion transcripts, image elicitation, individual semi-structured interviews of students and college coaches, college coach memos, and notes from the researcher's journal. These qualitative data were entered into HyperRESEARCH (HyperRESEARCH 3.7.1, 2014). I analyzed the data using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), in which data is coded using initial open codes that include key words or short phrases. Subsequently, initial codes were gathered into larger categories. The categories were then collected into theme-related components, which were then brought together into themes. The themes led to the development of assertions, which were supported with quotes from the original data.

Results for Quantitative Data

Results from the quantitative data are presented in two portions. First, reliability data are presented. Second, the repeated measures ANOVA of the college-going data and the barriers and supports data for the retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation surveys are presented.

Reliability data. Cronbach's α was computed for each of the constructs using SPSS to determine the reliability. The survey of college-going data included three constructs: (a) college-going competency, (b) college-going efficacy, and (c) college-going critical literacy. For the post-innovation assessment of these constructs, the reliabilities for these three constructs were: .88, .78, and .86, respectively. Similarly, the reliabilities for the five constructs on the post-innovation barriers and supports survey were: .68, .85, .85, .80, and .90, respectively for the barriers, parental support, other family member support, teacher support, and friend support constructs. With the exception of the barriers construct, the reliability coefficients were all above .70, which is an acceptable level of reliability, and confirm the reliability of the items for each of the constructs assessed by the surveys.

Repeated measures analysis of retrospective pre-, pre-, and post-innovation scores for college-going capital. A multivariate repeated measures analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there were differences in scores when comparing the retrospective-pre-, pre- and post-innovation survey results on the three college-going capital constructs. The multivariate $F(6, 44) = 8.62, p < .001$ was significant and $\eta^2 = .54$, which is a large effect size for a within-subjects design based on Cohen's criteria (Olejnik & Algina, 2000). Individual, univariate repeated measures

ANOVAs showed scores differed reliably for all three constructs when retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation scores were compared. Specifically, the repeated measures ANOVA for college-going competency was significant, $F(2, 24) = 16.89$, $p < .001$ and $\eta^2 = .59$, which is a large effect size for a within-subjects design (Olejnik & Algina, 2000). Similarly, the repeated measures ANOVA for college-going efficacy was significant, $F(2, 24) = 19.81$, $p < .001$ and $\eta^2 = .62$, which is a large effect size. Likewise, the repeated measures ANOVA for critical literacy awareness was significant, $F(2, 24) = 13.55$, $p < .001$ and $\eta^2 = .53$, which is a large effect size for a within-subjects design. The large effect sizes indicated reliable differences in the retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation means.

Follow-up post-hoc comparisons showed the college-going competency pre-innovation scores differed from the post-innovation scores; whereas the college-going efficacy scores and the critical literacy awareness scores did not demonstrate a significant difference when pre-innovation scores were compared with post-innovation scores. This latter outcome was anticipated because individuals have been shown to overestimate their knowledge on pre-innovation surveys. Because of this bias in pre-innovation scores, retrospective-pre-innovation scores were also gathered. Follow-up post-hoc comparisons for college-going efficacy and critical literacy awareness retrospective pre-innovation scores differed significantly from their respective pre-innovation and post-innovation scores. For the latter comparisons of retrospective-pre- and post-innovation scores, differences between retrospective-pre-innovation scores and post-innovation scores were 1.58, 1.56, and 1.16 points, respectively, which indicated substantial differences in perceptions on the 6-point scale. The retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation means

and standard deviations for college-going competency, college-going efficacy, and

college-going critical literacy awareness are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Retrospective Pre-, Pre-, and Post-Innovation Scores for College-Going Competency,
College-Going Efficacy, and College-Going Critical Literacy

| | Time of Testing | | | | | |
| | Retrospective-Pre-Innovation | | Pre-Innovation | | Post-Innovation | |
Construct	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
College-Going Competency	2.75	0.98	3.30	0.47	4.33	0.72
College-Going Efficacy	2.96	0.87	4.06	0.58	4.52	0.57
College-Going Critical Literacy	3.88	0.77	4.81	0.59	5.04	0.55

Repeated measures analysis of retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation

scores for barriers and supports. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to

determine whether there were differences in scores when comparing the retrospective-

pre-, pre- and post-innovation survey results of the perceived barriers to college-going

scores. The results showed there were no differences in the scores for the barrier

construct, $F(2, 24) = 1.48$, $p < .25$, which was not significant. As shown in Table 4,

below, the mean scores for barrier only decreased by 0.32 of a point from retrospective

pre- to post-innovation assessments.

Similarly, when testing the perceived changes in support, that compared the

retrospective-pre-, pre-, and post-innovation survey results, there were no differences,

multivariate $F(8, 44) = 1.55$, $p < .17$, which was not significant. As demonstrated in

Table 4, below, mean differences for pre- compared to post-innovation scores were quite

67

small with the largest difference being 0.18 points. Even the mean differences for

retrospective-pre- as compared to post-innovation scores were small with the largest

being 0.64 points. In sum, there were not differences between the means over time for

the barriers and supports. The means and standard deviations for the barriers and

supports are presented below in Table 4.

Table 4

Retrospective-Pre-, Pre-, and Post-Innovation Scores for Barriers, Parental Support,
Other Family Support, Teacher Support, and Friend Support

| | Time of Testing | | | | | |
| | Retrospective-Pre-Innovation | | Pre-Innovation | | Post-Innovation | |
Construct	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
College-Going Barriers	3.89	0.73	3.65	0.49	3.57	0.65
Parental Support	4.95	0.80	5.25	0.71	5.22	0.71
Other Family Member Support	4.97	0.73	5.02	0.56	4.94	0.69
Teacher Support	4.51	0.85	5.11	0.47	5.15	0.64
Friend Support	4.29	0.94	4.31	0.81	4.48	0.99

Results for Qualitative Data

Results from the qualitative data are presented below. These results were based

on analysis of the six qualitative data sources: student journal responses, dialogic

discussion transcripts, image elicitation, individual semi-structured interviews, college

coach memos, and notes from the researcher's journal. Data sources included

transcriptions from five sets of dialogic discussions, student responses to 12 different

journal prompts, 14 sets of pre- and post-innovation student-selected images, 14 student

interviews, five college coach interviews, 13 college coach memos, and researcher

journal notes. Table 5 provides details regarding the word-count quantity of each

qualitative data source. The qualitative results are presented in sections, according to the

five final themes that emerged. Throughout the presentation of these qualitative results,

all student names are pseudonyms.

Table 5

Description of Qualitative Sources

Data Source	Word Count
Student Journal Responses	16,217
Dialogic Discussion Transcripts	27,048
Student Interviews	47,246
College Coach Interviews	19,432
College Coach Memos	2,691
Researcher Journal Notes	10,533
Total Word Count	123,167

Themes. In the analysis of the qualitative data sources, 102 initial codes were

identified during the open coding process. Using the constant comparative method

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998), I compared these initial codes against one another, modified

them as needed, and merged them with other codes to form larger categories. After

reflection, these categories were then grouped into theme-related components and five

major themes. The five themes that emerged from the data included: college-going

competency, college-going self-efficacy, college-going critical literacy, post-secondary

educational barriers and supports, and college coaching yielded both successes and challenges. Table 6 presents the theme-related components, the related themes that emerged from the initial codes, and the assertions derived from the analysis process.

Table 6

Theme-Related Components, Themes, and Assertions

Theme-Related Components	Themes	Assertions
Students had many questions about college-going at the beginning of the semester. Students improved their college-going skills and knowledge levels through inquiry-based and hands-on activities. Students developed more-specific academic and career goals. Students felt more prepared about college-going as the semester progressed.	College-going competency	Through inquiry-based and hands-on activities, students expanded their college-going skills and knowledge levels, developed and modified their academic and career goals, and felt more prepared to handle the challenges associated with accessing college.
Students felt scared and nervous about college. Students benefited from hearing current and former college students' stories. Students benefited from completing college-level composition assignments. Students gained a deeper understanding of college and their perceptions towards college-going shifted.	College-going efficacy	As students learned from others' experiences and achieved success with college-level assignments and situations, their college-going self-efficacy increased and their ability to envision themselves as college students developed.

Students recognized social injustices within the educational system.

Students experienced a variety of emotions during the class, but they were not afforded enough opportunities to explore and act on them.

Students believed that teens could effect social change in abstract terms, but doubted their own power to do so in concrete situations.

Students developed varying degrees of critical consciousness. | College-going critical literacy | Students' college-going critical literacy is developed most when class curriculum fosters their identification of social injustices and when they are provided with opportunities for praxis (cycle of reflection *and* action) throughout the entire course, rather than exclusively at the end. |
| Students' most noteworthy educational barriers and supports did not change over the course of the semester.

Students elaborated how they could overcome noteworthy barriers and articulated how they could enhance their support networks. | Post-secondary educational barriers and supports | Although students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports remained constant, students' perceptions of their abilities to overcome barriers and maximize supports developed. |
| College coaches guided students through a variety of college exploration activities.

College coaches provided students with moral support.

Institutional-level factors resulted in challenges for many college coaching partnerships.

Individual-level factors resulted in challenges for some for some college coaching partnerships. | College coaching yielded both successes and challenges | College coaching partnerships benefited students most when coaches and students developed strong relationships, met regularly, and had substantial supports and resources for their college-exploration activities. |

College-going competency: Assertion 1. *Through inquiry-based education and hands-on activities, students expanded their college-going skills and knowledge levels, developed and modified their academic and career goals, and felt more prepared to handle the challenges associated with accessing college*. The English language arts college-going curriculum included specific lessons and activities to help students develop their college-going competency—the critical skills and knowledge needed to access college. As the semester progressed, students benefited from learning about topics such as connecting personal interests to careers and college majors, distinguishing between different types of post-secondary institutions, and understanding college and financial aid application processes.

Some initial codes that led to the theme of college-going competency included the in vivo code "unprepared," the descriptive codes "uncertainty" and "deadlines," and the process codes "asking questions" and "determining colleges." As the relevant initial codes were compared against, modified as a result of, and merged with other codes, four theme-related components emerged as this theme's central properties. The theme-related components that substantiated the college-going competency theme and its corresponding assertion were: (a) students had many questions about college-going at the beginning of the semester, (b) students improved their college-going skills and knowledge levels through inquiry-based and hands-on activities, (c) students developed more-specific academic and career goals, and (d) students felt more prepared about college-going as the semester progressed.

Students had many questions about college-going at the beginning of the semester. Students' very first journal entry revealed that many of them had just as many

72

questions about college-going as they did definitive answers. The first journal-entry

prompt asked the following two open-ended questions: "What do you think of when you

hear the word college?" and "How do you feel when you think of going to college?"

Although students responded thoughtfully and shared their ideas about and feelings

toward college, they also took this first journal writing opportunity to ask many

questions. One student wrote:

> When I hear the word college I think "future." I always think if I'm really going
>
> to go. If I go, will I go for what I planned for? I wonder if I'll really stay all the
>
> time or drop out like other kids. I wonder how I'll pay for it all. Future is the
>
> main thing on my mind. I'm not sure what my future will be. (student journal
>
> entry, August 28, 2014)

Another student's journal entry also exemplified students' lack of certainty and need for

more information. The entry was a series of questions that included: "Where am I going

to get the money? Where should I go? What should I go for? Will I get in? Where will

I live? Will my boyfriend live with me? I'm anxious. I'm unprepared" (student journal

entry, August 28, 2014). One other student wrote, "I wonder how to do it all. Where do I

even begin?" (student journal entry, August 28, 2014)

Students' uncertainty and need for more information described above in these

initial journal entries also appeared in many of the questions posed by students on the

classroom's "parking lot" wall. The parking lot was a place where students could "park"

any questions they had so that we could follow up and discuss them in future classes.

Students' beginning-of-semester parking lot questions covered topics ranging from

college admission requirements to financial-aid specifics to selecting majors. Some specific questions that were posted in the first month of the class included:

> Do you have to take the ACT test to get into college? Which test is better—SAT or ACT? How many scholarships are you allowed to apply for? Can I use my scholarships to buy a laptop? I still don't understand the different degrees. Which is better? How come in high school we take three credits a semester, but in college they take twelve or more credits a semester? Isn't this impossible and crazy amounts of work?" (researcher journal entry, September 3, 2014)

These parking-lot questions allowed me to assess students' levels of understanding about various tasks and vital information needed for high school students to successfully gain access to college. The parking lot also helped the class clarify misconceptions about college-going.

Students improved their college-going skills and knowledge levels through inquiry-based and hands-on activities. Rather than just passively receiving college-going information through direct instruction methods such as lectures and presentations, students in the English language arts college-going class participated in hands-on activities and sought answers to their own questions. These hands-on and inquiry-based activities improved their college-going skills and knowledge levels and included: connecting their interests to possible academic and career paths; researching various aspects of colleges and financial aid; and creating individual questions for the different college question and answer panels.

For example, during the first two weeks of the course, students took online versions of the Myers-Briggs personality inventory and the Holland Codes career

inventory. These inventories allowed students to think more deeply about how their personalities and interests might shape their academic and career futures. This was a positive experience for them. I described the enthusiasm and learning benefits surrounding these activities in an early researcher journal entry:

> The students seem amazed at how the Myers-Briggs' and Holland Codes' results match who they truly feel they are. It's validating for them to see that their personality types match up to some really cool careers. Those who hadn't given as much thought to their careers as others are learning how to link their interests to careers and seeing how different academic paths can help prepare them for those careers. (researcher journal entry, August 25, 2014)

The positive influence of these activities was also echoed by students. One senior stated, "I knew I wanted to go into the medical field, but it was good to see that my personality is good for it" (student interview, December 15, 2014). Another student commented, "It was interesting to see all the different jobs I'd be good at. Some I'd never thought about or heard of before" (student interview, December 9, 2014).

After conducting these initial career-inquiry activities during class time, some students continued connecting interests and potential careers to academic paths with their college coaches. One student shared how she and her coach explored different careers related to early childhood education. In one of her journal entries, she wrote, "She showed me it doesn't just have to be teaching kindergarten. There's a lot of different jobs working with kids out there" (student journal entry, October 9, 2014). Another student who was deciding between entering the workforce directly and attending college after graduation was able to connect personal interests to potential careers and college

majors during his coaching session. His college coach explained, "I think it was enlightening for him to see the different career clusters of interest to him that are available at those colleges" (college coach memo, September 29, 2014).

In addition to exploring future academic and career paths, students also learned about colleges and financial aid through individualized research and hands-on practice activities. One student explained how developing her online research skills helped her narrow her college-choice list. She stated, "It made me open my eyes a lot I guess, like what colleges I really wanted to go to. One [college] that I thought would be great didn't even have my program" (student interview, December 9, 2014). Another student explained, "I wanted to go to Jacksonville University because it's near family and they have a really good forensics program, but then when I did the college calculation worksheet I saw how much it would really cost" (student interview, December 10, 2014). Another student echoed this idea when she commented, "I liked those worksheets you had us do, like the tuition and all that stuff because you don't know what it's going to cost with food and books and everything else until you really do it" (student interview, January 8, 2015).

Not only did the hands-on activities help students find colleges that fit their interests and budget, the activities also helped develop their financial aid knowledge and skills. One student explained, "Just actually doing stuff was good, like how we filled out the practice FAFSA thing, I think that was pretty smart. I think that really just kind of showed me, okay, it's not that hard" (student interview, December 11, 2014). Other students commented that actually applying for scholarships helped them. One junior remarked, "It was good when you helped me set up an email and start with the

scholarships, cause now I really know how to do them and I'm figuring out what ones I want to go for" (student interview, January 7, 2015). Another senior commented, "I wouldn't have even known all those scholarship websites were out there if you hadn't shown us in class" (student interview, December 18, 2014).

Students also improved their college-going skills and knowledge levels through inquiry when they created questions for the two different question and answer college panels. By considering what they wanted to know and crafting personally meaningful questions, students were able to deepen their understanding of the college-going process. Some examples of students' questions included: "What was most challenging about getting to college, and how did you overcome it?" and "Do you recommend a community college or a university and why?" and "How are you paying for college?" (researcher journal entry, September 24, 2014). The students' entries written immediately after each of the panels revealed the benefits of this inquiry activity. Many students wrote about not procrastinating and needing to meet application and scholarship deadlines. The following journal entry represents this idea: "I learned that I shouldn't slack off. I need to get organized if I'm gonna succeed…start applying for money now!" (student journal entry, December 10, 2014). Another student commented, "I'm very bad at procrastinating. I wait a long time to do things, so when Nick and Stacie talked about it, I realized that I have to get better, especially this year with applications and stuff" (student journal entry, December 10, 2014). Another common element written about in the post-panel journal entries involved planning. One student wrote, "I learned that you need to plan early so you know what you're doing" (student journal entry, September 11, 2014). Another

77

student explained, "I want to start making a solid plan for college so I don't fail" (student journal entry, December 10, 2014).

    Students developed more specific academic and career goals. As they learned about different colleges, their environments, their costs, and their program offerings, students often articulated more precise ideas of their future academic and career plans. At the beginning of the semester, many students had vague ideas about college. In fact, only one student (out of fourteen) mentioned a specific college by name in the first journal entry that prompted students to share their thoughts and feelings about college. As they conducted research, considered various factors, talked to different people, and visited campuses, students' future goals often became more targeted and specific.

    After traveling to Flagstaff to visit Coconino Community College and Northern Arizona University in September, this goal specificity could be seen in students' written reflections on the trip. Students wrote things such as: "I am now thinking of going to CCC to start the college experience and then transfer to NAU" and "NAU made me realize that a 2 year college will be a good first step for me" and "NAU is a top choice for me" (student journal entries, September 25, 2014). Likewise, the class's campus visits to Yavapai College and Arizona State University helped some students clarify their academic and career goals. Students wrote things such as: "The trip was great. I got a lot more information about different colleges I wasn't even considering" and "I really liked the ASU campus for its programs and family dorms. I am so totally applying to ASU!" and "The trip made me realize where I want to go. I still prefer NAU" (student journal entries, October 23, 2014).

End-of-semester student interviews and the image-elicitation process also demonstrated that students' academic and career goals became more focused throughout the course of the class. One student described how her college selection prior to the class was based on superficial elements. She noted, "The college I really wanted to go to ever since I was like really little was the University of Arizona because like you know the big sports teams, everything, the Wildcats, but I've never even been there" (student interview, December 10, 2014). Other students mentioned similar thought processes about forming academic goals. One particular 11th grader commented that in the beginning of the year he thought, "College would just be a lot of partying and stuff like that. It didn't really matter where I went, but now it does. I don't want to be on a big campus" (student interview, January 7, 2015). Another student's pre- and post-innovation images powerfully demonstrated how students' academic and career goals increased in specificity. At the beginning of the semester, the student selected a picture of college football and a diploma to represent his ideas of college-going. At the end of the semester, he chose an image of Yavapai College's logo and a picture of an automotive class. See Figure 1, on the next page. When asked to explain the changes in his images, the student elaborated:

> Well, I love college football and it was just, go somewhere that had that. But
> now, it's about YC for Yavapai College because that's where I want to go. And
> the degree was to get a better job, but the second is that I've actually thought
> about what I want to do. (student interview, December 18, 2014)

79
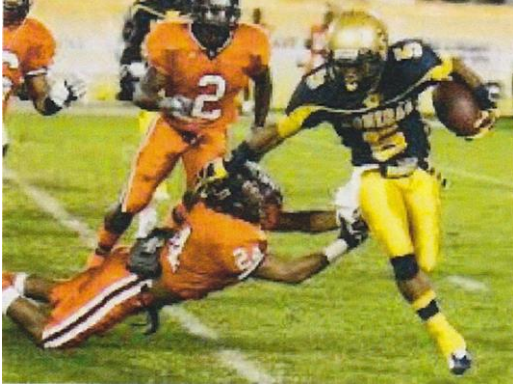
Figure 1. Pre- and post-innovation image samples. Student's pre-innovation (top row) and post-innovation (bottom row) images representing his ideas about college-going.

     Students felt more prepared about college-going as the semester progressed. As students continued through the class, they learned concrete information about college-going. As they investigated and understood information about different colleges, as well as their offerings, costs, applications procedures, and financial aid processes, students felt more prepared for the challenges associated with the college-search process.

     In their end-of-semester interviews, many students associated learning about the nitty-gritty details of college-going with feeling more prepared overall. One student commented, "I never knew there were so many deadlines. I just thought, hey, graduation is coming maybe we should apply, but it don't work that way…It was pretty helpful and got us ready because a lot of us don't know" (student interview, December 15, 2014).

Another student shared how valuable learning about college-going was for her when she replied to my open-ended question "Can you describe how learning about college has been for you this past semester?" She responded, "When I first started the year, I didn't know anything about college, like, I was just lost. Then we started going over everything…even what we needed to do and when. It was really helpful for a person like me" (student interview, December 9, 2014). One final student clearly explained how learning about the college-going process increased her sense of preparedness and certainty. She said, "I'm getting a handle on things, knowing what all I need to do. I was pretty confused and negative at the beginning of the year because I didn't really know anything about college. Now, I'm more sure of things" (student interview, December 11, 2014).

Taken together, four related components of the theme college-going competency emerged as students actively learned about college-going through inquiry-based and hands-on activities. Moreover, their college-going skills and knowledge levels increased, their academic and career goals became more specific, and their sense of preparedness to handle the challenges associated with accessing college improved.

College-going self-efficacy: Assertion 2. As students learned from others' experiences and achieved success with college-level assignments and situations, their college-going self-efficacy increased and their ability to envision themselves as college students developed. This assertion is based on the analysis of the entire qualitative data set that led to the development of the college-going self-efficacy theme. Some initial codes that led to the theme of college-going self-efficacy included the in vivo codes "scared" and "nervous," the descriptive codes "personal story" and "academic

inadequacy," and the process codes "seeing self at college" and "shifting perceptions."

As the relevant initial codes were compared against, modified as a result of, and merged

with other codes, four theme-related components emerged as this theme's central

properties. The theme-related components that validated the college-going self-efficacy

theme and its corresponding assertion were: (a) students felt scared and nervous about

college; (b) students benefited from hearing current and former college students' stories;

(c) students benefited from completing college-level composition assignments; and

(d) students gained a deeper understanding of college and their perceptions towards

college-going shifted.

Students felt scared and nervous about college. All six of the qualitative data

sources supported this theme-related component. However, initial codes leading to the

conclusion that students felt scared and nervous about college most frequently emerged

from students' journal entries, their pre-innovation images, and their end-of-year

interviews. For example, in their first journal entry, nine out of 14 students reported

feeling scared, nervous, fearful, and/or anxious about college. Likewise, in their pre-

innovation image log, half of the 14 students selected images with negative affective

connotations. A sampling of these images is shown in Figure 2, on the next page. As I

categorized the various codes in the qualitative data sources, it became clear that

students' fears about college-going centered on several main issues. Some students

worried that they would fail academically; others worried that they would not be able to

adjust to a new, larger environment; and still others worried that they would not be able

to balance adult responsibilities with school assignments.

Figure 2. Pre-innovation image log samples. Images selected by students at the beginning of the class, demonstrating negative emotional attitudes toward college-going.

Many students shared that they were scared and nervous about the difficult academics they would encounter once at college; they feared that they would fail. When asked at the beginning of the semester to explain what they thought of when they heard the word "college," one student wrote, "I think of all the exams and homework and I feel terrified because I believe it will be impossible" (student journal entry, August 28, 2014). This same student expressed his fear of failure when commenting on his beginning-of-

semester college-going image—the word "fail" in large red lettering. He said, "I think failure, like that's one of my, like one of my worst fears ever" (student interview, January 7, 2015). Another student also worried about not succeeding. She explained, "When I hear the word college, I get stressed and scared because part of me thinks I won't even get into any college, and if I do, I probably won't do good" (student journal entry, August 28, 2014). This idea of not achieving academic success was expressed by another student who displayed much self-doubt. She wrote, "It makes me sick to my stomach to think of college. It won't do anything but make me feel dumb" (student journal entry, August 28, 2014).

In addition to worrying about not succeeding academically at college, many students expressed fear and anxiety about adjusting to a new, larger environment. Because most of the students' educational experiences have been in a K-12 district with less than 200 students total and graduating class sizes averaging between 10 and 12 students, thinking about being on a college campus was intimidating. One 11th-grade student described her fear clearly when she noted, "When I hear the word college I think tons of different, new people. I think of big classes, different professors, etc. I feel scared when I think about going off to college" (student journal entry, August 28, 2014). Another student wrote, "When I hear the word college, I honestly feel scared. It's kind of unsettling to think of me being on a huge campus with tons of people. I'm scared to get lost, because I'm so used to being here" (student journal entry, August 28, 2014). One other student spoke to his fear during his end-of-semester interview. He said, "Y'know, it's like I'm still scared, I guess you'll always be a little to you actually do it and are on campus, but it's not as bad as it was before" (student interview, December 10, 2014).

84

Another main concern that caused students to feel nervous was balancing adult responsibilities with their school assignments. One student expressed concern about the topic when he commented, "Everyone says that it's supposed to be the best time of your life, but you have to pay the bills and be able to support yourself. I think it's something you have to get used to" (student interview, December 18, 2014). Another student pointed out, "Going to college could be exciting but also kinda scary because you'll have to pay your own rent and get a job. It's a lot of stress because of school work too" (student journal entry, October 9, 2014). This stressor of managing school and with adult roles was mentioned in quite a few of the end-of-semester interviews. Representing this concern, a senior spoke about the challenge of doing well in classes *and* in life. She said, "It's hard thinking about how you're going to be able to do school and be able to eat and take care of yourself, never mind worrying about your family too" (student interview, December 15, 2014).

Students benefited from hearing stories from current and former college students. As students acknowledged and grappled with the difficult emotions related to college-going, they also found strength in the power of stories. One student described the power of learning about college-going through others' personal experiences (as opposed to direct instructional techniques like reading about college) when she wrote, "Reading about college is different than talking to someone and learning about their experiences because reading doesn't show you how people actually feel. It's not as real" (student journal entry, September 11, 2014). Students had opportunities to hear stories from their college coaches and others on an ongoing, informal basis; in addition, they also benefited from three formal structured occasions to learn from others' experiences. These events

85

allowed students to ask specific questions, receive straightforward advice and information, and gain reassurance and confidence about their own college-going possibilities.

At the beginning of September, students attended a panel discussion that featured all of the college coaches as the panelists. Mid-way through the semester, in late October, students attended an informational session hosted by an Arizona State University student group, SPARKS, whose primary mission is to inspire K-12 students, especially those underrepresented on college campuses, to consider higher education as an option for their futures. And, finally, in early December, students participated in a question and answer session about college-going with two current college students who were recent graduates of Seligman High School.

For each event, students collaborated to create questions for the various speakers. Originally, this was not my plan. For the first question and answer session, I had intended that each coach would speak for a certain amount of time and then open it up to general discussion. However, students felt they would benefit more if they created specific questions for the college coaches. As one of my researcher journal entries demonstrated, this proved to be a much better idea. I wrote:

> I'm so glad that I listened to my students and had them create the questions. I
> don't know what I was thinking! They did an amazing job working together to
> refine the question list so it represented the majority of their issues…the questions
> really covered so many areas of college life and I definitely sensed a growing
> interest and excitement as they listened to the coaches' responses. (researcher
> journal entry, September 12, 2014)

Because the student-crafted questions were such a success during the first event, students continued to create personally meaningful questions for the remaining two formal informational events. These also proved valuable. After attending the SPARKS session, one student wrote, "I'm glad I got to ask my question. I can use the information they shared even if I apply to other colleges" (student journal entry, October 23, 2014). Another student responded to the question "How did the college field trip benefit you?" by writing, "I liked that we were able to talk to college students and learn about their experiences. It made me feel better when they answered the question about meeting new people" (student journal entry, October 23, 2014). Another student responded to this question by writing, "It was cool to see the guy from the Tuba talk about adjusting. That was really an important question for me" (student interview, October 23, 2014).

In addition to answering specific questions, these informational events provided students with honest, straightforward advice about college-going. Many students expressed that they appreciated hearing the truth from the speakers, even when the truth focused on the more challenging aspects of college life. One student's comments were representative of many other students' thoughts. She offered, "I'd rather hear it for real, not sugar-coated. We need to have more students come in and have them tell it like it is, like Nick and Stacie did, not like come in and say 'Oh yeah, it's all great, blah, blah, blah'" (student interview, December 9, 2014). Another student shared how hearing about the challenges of college-going from college students was positive for him. He explained, "I think it's good to hear about the hard stuff, like it's helped me realize that life isn't going to hand you everything, it's going to fight you for it" (student interview, January 7, 2015).

87

As they heard these personal stories from those who had experienced college firsthand, many students noticed a common motif in the speakers' stories: a pattern of overcoming challenges. When reflecting on the first college coaches' question and answer panel, the vast majority of students made note of how the coaches struggled but ultimately graduated from college. The fact that so many of the speakers encountered difficulties on their college journeys, but then overcame them, reassured students that they could also succeed One student reflected, "All the coaches had different types of stories…but they all had their struggles. And no matter what they went through, they still kept their head up and kept moving forward, so why can't we?" (student journal entry, September 11, 2014). Another student commented, "I am actually getting really excited for college, because now that I know some actual experiences from people I trust, I know that I will be able to survive college" (student journal entry, September 11, 2014).

Students also observed this pattern of overcoming struggles even from the panels featuring current college students. One student, referring back to the question and answer session with Seligman High graduates, was motivated by seeing those he knew succeed. He remarked, "I used to think it would be a constant struggle all the time, but we've seen people from this school go out and do it on their own" (student interview, December 18, 2014). Even when the stories were not from people the students knew well, like former Seligman students, hearing how people overcame challenges was empowering. Demonstrating this effect, one senior explained the positive influence the SPARKS students had on her. She said, "It seems like they shared their difficulties a little bit, but they also made it happen, they're doing it and it just changed how I thought about it. I don't doubt myself as much" (student interview, December 11, 2014).

88

Students benefited from completing college-level composition assignments.
Another component of the English language arts college-going class that benefited
students was the inclusion of college-level reading and writing assignments. Throughout
the semester, students were asked to read, research, and write at levels comparable to
those expected of students in freshman-level composition courses. Although this was
challenging for many students, especially those in the 11th grade, they ultimately rose to
meet the higher expectations and their attitudes shifted from initial resistance to proud
accomplishment. The students' success with higher-level academics resulted in increased
confidence about college-going.

Throughout the semester, students read, analyzed, and discussed essays, articles,
and book excerpts that were of a more-advanced level than they were accustomed to
reading in their previous high school English classes. They were also required to write
regular responses to those readings and draft and revise three major academic papers: a
scholarship essay in the form of a personal essay, a rhetorical analysis, and a five to eight
page research paper. One student described this shift in academic difficulty when she
stated, "Well, it's been a lot different from last year. I mean, it actually feels like a
college class, it's such a higher level than normal" (student interview, December 15,
2014). Another student similarly remarked, "With the different types of writing and
longer papers, it's a lot harder…I feel like you're really getting us ready for next year
when we're in college" (student interview, December 9, 2014).

The higher-level academics described above by students initially resulted in
frustration among some students. They were also met with resistance by some students.
Teachers reported that students were complaining to them about the class's workload. A

89

few students also complained to me. A common refrain among many of my 11th-grade students went like this: "We're juniors, why are we doing what the seniors are doing? Why are we doing a college rhetorical analysis? We're not in college!" I wrote about the various instances of frustration and resistance in my researcher journal. One student's frustration was notable:

> Yesterday, Tricia came over to work on her paper during study hall and said, "Ugh! This is so stupid!" I asked her why she said that, and she replied, "It's just so hard and I don't get it at all." I told her that hard can be good. We worked through the Ferguson op-ed piece she had chosen from *The New York Times* (which was very hard), and, as she was leaving, she said, "I'm sorry about what I said, Ms. Morrison, I'm just frustrated." (researcher journal, October 14, 2014)

> Other students commented on their frustration during end-of-semester interviews.

One student told me, "It's been really hard like cause you had us write the essay and then the analysis and the research…and it's just been really hard" (student interview, December 10, 2014). Another student underscored the annoyance she felt about the class's final research paper when she stated, "I just hate it. That last paper has been the hardest part out of anything we've done" (student interview, December 11, 2014). However, when probed about how doing the paper made her feel, the same student continued, "Well, I'm just trying to do the most number of pages in the range, because even though I don't like it, it's just that college is going to expect it" (student interview, December 11, 2014). This student's rising to the challenge of the class's assignments was not an isolated occurrence.

90

The majority of students persevered and recognized the benefits of their efforts. One student's comments were representative of many students' feelings. She explained, "The essays have been hard, sometimes to get them done in time, but I think it's helping me for college" (student interview, December 11, 2014). By the end of the semester, many students' attitudes about the class's challenging work had shifted from initial resistance to proud accomplishment. At the end of the semester, a senior reported, "It was hard to get into at first, but once I did I was like, hey, this is not that hard. I thought it was pretty cool" (student interview, December 15, 2014). Another student commented, "I can't believe I'm saying this, but the writing was really helpful" (student interview, January 8, 2015). A few students, when asked how to improve the course, even suggested more writing.

Students gained a deeper understanding of college and their perceptions toward college-going shifted. Throughout the semester, students developed a clearer understanding of college academics and campus life. Analysis of the qualitative data sources revealed that the two strongest factors enabling students to deepen their understandings of college were the question and answer sessions and the college campus visits. As students developed these clearer understandings, their perceptions of college-going shifted.

In their journal entries and end-of-semester interviews, many students' responses revealed that the question and answer panels helped them to understand college better. One student commented, "It's good to think about the benefits of college, like they talked about, freedom, making new friends, having fun" (student journal entry, October 23, 2014). Another student shared how the panel helped him see that the workload is

manageable and contributed to his shifting ideas about college. He said, "Yeah, I thought

it was going to be like you're stressed all the time and all that, but with Stacie and Nick

coming down here, I see that you can be organized and plan ahead" (student interview,

December 15, 2014). This shift in perception about college workload was also evidenced

in students' pre-and post-college-going images (see Figure 3). One student, when asked

to discuss two of her images (each of which featured a girl with books and lots of work in

front of her), explained, "It just changed. Like, the first one it's chaos, right? The second

one, she's got all her stuff, she's focused" (student interview, December 11, 2014).
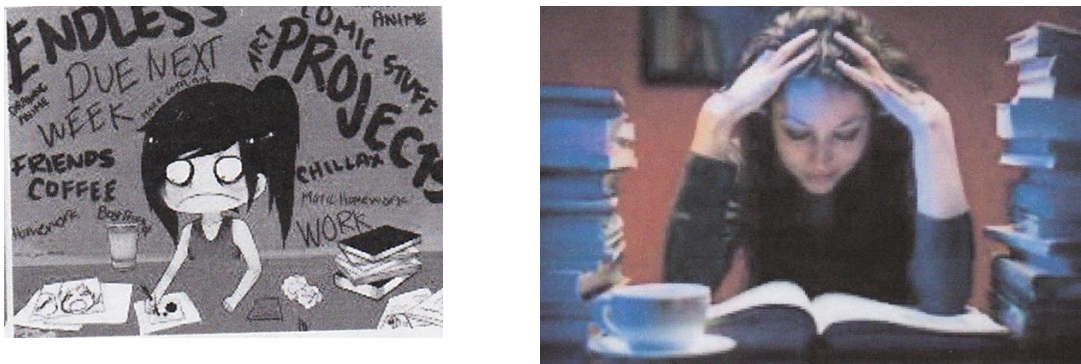
Figure 3. Shift in college-going perceptions image samples. Student's pre-innovation
(left) and post-innovation (right) images representing her shifts in ideas about college-
going.

Students' understandings of college was also greatly enhanced by touring

different college campuses, listening to schools' informational sessions, eating in the

dining halls, observing students, getting a feel for college life, and attending a college

composition class. Because the majority of students had never been on a college campus

before our class's field trips, these campus visits were invaluable in helping students fully

imagine college life. One student succinctly summarized the effects of these trips during

his end-of-semester interview when he said, "The trips made us open our eyes to what

college is really about. You could look it up online but it's nowhere near the same as being there in person" (student interview, January 7, 2015).

Touring the campuses gave students a visual to associate with the information they were learning about in class. Many of them picked up on the smallest things. For example, one student, a full two months after the last college field trip, commented, "I liked seeing the colleges and the cards they use to pay for their food and lunches….it was just good to see all the students and how they all just walk around and don't really interact so much" (student interview, January 8, 2015). Another student explained how it was hard for him to imagine what college dorms and cafeterias looked like. He shared, "I never knew it was people in and out at the cafeteria and different restaurants all day long. I thought it was like high school, one cafeteria, one time, you know? That was something that really got my attention" (student interview, December 10, 2014).

In addition to helping students better understand the social world of college, the campus visits deepened students' understanding of college academics when they attended various sections of Northern Arizona University's English 105 course. Students went in groups of three and four to attend these first-year composition courses. They were invited to participate in discussion and activities and were pleased to find that the English 105 students were learning the skill of rhetorical analysis, just like they were in our high school English class. Excerpts from students' post-campus-visit journal entries revealed that, for many, this part of the trip was the definite highlight. Excerpts from three students' journal entries provide representative quotes about the English 105 class's influence: "I loved being able to sit in on a class" and "I learned a ton from the students

and teacher in my class"; and "It was very important and relieving to sit in on the class" (student journal entries, September 25, 2014).

I also noted students' enthusiasm for this part of the campus visit later that night in my researcher journal:

When we met back in front of NAU's Writing Center, the hall was buzzing with students exchanging information about "their" class. Greg and the instructors did such a good job of making students feel welcome. Later that afternoon on the bus ride back to Seligman, I had conversations with at least four or five different students about what they had done in class. Some gave me recommendations about the next speech or text we should analyze. (researcher journal entry, September 25, 2014)

At the end of the semester, a few students made specific mention of the class visit. One student explained its benefit when he described his experience in the class: "I was actually able to see what college classes were like. It was good to see how comfortable they all were with each other even though the semester had just started. I felt comfortable there" (student interview, December 9, 2014). Another student explained, "Being in the class was great. My teacher was really laid back and I understood what he was teaching" (student interview, December 11, 2014).

Excerpts from the students' post-campus-visit journal entries demonstrated a shift in perceptions and attitudes toward college-going. Four students provided representative quotes: "I thought the campus would be scary, but it wasn't" and "The trip was fun. It made me realize that it might not be so scary after all" and "As I walked around the campuses, I started thinking how college will be fun and worth my time" and "It was

great to see it and how I'll probably be living this time next year." (student journal

entries, September 25, 2014 and October 23, 2014).

The different qualitative data detailed above substantiated the four related

components of the theme college coaching self-efficacy. Further, the data supported the

assertion that students' college-going self-efficacy increased and their ability to envision

themselves as college students developed when they learned from others' experiences

and achieved success with college-level assignments and situations. As students' gained

confidence in college-going, they were able to believe that they could "do" college.

College-going critical literacy: Assertion 3. *Students' college-going critical*

literacy is developed most when class curriculum fosters their identification of social

injustices and when they are provided with opportunities for praxis (cycle of reflection

and action) throughout the entire course, rather than exclusively at the end. This

assertion is based on the analysis of the entire qualitative data set that led to the

development of the theme college-going critical literacy. Some initial codes that led to

the theme college-going critical literacy were the in vivo codes "unjust" and

"discouraging," the descriptive codes "beat the odds" and "power," and the process codes

"assigning individual-level blame" and "questioning mainstream values." As the relevant

initial codes were compared against, modified as a result of, and merged with other

codes, four theme-related components emerged as this theme's central properties. The

theme-related components that validated the college-going critical-literacy theme and its

corresponding assertion were: (a) students recognized social injustices within the

educational system; (b) students experienced a variety of emotions during the class, but

they were not afforded enough opportunities to explore and act on them; (c) students

95

believed that teens could effect social change in abstract terms, but doubted their own power to do so in concrete situations; and (d) students developed varying degrees of critical consciousness.

Students recognized social injustices within the educational system. As students progressed through the course, they clearly identified social injustices occurring in U.S. education—both in the overall system and in their own school. During the first month of the course, students read and analyzed an article detailing the low college-going and college-persistence rates of rural students. Seeing these statistics in black and white helped students identify their own experiences and connect them to a larger problem. One student wrote, "I never really knew this. I mean it was kind of in the back of my mind cause I know we don't have as many kids go on to school, but it's crazy that it's in the whole country" (student journal entry, September 18, 2014). When asked why they thought these college rates were so low, students cited a variety of reasons indicating their understanding of how unequal educational experiences are related to different expectations of—and resources for—students. Their responses included: "Low income schools probably just want kids to graduate and don't see them going any farther than high school" and "Some schools don't help students prepare to go to college. It sorta makes me think of my own school" and "Because most people from poor schools don't have as much of an advantage as high income people" (student journal entries, September 18, 2014). During this early part of the semester, many students' responses included statements that were qualified with words such as: probably, sorta, some, maybe, etc.

As students continued reading about the opportunity gap, viewing videos, discussing issues, and comparing different high schools' resources, their critiques of

educational inequities became stronger and less qualified. Referring to disparities in school funding, one student wrote, "It's totally wrong because while you are a kid, you can't pick where you're born, where you grow up" (student journal entry, October 30, 2014). Other students explicitly connected schools' resources with achievement. A senior, whose thoughts reflected the ideas expressed in many journal entries, noted, "The elite school has better everything, more motivated people, advanced classes and clubs, etc. This basically will give them a better chance at learning and success" (student journal entry, October 6, 2014). Another student, speaking about disparities in high schools' advanced placement course offerings, remarked, "It's unfair for some to have such a better education in high school, I mean if it happens in college, I understand, like one kid goes to Harvard and another community college, but in high school it should all be the same" (dialogic discussion #2, October 8, 2014).

One particular aspect of educational inequity resonated strongly with students and became a frequent topic in many of their journal entries and discussions. This topic was teacher quality, and it was particularly salient because of the current situation at their school. When students had returned to school in August, there had been turnover in three of the four main content-area teaching positions. One of the new teachers was a para-professional without teaching experience in the assigned content area; the second was a certified educator, but resigned and left half-way through the semester; and the third was an out-of-retirement teacher with whom students struggled to learn the subject matter. Students, by and large, thought this issue of teacher quality was the most significant issue facing their school, and shared their frustration with what they believed was inadequate teaching and instruction. One student explained, "I mean I'm not gonna say names, but

97

we have a teacher who just gives us papers out of a book, and doesn't really know the material" (dialogic discussion #2, October 8, 2014). Another student echoed this sentiment when she said, "Some teachers, they just give you things to do, but they can't really tell you how to do them. I know for some of them, it's not their fault, but it's not fair to us either" (dialogic discussion #2, October 8, 2014). While many students made measured comments and were cautious to offer strong criticism out of concern for individuals, others were direct and forceful in their critique of teacher quality. For example, one student was clear, "No offense to you, Ms. Morrison, but the teachers they hired are horrible!" (dialogic discussion #3, October 22, 2014). Another student asserted:

> We're a low-income school anyway, I don't think it's fair that they give us crap teachers because they think we're not gonna go to college. Yeah, let's give 'em super unqualified teachers and see how far they make it. That's not right! (dialogic discussion #3, October 22, 2014)

Students experienced a variety of emotions during the class, but they were not afforded enough opportunities to explore and act on them. As students explored their own school's—as well as the nation's—problems related to educational inequity and college access, their emotional states varied. Analysis of the qualitative data showed that students experienced a wide range of emotions, including: indifference, discouragement, frustration, anger, powerlessness, defiance, hopefulness, empowerment, and motivation. In the beginning of the semester, quite a few students expressed indifference toward issues of educational inequity. Five of fourteen students shared that reading about rural students' low college-going and persistence rates made them feel things like "nothing in particular" or "nothing, really" (student journal entries, September 18, 2014). As the

98

semester continued, most of these students' emotional stances shifted. However, at the end of the semester, a couple of students still showed indifference. One senior commented, "I feel that even though we're probably at one of the schools that is affected by the opportunity gap on the negative side, I still don't care. I'm probably wrong for that, but I just don't care" (student interview, December 9, 2014).

Although a few students demonstrated indifference toward educational equity issues, another small portion of students demonstrated consistently positive affective states, despite the class's focus on potentially discouraging topics. These students were not discouraged by things like unequal funding, disparate course offerings, and the many hurdles needing to be jumped to make it to and succeed in college. Rather, these students saw these issues as mere challenges to overcome and were, in fact, motivated by the somber facts. One week, after analyzing excerpts from Linda Darling Hammond's book *The Flat World and Education,* students holding these more positive emotions expressed them in their journal entries that day and wrote things such as: "This just makes me want to go to college even more" and "If I want to do something bad enough, I'll make it happen" and "This information is a little discouraging, but it only makes me want to try harder" (student journal entries, October 30, 2014).

Although some students exhibited indifferent or positive emotional stances when learning about educational inequity, the majority of students struggled with negative feelings—at least during the first half of the semester. When asked to describe their experience learning about educational inequity, one student reported, "It made me feel bummed" (student interview, December 10, 2014). Another student echoed this downtrodden feeling when she said, "It's sad and it makes me pretty upset, like I should

99

just stop and not try" (student interview, December 10, 2014). Finally, another student expressed anger when he offered, "It disgusts you, ya know? It's awful how schools just skip over some people" (student interview, December 10, 2014).

As students' negative emotions surfaced, I became concerned that students' discouragement about educational inequities would impede their development of college-going efficacy. As a result, during the first half of the semester, I found myself trying to balance the emotional climate of the classroom, rather than letting students dig deeper into what they were rightly feeling. I wrote about this tendency in an early journal entry:

> Yesterday was really rough at school and it got pretty dark with the juniors.
> They're so frustrated about the new teachers. They were feeling helpless and a
> little hopeless. They couldn't even fathom how they could improve the situation,
> no matter how much I prodded. So, today I wanted to bring it back with a more
> positive tone. I had the kids brainstorm some of their own inner strengths and
> other external supports they have to deal with difficulties, and it seemed a little
> more positive. (researcher journal entry, October 9, 2014)

My attempts to modulate the emotional state of the classroom prevented students from fully exploring the darker side of their feelings. When I made more room for these explorations later in the semester, it did not impede students' growth, but rather fostered it. One student expressed this idea when she stated:

> It was important to understand the issues and to get bothered by them so that we
> know we're not going to have it easy, we're going to have to step it up a little, try
> harder, fight. Knowing the issues can motivate kids. (student interview,
> December 15, 2014)

In addition to not having enough opportunities to explore their emotions, students needed more time to take actions inspired by their feelings. Because it was the first time implementing the college-going curriculum, various units and topics took longer than expected, and the action- and effecting-change component of the course kept getting pushed back. As a result, students did not have as much time for this critical curricular piece. I expressed my frustration when I wrote:

> Students are taking so long with the research process. They're doing a great job, but I feel like they're never going to share what they've learned. Everyone's at different points. I know the academic part of doing this paper is huge, but so is them having an audience larger than our class. (researcher journal, December 1, 2014)

Students believed that teens could effect social change in abstract terms, but doubted their own power to do so in concrete situations. Students expressed conflicting views on teens' abilities to effect social change on issues of importance to them. When writing or discussing teens' ability to effect change in abstract terms, students were unequivocal in their belief that, yes, teens could be powerful and effective. When asked directly about teens and social change, most students agreed with the 11th grader who wrote, "I do think that teens can be effective in protesting issues and making a difference because teens feel more passionate about things and adults just accept what happens" (student journal entry, November 12, 2014). Adding to the consensus expressed in that specific round of journal writing, another student shared, "Everyone has a voice and can speak up. It worked in the sixties. Teens and kids can make a difference in any century I think" (student journal entry, November 12, 2014).

These students' confident statements about effecting social change in the abstract did not match their sentiments when they talked about specific, concrete issues in their lives. Two particular issues that resonated with students on a personal level were the school's shortage of quality teachers and the school's surveillance of student movement. These issues would arise during various discussions. Students voiced strong feelings about these two topics; however, they also expressed many doubts about their ability to change the status quo.

When discussing how to improve the teacher quality issue, one senior explained, "I don't even think we can get better teachers because those teachers would rather go to a better district and not have to travel an hour-and-a-half to come here" (dialogic discussion #3, October 22, 2014). Later that same day, a junior shared her feeling of powerlessness to effect change when she lamented, "We can't change that no one wants to teach and live here, I don't even want to live here sometimes!" (dialogic discussion #3, October 22, 2014). This inability to imagine change happening around this issue continued to surface during discussions. A few weeks later, one senior said with resigned acceptance, "We can't make people come work for us. We need to take who's willing to come" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014). During these discussions, when I prompted students to brainstorm what they could do specifically to change this problem, a few ideas would be bandied about, but then students' sense of powerlessness would once again dominate the discussion.

These equal parts frustration and powerlessness were also evident when students discussed their anger at the new hall pass system and the rule prohibiting them from walking in the back hallway of the school. Students felt that these regulations restricting

102

and surveilling their movements were belittling and unnecessary. One student complained, "They have hall monitors to make sure no one's doing anything naughty, but we still can't be in the back hallway. We have to just walk a stupid horseshoe in the morning" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014). Another student said, "There's just no trust in us, so they make all these rules like we're kids" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014). Then, one student added, "I feel like they worry more about, like, how we act, like our attitudes and stuff, than how we think" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014). Despite their strong feelings about these issues, students did not think they could effect change. One student summarized his classmates' viewpoints clearly when he said, "I don't really think that students have that much power, like, to have a decision on that. If we did, the higher authorities would just shut it down" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014).

Students developed varying degrees of critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is one's ability to understand social, political, and economic injustices and power imbalances, as well as the ability to question and take action against these oppressive elements to effect personal and social transformation. Analysis showed that the majority of students deepened their understandings of the social injustices and power imbalances that influence their current educational environments and future college opportunities. They also began to question dominant knowledge. This can be seen throughout students' journal entries, dialogic discussion contributions, and end-of-semester interview comments.

An example of students' ability to question dominant elements of society that are presented as neutral or "normal" happened after the students viewed the documentary

Born with a Wooden Spoon: Welcome to Poverty U.S.A. The discussion that followed this film viewing resulted in substantial discussion of the media's portrayal of poor people and analysis of power relations regarding who speaks for whom. During this discussion, students noted the following: "People who are in poverty aren't valued" and "People think being poor is bad and you're dumb and that it's a dirty life" and "I didn't like that rich people or even middle class people were talking about what being poor is like, when they're not even living it" (dialogic discussion #4, November 4, 2014). While the film's purpose was to examine poverty and its effects on children, students immediately detected and rejected some of the negative depictions of poor people and some of the victimization narratives presented by the film's "experts."

Another significant moment when students demonstrated their burgeoning critical consciousness occurred during a discussion about contemporary student protests. While students were discussing a controversy about censoring school curriculum in Jefferson County, Colorado, many showed awareness of how structural forces can serve to maintain power imbalances. When presented with the question, "Why would the Jefferson County Board of Education want to omit parts of U.S. history from the curriculum?" a junior student responded, "It's just information, I don't know." Then, another student added, "but information can be dangerous." Finally, another student chimed in, "It's only dangerous to people who don't want us to know it" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014). Similarly, in the 12th graders' discussion about the same topic, one student explained, "I think they're just taking out the parts about protest so kids don't know what they're capable of to go against the school." Another student

104

added, "Yeah, if you don't learn about other people, you'll just always be told what to do and not question it" (dialogic discussion #5, November 17, 2014).

Despite their abilities to understand and critique dominant knowledge, social injustices, and power imbalances, most students did not take action to effect change. Part of this could be due to the fact that I had planned for students to conduct their action/public awareness outreach projects toward the end of the course, after they completed their research papers. As the research papers took longer to finish, there was little time to act. Students faced serious time constraints. While approximately half of the students did not complete the public outreach component of their final project (and therefore did not demonstrate the action-taking component of critical consciousness), a handful of students worked diligently to finish their projects even after the semester ended. These students' passion was encouraging, as I noted when we returned to school in January:

> So, Crystal and Shawn have sent their messages about unequal curriculums and early childhood education out to the masses via their Instagram and Facebook accounts. It will be interesting to see what responses they get. Maria is almost ready to present her unequal funding presentation to the board. Stefanie posted her flyers about dysfunctional education environments around the school. I am so proud of Tricia; she's been painting and working on her motivation board in the lounge all week during study hall. It's looking really good. (researcher journal, January 14, 2015)

Taken together, four related components of the theme college-going critical literacy emerged as students examined inequities in college access and the U.S.

educational system in general. Reading, discussing, and analyzing these topics resulted

in students clearly identifying social injustices and developing varying degrees of critical

consciousness.

Post-secondary educational barriers and supports: Assertion 4. Although

students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports remained

constant, students' perceptions of their abilities to overcome barriers and maximize

supports developed. This assertion is based on analysis of the entire qualitative data set;

however, the three primary data sources supporting this assertion were student

interviews, image elicitation results, and student journal entries. Some initial codes that

led to the theme of post-secondary educational barriers and supports included the in vivo

codes "money" and "family," the descriptive codes "scholarships" and "tutoring," and the

process codes "worrying about finances" and "describing personal strengths." As the

relevant initial codes were compared against, modified as a result of, and merged with

other codes, two theme-related components emerged as this theme's central properties

and validated both the theme and its corresponding assertion. These components

included: (a) students' perceptions of their most noteworthy post-secondary educational

barriers and supports did not change over the course of the semester; and (b) students

elaborated how they could overcome noteworthy barriers and articulated how they could

enhance their support networks.

Students' perceptions of their most noteworthy post-secondary educational

barriers and supports did not change over the course of the semester. Referencing both

their pre- and post-innovation images, the majority of students explained during their

end-of-semester interviews that their noteworthy barriers to and supports for college-

106

going had remained the same. Students had not seen their image logs in over fourteen weeks, yet 10 of 14 students selected the same barrier to college-going in December that they had selected in August. Likewise, 11 of 14 students selected the same support for college-going at both the beginning and end of the semester.

When comparing pre-and-post innovation images, the most frequently occurring perceived barrier was money. Eight of 14 students indicated that money was a noteworthy barrier either at the beginning or end of the semester, or both. Students represented financial barriers most often with dollar signs, but also with images such as wallets and banks. One student, when shown his pre-and post-innovation images and asked to describe them and any changes that he saw, stated, "Both are money. I guess money has always been kind of a problem, so yeah. We're not poor, but there's no extra for school" (student interview, December 18, 2014). Another student spoke for herself and others when she explained, "So, I picked money as a barrier both times and I think it's just a barrier for a lot of us from around here" (student interview, December 15, 2014).

Not only did the majority of students perceive paying for college as the most noteworthy barrier, the majority of students perceived their families as the most significant support to attending college. When examining both the pre-and-post innovation images, 10 of 14 students selected family at both the beginning and end of the semester. Students' visual representations of family support included cartoon images of family units, pictures of families resembling their own found on search engines, or actual photographs of their families. Describing the importance of her family, one senior shared, "The pictures are the same because I feel like that's my home, my people that I

love most, and, like, their support matters over anybody else's" (student interview, December 11, 2014). Another student described why his family would be his biggest support if he went to college. He said, "My support is my family. If you have this kind of support, you can call them at 2:00 in the morning when you're stressing out and know they'll be there" (student interview, December 10, 2014). Two other students valued their families so much that they selected them as their supports for going to college, as well as their barriers to attending college. One of these students explained, "My barrier is leaving home, saying goodbye to my family for a while. I don't know how I'll leave. But then, they're also my support and want me to succeed" (student interview, December 9, 2014). The other student said, "It's hard to think of leaving them cause they mean everything to me" (student interview, December 9, 2014).

   Students elaborated how they could overcome noteworthy barriers and articulated how they could enhance their support networks. Although students' perceived barriers did not simply vanish over the course of the semester, students were able to articulate and identify specific strategies and resources they could use to overcome these barriers. One student, recognizing her obligation to her family, and not wanting to "abandon them" to attend college, described how she would balance the challenge of family duties and her desire to continue her education. She remarked, "I'm thinking Yavapai. I liked the campus, and I won't be so far away. I was thinking of California, but then it became real that my family needs me more so I can just stay close to home" (student interview, January 8, 2015). Another student, speaking of her perceived financial barriers, discussed some of the resources that she had already investigated. She explained, "Well, lucky for me, my tribe finances a lot of enrolled

members for school. I've already filled out the application for it…. I've also entered a few scholarships from that one site" (student interview, December 15, 2014). These students' comments were representative of the majority of students, who were able to articulate specific strategies and resources to use to overcome college-going barriers.

In addition to being able to elaborate on ways in which they could overcome college-going barriers, students were also able to articulate how they could enhance their support networks. Most students, when asked what other supports they had beside the primary one they had selected, were able to name two or more people or sources they could include in their list of supports. For example, one student who discovered that his originally identified support of family preferred he go straight into the workforce, cited four other people who supported his college-going. Speaking of these individuals, he stated, "They want me to advance my career and go see what other opportunities are out there" (student interview, December 18, 2014). Another student explained that he had many other people to count on. He commented, "Well, my school, I mean they're pretty much here for us and my baseball coach and you" (student interview, January 7, 2015). Another student stated, "Well, you and Mrs. Keller will help me, and I guess I need to talk to people I know who are in college, cause I have a couple of friends already there" (student interview, December 11, 2014).

Further, when asked to brainstorm their own inner strengths on which they could rely and other people that would support their college-going, students created substantial lists. Most students listed at least three or four positive personal qualities that could help them succeed in their college-going efforts. These traits included: motivated, determined, creative, kind, independent, organized, hopeful, confident, and zestful. As for others who

could be included in their support networks, students identified, on average, four other individuals apart from their immediate families.

Taken together, two related components of the theme post-secondary educational barriers and supports emerged from data analysis. These theme-related components demonstrated that, although the majority of students' perceptions of barriers to and supports for college-going did not change, students were able to articulate how to overcome barriers and enhance support systems.

College coaching yielded both successes and challenges: Assertion 5. *College coaching partnerships benefited students most when coaches and students developed strong relationships, met regularly, and had substantial supports and resources for their college-exploration activities.* This assertion is based on the analysis of the entire qualitative data set. Some initial codes that led to the theme that college coaching yielded both successes and challenges included the descriptive codes "advice" and "reassurance" and the process codes "navigating websites" and "modeling tasks." As the relevant initial codes were compared against, modified as a result of, and merged with other codes, four theme-related components emerged as this theme's central properties and substantiated both the theme and its corresponding assertion. These components included: (a) college coaches guided students through a variety of college exploration activities that were characteristic of the college predisposition, search, and choice phases; (b) college coaches provided students with moral support; (c) institutional-level factors resulted in challenges for many college coaching partnerships; and (d) individual-level factors resulted in challenges for some for some college coaching partnerships.

College coaches guided students through a variety of college exploration

activities that are characteristic of the college predisposition, search, and choice phases.
One of the main successes resulting from college coaching partnerships was that coaches guided students in college-exploration activities. Since college coaching was designed to supplement students' in-common English class curriculum and address students' individual needs, a variety of college-exploration activities occurred throughout the different coaching partnerships. Depending upon variables such as students' class years, interests, or previous experience with exploring college, sessions focused on different activities. These different activities were characteristic of the various college-choice phases of predisposition, search, and choice as outlined in the three-phase college choice process by Hossler and Gallagher (1987).

Students who were still developing their attitudes toward college-going were able to investigate different post-secondary options and participate in activities more closely aligned with the predisposition phase of the college choice process. For example, one student who was leaning heavily toward enlisting in the military after graduation explained how his coach helped him. He stated, "She helped me look more into it all and the jobs available in the different branches…and how much money there is for college if you serve first" (student interview, December 9, 2014). Another student who was considering different post-secondary options received informational guidance from his college coach. The coach was able to help him understand the varying amounts of time that different types of education would take to complete. The coach reflected, "Today we talked about the difference between getting a degree and a certificate. It got him thinking

about which level he wanted to pursue and how many credits/how long it would take on each path" (college coach memo, November 11, 2014).

For those students who were leaning toward college, but needed more information, the college coaching partnerships focused on college-exploration activities that were characteristic of the college choice phase of the process. These students worked with their coaches to research and gather information about different colleges, their costs, admission requirements, and programs offered, as well as related topics like scholarship eligibility criteria and college entrance exams. Data from many student and coach interviews showed that students needed considerable support with these search-phase activities.

One search-phase activity that proved difficult for many students was gathering information about colleges. Quite a few students found that gathering information about colleges was difficult. Representing the experiences of many students, one junior explained, "The most helpful part about the coaching would be learning how to use the website because I couldn't find anything on there when I was looking by myself" (student interview, December 18, 2014). A college coach echoed this idea when she explained, "He initially was resistant to searching the websites by himself, but after working together and showing him how to navigate them and which keywords to look for, he was able to do it on his own" (college coach memo, December 9, 2014). For adults who have background knowledge about college, knowing the best search terms to use to locate specific information may be almost intuitive, yet for students with less college-going experience it was often a stumbling block. A college coach explained, "For me, it's like, oh, academics, tuition, housing, and I think it's easy, but some of the students needed me

112

to explain instead of 'apartments' type 'dorms' or 'housing'; instead of 'money' type 'cost' or 'tuition.' Just helping them with the terminology for college life was good" (college coach interview, December 8, 2014).

Not only did college coaches help students navigate websites to gather accurate information about different colleges, they also helped students research and gather information about scholarships and college entrance examinations. One student explained that his college coach helped him sort through the vast number of scholarship opportunities to find the ones for which he was eligible. He commented, "She's helped me, like, because when you look at scholarships, you think you apply for all of them, you know? And my coach was like, well, not necessarily, and she sat down with me and overlooked the choices and the requirements and it helped, it helped a lot" (student interview, December 10, 2014). A couple of senior students received assistance with locating information and preparing for college entrance exams. One student noted, "We signed up for the ACT test together. It wasn't too hard, but I liked having the help" (student interview, December 9, 2014). Another student explained, "I was nervous about taking the test, but we printed out the practice test so I could be ready" (student interview, January 8, 2015).

Although the majority of college coach partnerships focused on predisposition- and search-phase college exploration activities, a couple of seniors were ready to make decisions about which college they would like to attend. With additional help from their college coaches, these seniors were able to further target their college-exploration activities. One student reported, "Now that I have decided to go to Yavapai, I really gotta get going on scholarships. There's a scholarship for FFA that she's going to help me fill

113

out" (student interview, 8, 2015). Another student, also having decided where to attend, stated, "Now we're just looking out for them posting the application for residence halls. I guess the rooms go fast" (student interview, December11, 2014).

College coaches provided students with moral support. In addition to facilitating college-exploration activities, the college coaches served as sources of moral support for students. All six qualitative data tools revealed that students had anxiety and fear about college-going. In fact, the words "nervous" and "scared" were two of the most frequently appearing in-vivo codes throughout the entire qualitative data set. For those college-coaching partnerships in which effective relationships were established, coaches were able to acknowledge students' feelings about college during discussions and provide reassurance and perspective about the entire college-going process.

Multiple college coaches explained that just listening and discussing students' concerns was extremely important. One coach noted:

Many of our students and their families don't have anyone to talk to, so having someone to talk to is huge. The kids have those baby questions, you know, and need to start easing some of those early fears, like "Oh, I can't leave home," or "I can't do it." (college coach interview, January 6, 2015)

Another coach also affirmed the power of discussing students' worries about college when she stated, "It was good for her to talk about it. I think it alleviated some of her anxiety" (college coach memo, December 8, 2014).

In addition to discussing students' anxieties and fears about college, coaches were able to provide reassurance and perspective about college-going issues like meeting deadlines, filling out forms, etc. For example, one student described how filling out an

114

online college application would have been much more stressful if he had not had his college coach to reassure him. He explained, "You get such a big page and you're like, man, I don't know if I should click that or even go any further….but she got me through the steps and finally by Friday, I could apply for it" (student interview, December 18, 2014). Other students also benefited from their coaches' reassurance and perspective on the college-going process. One coach commented that when students seemed lacking confidence, she would say, "It's OK to touch buttons and go places because you're not going to get lost" (college coach interview, December 16, 2014). Another coach made sure to let her students know "that the world is not going to end if you don't find out how much tuition costs, or you don't get accepted at such and such place" (college coach interview, December 8, 2014).

As coaches discussed students' feelings about college and provided them with reassurance and perspective on the college-going process, students gained trust in their coach and the relationship. One student, talking about his college coach in the end-of-semester interview, said, "I think she would help me through anything through college if I needed any help" (student interview, December 18, 2014). Another student agreed that her college coach was a source of moral support and said, "And, yeah, she'll help me out whenever I need her, and I tell her just about everything" (student interview, December 9, 2014).

Institutional-level factors resulted in challenges for many college coaching partnerships. Although some college coaching partnerships were successful, others encountered challenges that prevented students from realizing the full potential of college coaching. Unfortunately, some of these challenges resulted from institutional-level

factors such as difficulty coordinating meetings and chronic overburdening of staff, and they were difficult to counteract.

One challenge that was repeatedly mentioned during both students' and college coaches' interviews was the difficulty in coordinating the coaching sessions. Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, Seligman High School's master schedule changed to include a study hall/intervention time during eighth period, the last hour of the school day. In theory, this would have been an ideal time for college coaches to set up meetings with their students. However, as one coach stated, "It was difficult to meet with students due to all the various things happening during eighth hour" (college coach interview, December 16, 2015).

Eighth hour became a time when everything had to be done: monthly class meetings were scheduled, students would go for additional help in their content area classes, and some students ended up having a class scheduled during eighth period. Additionally, in November, basketball season began and every other week either the boys' team or the girls' team would begin practice at the beginning of eighth period. With almost 70% of juniors and seniors participating in this sport, it became increasingly difficult for coaches to meet with some of their students. A college coach explained that "not having that set time that you could meet with them during eighth hour was rough" (college coach interview, January 6, 2015). This inability of some coaching partnerships to meet was felt by students, too. One student's comment sums up what many students expressed during interviews: "At the beginning of the year it seemed like everybody was all for it, like, we're going to have coaches, but as we really got into the school year it seemed like it just kept getting put off" (student interview, December 15, 2014). Another

116

student expressed her frustration about the difficulty of coordinating meetings and how it reminded her of other times she had been disappointed by the school's inability to follow through with plans. She spoke of what appeared to her a recurring pattern when she said:

> I think the school has the right ideas, but they step up for a minute and expect us to be all for it, and then we're like what happened to you? It's just like, don't say stuff and not do it, you're adults, we take you seriously. You might not think we're taking you seriously, but we do. I think it's just letting us down. It sucks. (student interview, December 11, 2014)

Exacerbating the difficulty with coordinating meetings during eighth hour, unforeseeable circumstances resulted in a couple of the college coaches having their availability to meet with students compromised even further. One college coach had a class scheduled during eighth hour and, when the district was unable to replace a middle school teacher who resigned at the last minute, was also assigned to teach a sixth grade math class during her prep period. As a result, this college coach had no free time to meet with students except during her lunch. The college coach expressed how overburdened she was when she explained, "It was trying to fit in one more obligation, having to find time for it. I'm not complaining. I just wish I had that eighth hour that everybody else had" (college coach interview, January 6, 2015).

Another college coach's availability was affected by unforeseeable circumstances. When our small district's kindergarten teacher had to take a family-emergency leave of absence, one of the college coaches became the long-term substitute kindergarten teacher. This was in addition to her duties as athletic director and high school girls' basketball coach. With all these responsibilities, her availability to meet with students substantially

117

decreased. Although this was frustrating to both the coaches and students, this chronic

overburdening of staff is not unusual in our small K-12 district where individuals

frequently have to fill many unexpected roles. Multiple students affected by these

unforeseeable circumstances showed understanding about the situation. One student

stated, "Because our college coaches are teachers and super busy they don't always have

the time to help us because they're busy teaching" (student interview, December 10,

2014).

　　　　Individual-level factors resulted in challenges for some for some college coaching

partnerships. In addition to the institutional-level challenges, other more individual-level

factors prevented some coaching partnerships from being as successful as others.

Although coaches were given specific college-exploration activities and resources

initially, it was expected that after these were finished, coaches would customize their

sessions to meet students' individual needs. This worked extremely well for come

coaches, but not as much for others. One coach expressed the difficulty in not having a

cohesive scope and sequence of what and when things should happen. The coach

explained, "Without a list of what they have to get done and when they need to get it

done by, I'm not totally clear. I prefer to have all my ducks in a row' (college coach

interview, December 16, 2014). Another coach stated that the emails with activity

suggestions were "pretty clear, but having a checklist or something right there would be

better because the small stuff like emails I forget about, and it comes and I'm distracted.

But if I've got the big overall picture to refer to, it's better" (college coach interview,

January 6, 2015).

As a result of the lack of a specific scope and sequence, some students did not benefit as fully from coaching sessions as they could have. One student, speaking of her college coach and a session, explained, "She kind of gave me the computer and said, you know, kind of explore and get me if you need help and then I was a little bit directionless" (student interview, December 11, 2014). When asked about the college coaching component of the class, another student said, "I guess it just depends on all like who the coach is because some people don't have as much experience as other coaches, so it just varies a lot" (student interview, December 10, 2014).

Considering the specific data substantiating the four related components of the theme "college coaching yielded both successes and challenges," it is clear that students experienced a variety of college coaching partnerships. Each coaching partnership was unique and resulted in a range of experiences among students. Although some students benefited from regular, personalized coaching sessions, other students did not for a variety of reasons. The partnerships that most helped students develop college-going capital featured strong relationships where students met with coaches regularly and felt emotionally supported. Further, students benefited most when their coaches were able to overcome the challenges of scheduling constraints and the open-ended nature of the coaching process.

Chapter Five: Discussion

"Radicalization involves increased commitment to the position
one has chosen. It is predominantly critical, loving, humble,
and communicative, and therefore a positive stance."
—Paulo Freire

The purpose of this action research study was to understand how my underserved rural high school students construct college-going capital and to assist them in doing so, which allowed me to advocate for improvements in their college access services. For me, as a teacher-researcher, this study centered on Freire's conception of radicalization— striving to further align my professional actions with my social justice beliefs—in service of positive educational change. Recognizing that Seligman High School was not providing adequate college-access services to its students, I expanded traditional notions of the English language arts by incorporating college-going curricular components into my 11th- and 12th-grade English classes throughout the semester-long study.

In these classes, I re-envisioned traditional secondary English classroom curriculums to include (a) career exploration and college choice activities, (b) exposure to college academics and experiences, and (c) analysis and critique of the U.S. educational system and college-access inequities. This expanded curriculum embraced a Critical English Education framework. As noted in Chapter Two, Morrell (2005) defines Critical English Education as re-conceptualizing secondary English curricular content, changing pedagogical practices and textual consumption/production, and supporting teachers' growth as activists.

To better understand the complex ways in which my students constructed college-going capital within a Critical English Education framework, I framed this study with the following research questions:

1. How and to what extent do underserved rural high school students construct college-going capital (competency, efficacy, and critical literacy) through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum?

2. How and to what extent do underserved rural high school students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports change during their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum?

3. How can high-status, non-family adults (institutional agents) best support underserved rural high school students as they construct college-going capital?

With these questions guiding the study, I gathered and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data collected from students, college coaches, and me. In this chapter, the study's quantitative and qualitative results are examined in relation to one another. Following this integration of the data sets, I discuss the study's findings as they relate to the original research questions. Then, I share limitations of the study, implications for both research and practice, personal lessons learned, and concluding advocacy thoughts.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

To mix methods in social inquiry is "to invite multiple mental modes into the same inquiry space for purposes of respectful conversation, dialogue, and learning form the other, toward a collective generation of better understanding of the phenomena being studied" (Greene, 2007, p. 13). Although mixing methods to achieve a better understanding of the social phenomena being studied is the broader, more general

121

purpose for selecting a mixed research design, Greene (2007) specifies five distinct purposes for mixing methods that fit within the field's overarching rationale. These five distinct purposes are: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion.

This transformative mixed methods study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods for the purpose of complementarity. With respect to complementarity, mixed methods studies seek "broader, deeper, and more comprehensive social understandings by using methods that tap into different facets or dimensions of the *same complex phenomena…*to elaborate, enhance, deepen, and broaden the overall interpretations" (Greene, 2007, p. 101). By using a variety of qualitative data tools to assess different dimensions of students' construction of college-going capital, it is possible to ascertain a more comprehensive view of the quantitative data and students' experiences.

College-going competency. The quantitative and qualitative college-going competency data results exhibit complementarity and demonstrate that students' college-going competency improved over the course of the semester. According to the College-Going Capital Survey results, students' perceptions of their knowledge about college and the skills needed to access college changed significantly between August and December of 2014. On the college-going competency construct, the difference between students' retrospective-pre- and post-innovation mean scores is 1.58 points on a 6-point scale. These quantitative findings demonstrate increases in students' college-going knowledge and skills and gain additional support from multiple qualitative data. Students' journal entries and end-of-semester interviews, along with college coach memos and researcher

122

journal entries, further substantiate the improvement of students' college-going

knowledge and skill levels. For example, students' journal entries and responses to

interviews indicate they now know how to apply for financial aid and how to use the

internet to obtain information about different colleges.

In addition to supporting the quantitative results, the qualitative data elaborated on

students' knowledge and skill improvements to explain *how* their college-going

competency developed. Results from various qualitative data tools show that students

benefit from participating in inquiry-driven activities that develop their knowledge and

skills. For instance, they learn about financial aid by completing practice FAFSA forms,

writing scholarship essays, and registering with different scholarship services. Further,

by taking personality and career interest surveys, investigating different academic and

career paths, and working one-on-one with coaches, they are able to develop more

specific academic and career goals.

College-going efficacy. Complementarity between quantitative and qualitative

data is also evident in the college-going efficacy theme presented in the results section.

According to the College-Going Capital Survey results, students' perceptions of their

college-going confidence levels changed significantly between the beginning and end of

the semester. On the college-going efficacy construct, the difference between students'

retrospective-pre- and post-innovation mean scores is 1.56 points on a 6-point scale. This

increase in student efficacy is confirmed by the study's qualitative data results. Students'

journal entries from the beginning of the semester reveal that they were scared and

nervous about college-going, specifically with regard to more rigorous academics, larger

physical and social environments, and school/work/life balance. However, a wide variety

of journal entries, interviews, and college coach memos show that students had gained confidence about college-going by the end of the semester.

Whereas the College-Going Capital Survey assesses students' efficacy related primarily to accessing college and succeeding there academically, many of the student journal entry prompts were designed to assess slightly different facets of college-going efficacy, such as larger school environments and school/work/life balance. These journal entry responses, as well numerous other qualitative data sources, enhance the quantitative data results and show that students' efficacy levels improve as they hear stories from others who have overcome college-going challenges and as they have positive, successful experiences with campus tours and classroom visits.

College-going critical literacy. Similar to the results from the other two College-Going Capital Survey constructs, students' perceptions of their college-going critical literacy increased between August and December of 2014. On the college-going critical literacy construct, the difference between students' retrospective-pre- and post-innovation mean scores is 1.16 points. Although it is not as large as the increase for the other two constructs discussed above, this change is still substantial.

Rather than demonstrating full complementarity, a comparison of students' critical-literacy gains between the quantitative data and the qualitative data reveals that these two data sets demonstrate only partial consistency with one another. Greene (2007) explains that partially consistent results are one potential outcome that can occur in mixed method studies. She discusses the variety of results that can occur when she writes, "In practice, the patterns of results from a mix of methods designed to be complementary may range from convergence (as in triangulation) to divergence (as in

124

initiation), even though an overlapping or interlocking pattern is the one intended" (Greene, 2007, p. 101). Although not completely divergent, the quantitative and qualitative results are only partially consistent. Specifically, the quantitative data show definite critical-literacy growth among students. However, the qualitative data results show that, although students recognize social injustices and believe teens are capable of effecting change in abstract terms, they doubt their own abilities to effect change in concrete situations. Further, students develop varying degrees of critical consciousness.

This variation between the qualitative and quantitative data findings may result from the fact that the critical-literacy component of the College-Going Capital Survey was not as well designed as needed. Specifically, its survey items are not appropriately sensitive to the variety of critical-literacy components targeted in the course. For example, average means increased on survey items such as "Different high schools provide different levels of support for students' college goals" and "Not all students have the same opportunities to pursue their college goals." These increases demonstrate students' ability to recognize social injustices--the first part of critical consciousness. This finding is corroborated by the qualitative data. However, there are no survey items that assess students' ability to take action and effect change—the second part of critical consciousness. So, although the qualitative data demonstrate varying degrees of development in students' critical consciousness, the quantitative measure is not sufficiently sensitive to address the effecting-change component of critical literacy. These findings exemplify Greene's statement: "Mixed methods *practice* is ever so much more complicated and challenging than mixed methods *theory"* (2007, p. 101).

Perceived barriers and supports. The quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to students' perceived post-secondary educational barriers and supports exhibit complementarity and show that students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports remained constant from the beginning to the end of the semester-long study. On the perceived barrier construct, students' mean scores between the retrospective-pre- and post-surveys decrease by 0.32 points on a 6-point scale, indicating only a slight lessening in their perceptions of barriers. Similarly, students' perceptions of college-going supports show little change between the retrospective-pre- and post-innovation surveys. Among the four support constructs—parental support, other family member support, teacher support, and friend support—the largest change is in the teacher construct. From retrospective-pre- to post-innovation surveys, the teacher construct increase is 0.64 points, which is still small.

This lack of change in students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports is substantiated by three types of qualitative data: student journal entries, image elicitation results, and student interviews. Analysis of this data shows that students' most noteworthy barriers to college-going did not change, with the majority of students citing money as their primary barrier both at the start and end of the semester. Likewise, analysis demonstrates that students' most noteworthy supports also remained constant, with the majority of students citing their parents as their main support at both the start and end of the semester.

As with the college-going constructs, the qualitative data on perceived barriers and supports extends the overall interpretation of the quantitative data. Interviewing students about their image selections and their feelings about college-going barriers and

126

supports indicates that students are able to elaborate on how they could overcome barriers and enhance supports. They can clearly articulate specific strategies and resources to maximize their likelihood of going to college.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, the study results are discussed in relationship to both theory and related research. This discussion is organized around the study's three original research questions.

Research question #1. *How and to what extent do underserved rural high school students construct college-going capital (competency, efficacy, and critical literacy) through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum?* With the exception of one sub-component of the college-going critical literacy construct, results from the quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate complementarity. This indicates that, through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum, students develop college-going capital—especially college-going competency and college-going self-efficacy. To understand how students construct college-going capital, a return to the work of Lev Vygotsky, sociocultural approaches to literacy, and social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is warranted.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and sociocultural approaches to literacy advance that human learning does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, knowledge construction occurs within many social, cultural, and historical contexts. Within the supportive context of an English language arts college-going curriculum (among other contexts that students brought to the course), students are able to learn about college-going. In this context, SCCT provides a nuanced understanding of how students construct college-going capital.

Lent and others (1994) emphasize how people's thought processes interact with other variables and their environments to actively shape their academic and career development. Specifically, SCCT suggests that people's own behaviors, rather than being relegated to outcomes, are inputs and can influence a person's thinking.

Following this theoretical perspective, students in the English language arts college-going course are provided with many opportunities to actively develop their college-going competency. Students in the course are positioned as active agents—not mere information receivers—in strengthening their college-going skills and knowledge bases. The students' behaviors as active agents can then more strongly influence their thinking. As sociocultural theorist Gee (1996) indicates, learning occurs best when pedagogical spaces are created that allow students to move from object to subject positions. As opposed to a "banking model" of knowledge transmission where college-going skills and knowledge are "deposited" into students, this study's curricular innovation provides students with many opportunities to learn through hands-on activities and experiences. These activities and experiences allow students to discover answers for questions they themselves create.

Such a process makes learning more meaningful and improves students' college-going self-efficacy. Bandura (1996) explains that self-efficacy is developed through four different sources: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and mental and affective states. Throughout the course, students develop their self-efficacy by having mastery experiences with college assignments and college social situations. They also build their self-efficacy through vicarious learning experiences (observing models), by participating in the college question and answer panels, and by hearing stories from

other college students or graduates. Through positive encouragement and support from me, their other teachers, and their college coaches, students are socially persuaded that college-going is within their reach. And, finally, many students' affective states toward college improve as a result of positive college-going experiences.

Although sociocultural approaches to literacy and SCCT help clarify how students develop college-going competency and self-efficacy, a closer look at critical literacy demonstrates how students' college-going critical literacy developed, as well as why it did not improve to the same extent as their competencies and self-efficacies. If critical literacy is reading and writing about the "word and the world" to become aware of one's experience as being historically and socially constructed within various power dynamics, then *college-going* critical literacy is language use intended to increase awareness of how students' college-going is influenced by power-laden societal forces and institutions. In addition, the ultimate end of both critical literacy and college-going critical literacy is to promote justice—at the individual and societal levels—in the place of inequity.

Students in the course develop their college-going critical literacy by deepening their understandings of the larger systems that constrain their college access, and as a result of participating in a Critical English Education classroom. Through their work, students are able to identify social injustices within education, recognize the college-going challenges they face, and envision alternatives. In this study, one critical literacy component that not all students develop is taking transformative action. Although many students are able to use their college-going critical literacy for individual transformation and improvement, most do not take action for societal improvement. This is most likely

129

a result of students not being supported adequately with structures and opportunities for praxis—the back-and-forth dynamic between reflection and action (Freire, 1970).

      Research question #2. *How and to what extent do underserved rural high school students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports change during their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum?* Results from the quantitative and qualitative data demonstrate complementarity and indicate that students' perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers do not significantly change during participation in the course. The majority of students' most noteworthy perceived barrier—money—remains constant. To understand why there is not substantial change in perceived barriers, a return to SCCT and the related literature is necessary.

      SCCT and the relevant literature about barriers and supports demonstrate that when there are *real, objective* barriers to post-secondary education—like money is for the majority of students at my school—it can be difficult for these real challenges not to be *perceived* as barriers (Lent et al., 2000). In the largest study of rural youths' educational barriers to date, Irwin and others (2011) conclude that, in fact, the contextual factor of family economic hardship is one of the contextual variables that most strongly predict rural youths' overall perception of barriers. Considering the high poverty rate for students at my school, the contextual factor of low socio-economic status most likely makes students' perceived barriers more resistant to change. In addition to the influence of their socio-economic status, students' perceptions of money as a barrier to college-going may have been influenced by the curricular innovation itself. As McWhirter, Rasheed, and Crothers (2000) suggest, it is possible that, as students learn more accurate

information about college-going and related costs, their perceptions of encountering this financial barrier remain constant.

Despite the relatively static nature of my students' perceptions of barriers and their likelihood of occurring, the qualitative data demonstrate that students are able to articulate ways of mitigating these barriers. Therefore, although students clearly perceive the likelihood of barriers, they also have clear ideas of how to specifically overcome these perceived barriers, most importantly the financial barrier. To understand this positive finding, an investigation of coping efficacy is warranted. Lent and others (2000) explain coping efficacy as "beliefs regarding one's capabilities to negotiate particular environmental obstacles" (p. 46). Coping efficacy is conceptualized as a protective device that allows people to cope with real or perceived barriers (Bandura, 1997; Lent et al., 2000). Results of other studies indicate that coping efficacy can mitigate the negative effects that perceived barriers have on academic and career outcome expectations (Perrone, Civiletto, Webb, & Fitch, 2004; Thompson, 2013). The concept of coping efficacy, then, serves as a likely explanation why students' perceptions toward college-going and its possible outcomes continued in a positive direction as the semester progressed—in spite of perceived barriers.

Similar to the static nature of students' perceptions of college-going barriers, their perceptions of supports also remain constant. Although it is a positive finding that the majority of students continue to feel supported by their families, it is necessary to describe why their perceptions of this support (and of teachers and friends) do not improve through their participation in an English language arts college-going curriculum.

It is likely that students' perceptions of parental, familial, and friend support do not improve due to the fact these areas are not sufficiently targeted in the curriculum.

Originally, when designing the English language arts college-going curriculum, I intended on hosting two family information sessions—one on college-going in general and one on financial aid specifically. Due to the demands of creating the new course, organizing the college field trips, facilitating college coaching partnerships and advisory committee meetings, and still teaching three other classes, these family informational sessions did not take place. The only way I was able to include families was by inviting them to accompany their students on the college campus visits. The lack of family involvement during the study's innovation period is unfortunate, because, to be most successful, college access efforts must involve families (Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Hooker & Brand, 2009; Tierney et al., 2005; Tierney, Bailey, Constantine, Finkelstein, & Hurd, 2009). Results from other research studies demonstrate repeatedly the enormous influence that students' families have on every aspect of their college-going process. The lack of family involvement in this study is a likely reason why students' perceived parental and familial supports do not improve.

To understand why students' perceptions of teachers as supports also do not change significantly, it is important to return to the study's results. A review of the qualitative results show students identifying specific teachers and coaches as supportive. In addition, the quantitative results show that, after parental support, students perceive teacher support as the strongest support they have. At the end of the semester, students' mean score on teacher support was 5.15 on a 6-point scale. This idea of rural students perceiving teachers as crucial supports is substantiated in a study of over 8,000 rural high

132

school students (Griffin et al., 2011). The researchers indicate that rural students frequently go to their teachers for advice, support, and information about their futures. Further, the researchers claim that rural students in low-income schools and more remote schools like Seligman High School are more likely to turn to teachers and seek their support than other high school students who attend higher-income or small town schools (Griffin et al., 2011).

Although there is not much room for growth in students' perceptions of teacher support, there is still room for improvement. Oakes (2003) discusses the college-access benefits of schools developing a college-going culture in which all teachers and staff support students in their college-going efforts. It is likely that, because of the varying levels of success in the coaching partnerships and the fact that the college-going class is facilitated by only one teacher, there may not be enough opportunities for students to feel supported by *all* teachers.

Research question #3. *How can high-status, non-family adults (institutional agents) best support underserved rural high school students as they construct college-going capital?* The qualitative data show that high-status, non-family adults (this study's college coaches) best support students in the following ways: guiding students through college exploration activities, developing strong relationships so that students feel emotionally supported, and meeting with students regularly.

These research findings are consistent with SCCT and related literature, which show the importance of college-educated individuals serving as mentors to students who are navigating the complex world of college-going. In a recent study of rural college-access programs, King (2012) indicates that college-educated adult mentors are one of

the most important factors related to rural students' college-going behaviors. This positive association between college-going and mentors is also substantiated by larger-scale studies (Tierney et al., 2009). Based on their meta-analysis of studies evaluating college-access programs and practices over the past 20 years, the National Center for Educational Evaluation (NCEE) suggests that high schools can increase college-going for low-income and first-generation college students by providing students with college-enrolled or college-educated mentors (Tierney et al., 2009).

Among other benefits identified by NCEE (2009), mentoring helps students by assisting them with the college search and application process and by providing them with a caring adult who listens and advises. These specific ways that mentors support students—helping them with college-search activities and through careful listening—echo the qualitative data findings of this action research study. The value of both the practical and emotional support that college coaches provide to students in successful coaching partnerships cannot be underestimated. For example, the group College Access: Research and Action (CARA) suggest that first-generation college students, low socioeconomic-status youth, and students of color need both logistical and socio-emotional support from their adult mentors. The most successful coaching partnerships feature coaches who provide students with logistical and socio-emotional support to overcome common barriers such as (a) understanding the steps in the college-search process (Klasik, 2012), (b) navigating complicated college websites (Tucciarone, 2009), and (c) making sense of complex financial aid and college cost information (MacAllum, Glover, Queen, & Riggs, 2007).

When college coaches guide students through the college search and choice processes and develop strong relationships with them, students benefit. SCCT explains how individuals' self-efficacy can improve through mastery experiences and affective states. This theoretical framework is a likely explanation for the present study's qualitative data findings, which show that students in the most effective coaching partnerships become more assured and successful with college-going activities. As students develop positive emotional connections with their coaches and achieve mastery experiences in college-search tasks (such as comparing college offerings and applying for scholarships) their confidence improves.

Unfortunately, due to individual- and institutional-level challenges, some coaching partnerships tend not to be as successful as others. The potential of some partnerships is hampered by scheduling issues and timing conflicts; others are hampered by some coaches' inability to work independently of an explicit and detailed menu of activities. Stanton-Salazar (2010) notes that institutional agents—like this study's college coaches—are sometimes less effective due to a lack of institutional support. In this action research study, a lack of institutional support (in the form of not prioritizing coaching sessions for all students and teachers within the schedule) results in less successful coaching partnerships. Other research results also demonstrate that a lack of knowledge about the college-choice process and college-going in general can reduce the influence and effectiveness of staff and mentors (King, 2012; Tierney et al., 2009).

Limitations of the Study

As with any research study, this action research project has some limitations that warrant consideration. The noteworthy limitations include three threats to validity: the

135

novelty effect, the experimenter effect, and the duration of the course. These limitations are addressed below.

Novelty effect. Prior to the beginning of the study, I identified the novelty effect as a possible threat to validity that could weaken the study's causal claims. The novelty effect jeopardizes a study's validity when the participants feel unique and singled out for being selected to participate in the study. When this occurs, participants improve regardless of the innovation (Smith & Glass, 1987). Considering the small size of our school and the fact that the 11th and 12th graders participate in the college-access curriculum whereas the 9th and 10th graders do not, the novelty effect could contribute to the study's outcomes and be a limitation in this study. To minimize its potential influence, I explained to students that the new English curriculum will be offered again in the future and that this year is the first of many such opportunities. Also, to keep students from feeling privileged when they attend college field trips, I invited all freshmen and sophomores to join the juniors and seniors for one of the two full-day college field trips. Despite my attempts to mitigate the novelty effect, it remains a likely limitation of this study.

Experimenter effect. Also prior to the beginning of this study, I identified the experimenter effect as a potential threat to the study's validity. This threat to validity can compromise a study's external validity when the particular personality or energy of a researcher excessively influences the participants. When this occurs, participants are motivated to perform for *that* particular researcher; another researcher may not produce the same outcomes (Smith & Glass, 1987). Because I have long-standing relationships with my students, many of which are strong, there is no feasible way to minimize this

effect. I could not (nor would I want to) eliminate my existing relationships with students. Therefore, the experimenter effect persists as a definite limitation in this study. Nevertheless, the focus of this action research study is on changing the environment at Seligman High School, not on generalizing the outcomes to other settings. Thus, although the experimenter effect continues to be a limitation, the moral considerations driving this study with respect to increasing college-going capital among students far outweigh the need to mitigate any experimenter-effect considerations.

Duration of course. The length of the course/innovation is also a limitation of this study. Because this course was taught for the first time during this study, I underestimated how many weeks the curriculum would take to implement. As the semester progressed, and students needed more time with certain topics, activities, and assignments, the original curriculum timeline had to be revised. One curriculum area affected by the revised timeline was the final public outreach project, which called for students to take action and create awareness about an educational inequity issue. Although some students were so committed to their projects that they completed them in the spring semester after the course had officially ended, others did not complete them and were not able to experience this important class component. This made it difficult to evaluate how students experienced taking action and attempted to effect change, because most of the qualitative data on this topic is from those students who were more motivated.

Implications for Research

Action research is an iterative process, a spiraling cycle of reflecting, studying and planning, taking action, collecting and analyzing data, reflecting again, and so on.

137

As Riel (2010) explains, greater understanding from each cycle points the way to improved actions and other areas to be investigated. This cycle of action research points to some intriguing questions that warrant further consideration.

Future research could address the following questions: How might changes to the college coaching structure influence students' construction of college-going capital? What effect would more specifically addressing students' perceived barriers to and supports for college-going have on their construction of college-going capital? How could Seligman High School and families best collaborate to enhance students' college-going capital? How could the English language arts college-going class better develop students' critical consciousness? How would redesigning the critical literacy survey items on the College-Going Capital Survey influence the quantitative and qualitative data sets' complementarity? And, finally, what would be the best way to redesign the Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey so that it demonstrates students' coping efficacy?

These questions point to many different possibilities. In terms of next steps in researching college-going at Seligman High School, I would explore how improving the college coaching component influences students' development of college-going capital and their perceptions of post-secondary educational barriers and supports. In this exploration, I would focus on examining how small group coaching sessions and more targeted attention to individuals' barriers and supports might benefit students.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this action research study was to understand how my underserved rural high school students construct college-going capital and to assist them in doing so, which allowed me to advocate for improvements in their college access services. In this

section, I offer three implications for practice—derived from my reflection on the successes and missteps of the college-going class—as a first step in advocating for my students' college-access services.

The first implication for practice results from one of the class's noteworthy successes: college field trips. Especially when they include classroom visits or college student-led presentations, these field trips are an integral part of building students' college-going capital. The trips enable students to envision college and imagine themselves there. Bloom notes, "College-going capital is rarely built through direct instruction; instead, it is deeply rooted in a series of personal experiences of college campuses built over long periods of time" (2008, p. 4). Therefore, I recommend that college field trips be expanded in scope and routinized into Seligman High School's annual field trip calendar. Every student, beginning in ninth grade, should have the opportunity to visit a minimum of two colleges per year.

Another implication for practice results from one of the class components that has strong potential, but needs to be re-envisioned: college coaching. Coaching partnerships, when successful, provide students with moral support and much-needed assistance in the college search and choice processes. Because low-income and potential first-generation college-students face unique challenges in completing critical steps in the college search and choice processes, effective coaching partnerships could make a critical difference in the futures of Seligman High students, who lack professional guidance counseling services. However, when coaches do not have institutional- and/or individual-level support and resources, these coaching partnerships tend to be less effective. Some coaches encounter time constraints and are unable to schedule regular one-on-one

sessions with their students. Other coaches need more informational resources and training about college-going mentoring to increase their effectiveness.

As a result of these findings, I recommend four changes to the college coaching structure. First, to offset the challenge of scheduling so many individualized sessions, and to expand college coaching to the school's freshman and sophomore students, I recommend a small-group coaching approach. By holding small group coaching sessions once or twice quarterly on grade-specific college issues, fewer meetings will need to be scheduled when time is such a scarce resource. This will enable a consistent and systematic approach to providing students with invaluable resources. Further, these small group coaching sessions could be team-coached, ideally pairing a more experienced college coach with a less-experienced one. Second, the coaching sessions should be differentiated by grade level and follow a specific college-going scope and sequence, one that includes specific learning objectives and targeted activities appropriate for each grade level. Twelfth-grade students should still have one-on-one coaching available to them. Third, to counter the challenge of coaches not having enough informational resources to be effective, I recommend that high school staff interested in college coaching be trained on issues of college access and the college choice process. Additionally, an informational college coach book, along with other informational resources, should be developed and provided to all coaches. Fourth, since there are clear advantages to having a designated place for students to consult freely about post-secondary options (Bell, Rowan-Kenyon, & Perna, 2009), I recommend that Seligman High School devote a physical space for students to access college-going resources.

140

A final implication for practice originated from one of the class's shortcomings: lack of family involvement. This needs to be remedied because, as noted above, to be most successful, college access efforts must involve families (Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Tierney et al., 2005). The vast majority of students at Seligman High School cited their families as their largest support for attending college. Students' families, this most valuable resource, need to be more actively pursued and welcomed into the college-going process. First, I recommend that parents be invited to their students' small group college coaching sessions. Second, Seligman High School should host two family college-going informational events annually. Like college-going activities for students, these events should be hands-on and relational, allowing families to better understand the college-going process and have their concerns addressed and questions answered.

Lessons Learned

This action research study and its resulting dissertation have been in the making, in one way or another, for almost three years now. Throughout this time, my personal and professional beliefs have been tested, refined, and strengthened. Below, I share some of the ways in which this action research experience has helped me develop as an educational leader.

Either/or thinking. When I was younger, my family would often joke that I could never make up my mind and make a quick, firm decision. They were correct. I would deliberate over the seemingly simplest things, wanting to see all sides of a situation and make the best decision for me and any others involved. As they playfully teased me about this personality trait, I started to wonder if it was a flaw. It seemed that people who made quick decisions were perceived as confident and well respected. They

did not hesitate; they did not straddle issues but, rather, aligned themselves strongly on one particular side. Of course, there are times in life when this quick, either/or approach is desirable. And, at times in the past, trying to be that quick, firm decision-maker who aligns herself strongly with one side of an issue, I adopted that approach, yet often regretted it.

Thankfully, my participation in this action research study and this doctoral program in general has helped me understand the real worth of a thoughtful approach to situations, one that values multiple perspectives and rejects either/or thinking. In short, the study and the doctoral program have allowed me to better understand why the Cartesian dualism of either/or thinking does not deserve to be placed on a societal pedestal. Instead, a Vygotskian-style dialectical approach to thinking is much more beneficial. Through this action research study, a dialectical approach to thinking has yielded many positive results.

First, with regard to research design, mixing methods, as opposed to relying on one method exclusively, provided a richer, more nuanced understanding of my students' experiences. Second, with regard to the study's innovation, a dialectical approach allowed me to imagine there could be an *English* class that helped students with the nuts and bolts of college access. This blended class provided much-needed resources to all of our school's 11th and 12th graders in a cohesive manner. Third, with regard to the class curriculum, a cognitive-literacy approach provided direct, explicit instruction of those "basic skills" students need to access college, and a sociocultural-literacy approach ensured students' development of the critical thinking skills needed to critique the various systems that constrain college access. This blended approach provided students with the

142

high-stakes knowledge needed to improve their own situations and also promoted contemplation of how societal structures need to change to benefit more people.

Challenging the educational status quo. As a result of this research project and working with my students, my professional beliefs regarding the importance—and difficulty—of challenging the educational status quo have been strengthened. It is not easy to question the system to which you belong day in and day out. As a result, throughout my career, I, like many teachers, have experienced "teacher doubleness." Bickmore, Smagorinsky, and O'Donnell-Allen (2005) explain that teacher doubleness occurs when external institutional discourses collide with opposing internal philosophies, leading to negative consequences for both teacher and students. My teacher doubleness had the potential to undermine the critical-literacy component of the study.

Rationally, I was aware of the power of critical pedagogy for my students' development of college-going capital; however, this pedagogical approach was challenging to enact at times due to my emotions. The personal emotions that most often led me not to act in full accordance with my critical values were worry and fear. I worried that supporting my students' critiques of educational inequity did not align with the compliance/don't-rock-the-boat discourse of schooling. I also feared that I would face consequences from administrators, such as diminished reputation or a less stable position. Well, to some extent, my worries and fears were valid.

Supporting student critique of their education *does not* align with the dominant compliance discourse of schools. This was most evident toward the end of the semester when I shared with a school leader how students were working on their public outreach projects to increase awareness about educational inequity. When I mentioned that one

forum for these projects might be school board meetings, I was told that "Empowerment can be dangerous." This statement reminds me of students' discussion about information being dangerous only to those who want to control it, but cannot. When I was told this, I did stand up for students' rights to share accurate information professionally and respectfully, but I wished that I had used that moment to start a deeper dialogue. I wished that I had asked "Dangerous for whom?"

Standing up for your beliefs (and students) in the face of school authority can be one of the difficult parts of challenging the educational status quo, at least initially. Ultimately, however, it can be one of the most empowering parts. Throughout this study, I gained strength from action, not inaction. As I continued to act in accordance with my value system and to "go public" with critical classroom readings and activities, my confidence in challenging the educational status quo was strengthened and my fears lessened. My career was not negatively impacted; to the contrary, I continued to receive high evaluations. As for my reputation, I cannot speak about my administrators' inner thoughts, but, ultimately, I know that these are not what is most important. For, as Freire (1998) noted, one "cannot be a teacher and be in favor of everyone" (p. 117).

The power of community. During this action research study, my personal belief in the power of community was reaffirmed. When I began the study, I organized a group comprised of various community members to act as an advisory committee. For the purpose of the study, this committee's role was to ensure that my research was responsive and attentive to the community it served. However, as I facilitated regular meetings throughout the fall semester, the committee desired to do more and, on its own initiative, has expanded its purpose. Although the research study is coming to an end, the group is

144

not. Instead, the advisory group has morphed into its own entity with its own mission.

The group is now the Futures First Committee, and its mission is as follows:

> The Futures First Committee will partner with the school and community to
> promote students' educational and career success by providing them with
> professional opportunities that will enhance their leadership abilities, develop
> their goals, strengthen their communication skills, and improve their sense of self
> beyond high school (personal communication, March 12, 2015).

The Futures First Committee planned two main projects for this year. First, it organized a cross-grade shadowing opportunity for eighth graders and high school seniors to encourage the success of eighth graders as they transition to high school. The shadowing opportunity involved the graduating seniors and rising freshmen participating in open and honest dialogue with one another about high school. Eighth graders were able to ask their most pressing questions, follow seniors to class, and get a glimpse of what awaits them next year in high school. Seniors were able to reflect upon their high school careers and share their wisdom with others.

The other main project is slated to take place this fall, and it is a 4 "C"s Night. The "C"s stand for Clubs, Classes, Colleges, and Careers, and the event is intended to promote Seligman High's offerings—as well as post-high school opportunities—to students and their families. The event originated out of advisory group meeting discussions. The group felt that many families were unaware of the school's different offerings and thought that, if awareness of these opportunities could be increased, it would promote students' success, both during high school and beyond.

Witnessing the organic development of the Futures First Committee has been an amazing experience. Its work clearly refutes the deficit-based thinking too often attached to families and communities of color and/or lower socio-economic status. I am proud to be a member of the Futures First Committee and to work with them as they advocate for students' rights to college access opportunities.

Concluding Advocacy Thoughts

Undoubtedly, national macroeconomic policies, federal and state programs, and other institutional factors foster and maintain educational injustice. And, although these larger structural forces can limit local-level education reform efforts, schools must still remain a tool for promoting educational justice and effecting positive change in society. In terms of the college-access opportunity gap, high schools can either constrain or promote their students' post-secondary educational prospects. One way that schools can improve their students' post-secondary educational opportunities is to assist them with developing the knowledge, skills, efficacy, and critical literacy needed to access college.

In many rural schools like the one where I teach, there is a scarcity of traditional resources to equip students with the college-going capital needed to access college. However, this lack of resources should not serve as a rationalization for schools like mine to accept defeat regarding their students' college-going. Rather, these conditions need to be a catalyst for creative thinking and unorthodox problem solving. Our students deserve at least that. This action research study implemented one possible solution to address my rural high school's low college enrollment rates and lack of guidance counseling services. The results of the study demonstrate that a Critical English Education re-imagining of the

146

curriculum can provide underserved students with a way to improve their post-secondary educational opportunities.

This is one possible solution to a complex problem. And while the specifics of the solution can certainly be adapted, improved upon, and used in other contexts, the more important lesson of this study is that grassroots change is possible and moral action is required of educators. Educators must become more than mere dispensers of knowledge. They must become agents of change. This is because marginalization and inequities continue to plague our schools. As a result, whatever the educational context or concern, critical educators need to work with and within their communities to improve educational outcomes for students. This is the hopeful work that teachers are both challenged by and privileged to do. In his book *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher,* critical educator William Ayers explains the nature of this future-focused work that educators must embrace: "The trick is to live with one foot in the world as it is…full of mud and muck, while the other foot strides toward a world that could be but is not yet."

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APPENDIX A

COLLEGE-GOING CAPITAL PRE/POST SURVEY

College-Going Capital Survey

Dear Student,

As you know, we are working to improve Seligman High School students' access to college education. I appreciate you taking the time to contribute to this project.

Your honest answers will allow me to help you gain the knowledge, skills, confidence, and critical awareness it takes to access college. Your truthful responses will also help future Seligman High and Hualapai Nation students.

This survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions while taking the survey, just raise your hand and I will come to your desk to help you.

Thank you again,
Ms. Morrison

College-Going Knowledge and Skills

The ten questions on this page will ask you to consider how knowledgeable and skilled you think you are when it comes to college-going. Make sure to read each question carefully and choose the answer that best represents you.

1. I know the approximate cost of attending different types of colleges.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

2. I know the differences among the various types of financial aid.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

3. I know how to apply for the different types of financial aid.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

4. I know the differences among the various types of colleges and the degrees they award.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

5. I know the admission requirements for different types of colleges.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

6. I know how to apply to different types of colleges.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Capital Survey

7. I know how to prepare for a college entrance exam (SAT, ACT, etc.).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

8. I know how to match my interests to future college major(s).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

9. I know how to match my career goals to future college major(s).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

10. I know how to effectively use the internet and other reference materials to learn more about college-going.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Confidence

The ten questions on this page will ask you to consider how confident you feel when it comes to different aspects of college-going. Make sure to read each question carefully and choose the answer that best represents you.

11. I am confident that I can identify which type of college is a good fit for me.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

12. I am confident that I can correctly complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

13. I am confident that I can write a strong scholarship essay.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

14. I am confident that I can complete a college application.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

15. I am confident that I can practice and learn strategies to improve my college entrance exam (SAT, ACT, etc.) scores.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

16. I am confident that I can do college-level work.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

17. I am confident that I can obtain emotional and practical support from my parents to go to college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

18. I am confident that I can seek help with filling out college paperwork from an adult at my school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

19. I am confident that I can contact college representatives and ask them questions about things I do not understand (admissions, cost, majors, etc.).

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

20. I am confident that I can succeed in college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

Critical Awareness

The ten questions on this page will ask you to consider how critically aware you are when it comes to different aspects of college-going. Make sure to read each question carefully and choose the answer that best represents you.

21. Going to college is important to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

22. I am college material.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Capital Survey

23. People like me go to college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

24. In college, I would be able to continue activities that I value (hobbies, sports, etc.).

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

25. I can attend college and still remain true to my values and beliefs.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

26. My personal strengths will help me overcome the challenges I may encounter during college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

27. A college education will help me have a fulfilling life.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

28. I would use a college education to make positive changes in society.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

29. Different high schools provide different levels of support for students' college goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

30. Not all students have the same opportunities to pursue their college goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

Thank You!

Please be assured that your answers will not be shared with any reference to your name or identity. Thank you again for your thoughtful responses!

31. Please enter your confidential 3-digit student ID below.

[   ]

APPENDIX B

COLLEGE-GOING CAPITAL RETROSPECTIVE-PRE SURVEY

College-Going Capital Retrospective-Pre Survey

Dear Student,

This is the last round of surveys we will be taking about this semester's class. I TRULY appreciate you taking 10 minutes to complete this honestly and thoroughly.

Your responses will help me determine the areas in which students' college-going knowledge, skills, confidence, and critical awareness have changed during the class.

THANK YOU!
Ms. Morrison

College-Going Knowledge and Skills

Please think back to how you felt at the beginning of the school year. Answer these questions about HOW YOU FELT IN AUGUST, BEFORE TAKING COLLEGE PREP ENGLISH.

1. Before this semester, I knew the approximate cost of attending different types of colleges.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

2. Before this semester, I knew the differences among the various types of financial aid.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

3. Before this semester, I knew how to apply for the different types of financial aid.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

4. Before this semester, I knew the differences among the various types of colleges and the degrees they award.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

5. Before this semester, I knew the admission requirements for different types of colleges.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

6. Before this semester, I knew how to apply to different types of colleges.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

7. Before this semester, I knew how to prepare for a college entrance exam (SAT, ACT, etc.).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

8. Before this semester, I knew how to match my interests to future college major(s).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

9. Before this semester, I knew how to match my career goals to future college major(s).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

10. Before this semester, I knew how to effectively use the internet and other reference materials to learn more about college-going.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Confidence

Please think back to how you felt at the beginning of the school year. Answer these questions about HOW YOU FELT IN AUGUST, BEFORE TAKING COLLEGE PREP ENGLISH.

11. Before this semester, I was confident that I could identify which type of college would be a good fit for me.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

12. Before this semester, I was confident that I could correctly complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

13. Before this semester, I was confident that I could write a strong scholarship essay.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

14. Before this semester, I was confident that I could complete a college application.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

15. Before this semester, I was confident that I could practice and learn strategies to improve my college entrance exam (SAT, ACT, etc.) scores.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

16. Before this semester, I was confident that I could do college-level work.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

17. Before this semester, I was confident that I could obtain emotional and practical support from my parents to go to college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

18. Before this semester, I was confident that I could seek help with filling out college paperwork from an adult at my school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

19. Before this semester, I was confident that I could contact college representatives and ask them questions about things I do not understand (admissions, cost, majors, etc.).

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

20. Before this semester, I was confident that I could succeed in college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

Critical Awareness

Please think back to how you felt at the beginning of the school year. Answer these questions about HOW YOU FELT IN AUGUST, BEFORE TAKING COLLEGE PREP ENGLISH.

21. Before this semester, going to college was important to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

22. Before this semester, I thought I was college material.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

23. Before this semester, I thought that people like me went to college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

24. Before this semester, I thought that I would be able to continue activities that I value (hobbies, sports, etc.) in college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

25. Before this semester, I thought that I could attend college and still remain true to my values and beliefs.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

26. Before this semester, I thought that my personal strengths would help me overcome the challenges I may encounter during college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

27. Before this semester, I thought that a college education would help me have a fulfilling life.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

28. Before this semester, I thought that I would use a college education to make positive changes in society.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

29. Before this semester, I thought that different high schools provided different levels of support for students' college goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

30. Before this semester, I thought that not all students had the same opportunities to pursue their college goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

Thank You!

Please be assured that your answers will not be shared with any reference to your name or identity. Thank you again for

your thoughtful responses!

31. Please enter your confidential 3-digit student ID below.

APPENDIX C

PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS PRE/POST SURVEY

Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey

Dear Student,

As you know, we are working to improve Seligman High School students' access to college education. I appreciate you taking the time to contribute to this project.

Your honest answers will allow me to help you gain the knowledge, skills, confidence, and critical awareness it takes to access college. Your truthful responses will also help future Seligman High and Hualapai Nation students.

This survey should only take 10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions while taking the survey, just raise your hand and I will come to your desk to help you.

Thank you again,
Ms. Morrison

College-Going Barriers (Challenges)

The ten questions on this page will ask you how much different challenges will stand in the way of you attending college. Make sure to read each question carefully and choose the answer that best represents you.

1. The cost of college will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

2. Family duties and obligations will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

3. Moving away from home will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

4. Not knowing many people at college will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

5. Uncertainty about my future career will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

6. Not fitting in with other college students will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

7. A lack of friend/boyfriend/girlfriend support will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

8. A lack of parental support will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

9. A lack of information about college will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

10. A lack of confidence will be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Parents)

Each of the next four sections features five questions about the degree to which your parents, family members, teachers, and friends support you attending college. Make sure to read each question carefully and choose the answer that best represents you.

11. MY PARENTS expect me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

12. MY PARENTS push me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

13. MY PARENTS encourage me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

14. MY PARENTS think that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

15. MY PARENTS care about what happens to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Other Family Members--Aunts, Uncles, Siblings, Etc....

16. OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) expect me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

17. OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) push me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

18. OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) encourage me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

19. OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) think that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

20. OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) care about what happens to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Teachers)

21. MY TEACHERS expect me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

22. MY TEACHERS push me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

23. MY TEACHERS encourage me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

24. MY TEACHERS think that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

Perceived Barriers and Supports Survey

25. MY TEACHERS care about what happens to me.

○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Slightly Disagree ○ Slightly Agree ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Friends)

26. MY FRIENDS expect me to work hard in school.

○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Slightly Disagree ○ Slightly Agree ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

27. MY FRIENDS push me to succeed.

○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Slightly Disagree ○ Slightly Agree ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

28. MY FRIENDS encourage me to think about my future goals.

○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Slightly Disagree ○ Slightly Agree ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

29. MY FRIENDS think that I should continue my education after high school.

○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Slightly Disagree ○ Slightly Agree ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

30. MY FRIENDS care about what happens to me.

○ Strongly Disagree ○ Disagree ○ Slightly Disagree ○ Slightly Agree ○ Agree ○ Strongly Agree

Thank You!

Please be assured that your answers will not be shared with any reference to your name or identity. Thank you again for your thoughtful responses!

31. Please enter your confidential 3-digit student ID below.

[_____]

APPENDIX D

PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS RETROSPECTIVE-PRE SURVEY

Perceived Barriers and Supports Retrospective-Pre Survey

Dear Student,

This is the last round of surveys we will be taking about this semester's class. I TRULY appreciate you taking 10 minutes to complete this honestly and thoroughly.

Your responses will help me determine the areas in which students' perceptions of barriers and supports have changed during the class.

THANK YOU!
Ms. Morrison

College-Going Barriers (Challenges)

Please think back to how you felt at the beginning of the school year. Answer these questions about HOW YOU FELT IN AUGUST, BEFORE TAKING COLLEGE PREP ENGLISH.

1. Before this semester, I thought the cost of college would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

2. Before this semester, I thought that family duties and obligations would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

3. Before this semester, I thought that moving away from home would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

4. Before this semester, I thought that not knowing many people at college would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

5. Before this semester, I thought that uncertainty about my future career would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

6. Before this semester, I thought that not fitting in with other college students would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

7. Before this semester, I thought that a lack of friend/boyfriend/girlfriend support would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

8. Before this semester, I thought that a lack of parental support would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

9. Before this semester, I thought that a lack of information about college would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

10. Before this semester, I thought that a lack of confidence would be a barrier to my attending college.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Parents)

Please think back to how you felt at the beginning of the school year. Answer these questions about HOW YOU FELT IN AUGUST, BEFORE TAKING COLLEGE PREP ENGLISH.

11. Before this semester, I felt that MY PARENTS expected me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

12. Before this semester, I felt that MY PARENTS pushed me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

13. Before this semester, I felt that MY PARENTS encouraged me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

Perceived Barriers and Supports Retrospective-Pre Survey

14. Before this semester, I felt that MY PARENTS thought that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

15. Before this semester, I felt that MY PARENTS cared about what happens to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Other Family Members--Aunts, Uncles, Siblings, Etc....

16. Before this semester, I felt that OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) expected me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

17. Before this semester, I felt that OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) pushed me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

18. Before this semester, I felt that OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) encouraged me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

19. Before this semester, I felt that OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) thought that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

20. Before this semester, I felt that OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS (AUNTS, UNCLES, SIBLINGS, ETC.) cared about what happens to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Teachers)

21. Before this semester, I felt that MY TEACHERS expected me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree ◯ Disagree ◯ Slightly Disagree ◯ Slightly Agree ◯ Agree ◯ Strongly Agree

22. Before this semester, I felt that MY TEACHERS pushed me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

23. Before this semester, I felt that MY TEACHERS encouraged me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

24. Before this semester, I felt that MY TEACHERS thought that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

25. Before this semester, I felt that MY TEACHERS cared about what happens to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

College-Going Supports (Friends)

26. Before this semester, I felt that MY FRIENDS expected me to work hard in school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

27. Before this semester, I felt that MY FRIENDS pushed me to succeed.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

28. Before this semester, I felt that MY FRIENDS encouraged me to think about my future goals.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

29. Before this semester, I felt that MY FRIENDS thought that I should continue my education after high school.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

30. Before this semester, I felt that MY FRIENDS cared about what happens to me.

◯ Strongly Disagree   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Slightly Disagree   ◯ Slightly Agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Strongly Agree

Perceived Barriers and Supports Retrospective-Pre Survey

Thank You!

Please be assured that your answers will not be shared with any reference to your name or identity. Thank you again for your thoughtful responses!

31. Please enter your confidential 3-digit student ID below.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR STUDENTS

Sample Journal Prompts for Students

August 28, 2014—What do you think of when you hear the word "college"?
How do you feel when you think of going to college?

October 6, 2014—Write a reaction paragraph, describing your thoughts after
viewing *A Tale of Two Schools.*

**October 23, 2014**—How was today's field trip to Yavapai and ASU for you?
How did the field trip benefit you? What would have made the field trip better?

November 12, 2014—Read the statement below, determine whether you agree or
disagree with it, and then explain your position. Teens can effect positive change
in the world.

APPENDIX F

IMAGE ELICITATION LOG
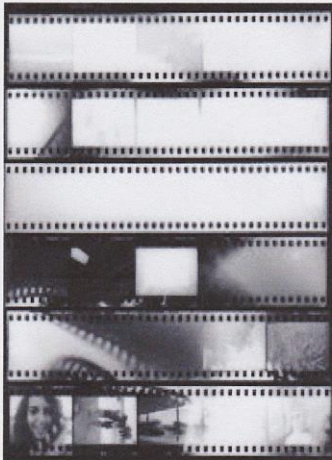
Capturing Your View
of College-Going with Images
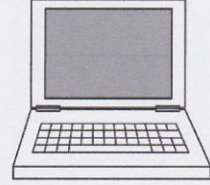
What do you think of when you hear the word "college"?

How do you feel when you think of going to college?

Below, brainstorm your responses to these questions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now that you've considered these questions, it's time to represent your thoughts and feelings about college through images.

Directions: **Gather four images that represent your view of college-going: two** images that capture your general thoughts and feelings about college-going, **one** image that represents a significant barrier to your attending college, and **one** image that represents a significant support for your attending college.

To represent your thoughts and feelings about college-going through images, **you can either take original photographs, select pictures from the internet, or a combination of the two.** As you collect images, record brief descriptions and explanations of them on this paper's **image log** (other side).

Your Image	Why Did You Select It/ Its Meaning
General Thoughts and/or Feelings about College-Going	
General Thoughts and/or Feelings about College-Going	
Significant Barrier to Your Attending College	
Significant Support for Your Attending College	

APPENDIX G

STUDENT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Student Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Possible Probes

1. Please tell me a little bit about how the College Prep English class has been for you this past semester.

2. What sorts of things have you learned and/or realized?
     - How do you feel about this knowledge and/or these realizations?

3. Please review the two images you chose about college-going at the beginning of the semester and review the descriptions you wrote about them. Now, do the same with the images and descriptions you completed last week.
     - How are these two sets of images similar and/or different?
     - Why do you think this is the case?

4. Now, please review the images and descriptions representing what you perceived as barriers to attending college both at the beginning of the semester and from last week. Please explain why each one is (was) a barrier to your attending college.
     - If your main barrier has changed, why do you think that is?
     - Over the past semester, have you discovered any resources or developed any strategies to help you overcome these barriers? If yes, explain.

5. Now, please review the images and descriptions of what you perceived as supports for attending college both at the beginning of the semester and from last week. Please explain why each one is (was) a support for your attending college.
     - If your support has changed, why do you think that is?
     - Over the past semester, have you discovered any other supports? If yes, explain.

6. Please describe your college coaching sessions? How were they for you?
     - Which parts of your college coaching sessions were most helpful to you?
     - Least helpful?

7. What are your thoughts about the educational opportunity gap in the United States?
     - How would you describe schools' and students' different levels of access to college to someone (perhaps a friend) who was not in our class?
     - How did learning about educational inequality make you feel?

8. Have your ideas about college changed this semester? If yes, how? If no, why do you think not?

9. In what ways could this class be improved to better help students in the future?

10. Do you have anything else that you'd like to share about your experience in the College Prep English class?

APPENDIX H

COLLEGE COACH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

College Coach Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Please describe how coaching students about college was for you.

2. In your opinion, what was successful about the college coaching?

3. In your opinion, what was challenging about the college coaching?

4. In which college exploration activities did your students need the most support from you? The least support?

5. In what ways do you feel you were best able to support students this past semester? Least able to support students this past semester?

6. In what ways could the college coaching be improved?

APPENDIX I

COLLEGE COACH MEMO TEMPLATE

College Coach Reflection Memo

Name of Coach:

Name of Student(s):

Date of Session:

1. Please briefly describe your coaching session.

2. What was successful about this session?

3. What was challenging about this session?

4. In what ways or with what areas of college-going is your student progressing?

5. In what ways or with what areas of college-going is your student struggling?

6. Any other comments or observations?

APPENDIX J

ASU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Ray Buss
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - West
602/543-6343
RAY.BUSS@asu.edu

Dear Ray Buss:

On 8/22/2014 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Co-Constructing College-Going Capital in a Rural High School English Class
Investigator:	Ray Buss
IRB ID:	STUDY00001408
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Appendix K--Parental Consent.docx, Category: Consent Form; • Appendix L--Student Consent--Assent.docx, Category: Consent Form; • Appendix M--College Coach Consent.docx, Category: Consent Form; • Morrison IRB 8-9-14, Category: IRB Protocol; • Appendix F--College Coach Semi-Strucutred Interview Items.docx, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Appendix B--Data Collection Tools.docx, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Appendix C--College-Going Capital Survey Items.docx, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Appendix D--Perceived Educational Barriers and

	Supports Survey Items.docx, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Appendix E--Student Semi-Structured Interview Items.docx, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Appendix H--Request to Present to Hualapai Tribal Council.docx, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Appendix I--Hualapai Council Minutes.docx, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Appendix G--SUSD #40 Support Letter.pdf, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Appendix J--Hualapai Nation Support Letter.pdf, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); • Appendix A--Student Recruitment Script.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 8/22/2014.

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

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Carissa Morrison
      Carissa Morrison

ASU **ARIZONA STATE**
UNIVERSITY

Knowledge Enterprise Development
Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Discovery

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http://ovprea.asu.edu

Date: August 13, 2014
To: Ben Larson
From: Deb Murphy

Debra Murphy

Re: Native American Involvement Protocol Review
ASU Investigator: Ray Buss
Title: College-Going Capital
IRB #:   STUDY00001408

Summary: The purpose of this study is to examine how and to what extent an English language arts college-access curriculum influences high school students' college-going competencies, efficacies, and critical literacies. All Seligman High School eleventh and twelfth grade students who are enrolled in either English III or English IV will be invited to participate in this study. While all students will participate in the course's curriculum and regular class activities for high school credit, only those with consent or parental permission/student assent to participate in the study will have their class work collected for data and be interviewed and surveyed. Seligman staff will serve as college coaches and will be asked to participate in a short interview about the college coaching experience. Approval from the Hualapai Tribe is included.

Please indicate decision below
☑ Protocol requires Tribal Authorization.   Authorization received by Hualapai Tribal Council
☐ Protocol does not meet the requirement for approval.

_____   8.22.2014
Ben Larson   Date

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance
660 S Mill Ave Suite 315 | PO Box 876111 Tempe, AZ 85287-6111 | P 480 965 6788 | F 480 965 7772

194