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Recommended Citation

Jaeger, Alberta Mary, "Understanding how the interaction between the community college and the underprepared student positions the student's developmental educational outcomes" (2016). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1561.
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UNDERSTANDING HOW THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND THE UNDERPREPARED STUDENT POSITIONS THE STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

by

Alberta M. Jaeger

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
Rowan University
March 30, 2016

Dissertation Chair: Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to urban community college students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who work diligently to succeed in college and the faculty and administrators who, with patience and understanding, help them achieve their goals.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Alberta Jaeger

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE AND THE UNDERPREPARED STUDENT POSITIONS THE
STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES
2015-2016
Ane Turner Johnson, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education

Underprepared urban community college students from low socioeconomic backgrounds face numerous challenges as they pursue a college degree. They can have weak academic skills that places them in non-college credited developmental education courses, which many do not complete. This qualitative case study used Bourdieu's (1977) theories of cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice as a critical test of a significant theory (Yin, 2009) to understand how the interaction between the urban community college and these students positioned the students' educational outcomes. Developmental reading/writing courses were observed. Students enrolled in these courses, faculty who taught the courses, and administrators who interacted with developmental students were individually interviewed. Students' final grades in the courses were used to determine students' educational outcomes. Themes identified included the influence of low socioeconomic status on education (Bourdieu, 1990), which led to a collision of cultures (Carter, 2003) within the institution and challenges to faculty pedagogy. This study showed how the transformational aspect of Bourdieuian Theory (1977, 1990), along with students' Community College Wealth (Yosso, 2005) and institutional validation of the students' personal culture (Rendon, 1994), can inform students' educational outcomes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Obtaining a college degree in America today can have a major impact on earning power and personal and intellectual growth. The median annual earnings of a four year college graduate are $53,976, which is much higher than the $32,552 median annual earnings of a high school graduate (Dell, 2011). Data from a Pew Research Center Survey (2011) also showed that four year college graduates stated their college education was very useful in helping them grow intellectually (74%), mature as a person (69%), and prepare for a job or career (55%).

Unfortunately, too many people are struggling today to obtain a degree, many due to their economic and social backgrounds (McDonough, 1997). They enter college underprepared especially those who graduate from high schools in areas classified as low socioeconomic status (NJ Commission on Higher Education, 2011). Students who are underprepared are required to take non-college credited developmental courses that many do not pass (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Not completing developmental courses stops students from obtaining a college degree and hurts their chances for upward mobility.

In an effort to increase student success, educational institutions throughout the country have made understanding what it means to be college prepared a major focus. In a report prepared for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Conley (2007) defines college readiness as "the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed – without remediation – in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution" (p. 5). Unfortunately, many students graduating from high school do not have the academic, cognitive, or behavioral skills needed to reach this goal (Conley, 2007) but

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are pressured to go to college. The Pew Research Center Survey (2011) showed that 94% of parents surveyed said they expect their child to attend college even though they may not have the skills to do college level academic work.

Many students who want to go to college, but do not have the necessary academic skills, are drawn to the community college because of open enrollment. All who apply there are accepted. Those without academic skills, however, may not be allowed to enroll in college credited courses. While most four year schools have some form of entrance requirement (Peterson's Guide, 2013), they also enroll students who need remediation. Whether students enroll in a four year college or a community college, if they lack academic skills in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, they will be required in most colleges to register for non-college credited developmental courses, which many do not complete (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

In an effort to assist community college students, especially those from low income families or backgrounds and who are students of color, the Achieving the Dream initiative was established in 2004. Over 200 community colleges throughout the country are currently participating in this initiative, which focuses on reforming community college education so these students stay in college and complete their degrees (Achieving the Dream, 2012). Assisting these students has become a national concern since 59% of students in the community colleges that participated initially in the Achieving the Dream initiative throughout the country were enrolled in at least one developmental course (Bailey, 2009). In New Jersey, enrollment in developmental courses in some urban community colleges is very high with 90% of the entering student population required to

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take a developmental course (NJ Commission on Higher Education, 2011). We can trace this dilemma to high schools not preparing students for college (Bailey, 2009).

There are numerous studies that show how high schools are graduating students not prepared for college, even though students say they intend to go to college (Berry, 2003; Illowshy, 2008; Long, Iatarola, & Conger, 2009; Williamson, 2008). These high schools offer lower level academic programs that do not prepare students for college level work but allow them to graduate from high school. Venezia, Kirst, and Antonio (2008) report in the final policy brief on the Stanford University Multi-state Bridge Project that there is a wide disconnect between what is measured in high school assessments and college entrance and placement requirements. The study also found student and parent misconceptions about what is needed to prepare for and attend college, due in part to the inequities in counseling, course offerings, and resources available to students and parents in different high schools, especially those in low SES districts. "Only 42%, 44%, and 47% of economically disadvantaged parents in Illinois, Maryland, and Oregon respectively, stated that they received college information as compared with 74%, 71%, and 66% of more economically well-off counterparts" (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2008, p. 6). Kirst (2003) describes the mixed signals that students received regarding what is needed to succeed in college. Students who intend to enroll in non-selective post-secondary education are not encouraged to do rigorous academic work in high school, which encompasses many economically disadvantaged students. Kirst (2003) states "more advantaged students receive ample signals and incentives to prepare for postsecondary education" (p.6). With a high school diploma students can enter the community college, even though they are not prepared academically for college level

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work, because it is affordable and accepts all who apply. Students, who are underprepared, however, are relegated to non-credit developmental courses that many do not pass, or even take (Bailey, 2009).

Mission of the Community College

For many students who are underprepared, the community college is their best hope for success, even if they need to take developmental courses, because of its mission of access and affordability. Shannon and Smith (2006) describe how crucial the open door policy of the community college is for the underprepared high school student in that "Until high schools adequately prepare all students for success in college, the open door is imperative" (p. 1). No one interested in pursuing higher education is turned away in a community college, no matter what academic background the student may have. The community college is also highly affordable. "The average price of attending a community college is lower than that of a four-year college, and has not increased at the same rate as tuition and fees at four-year institutions" (Shannon & Smith, 2006, p. 1).

Because of easy access and affordability, the community college is the place in which many students with poor academic skills enroll because they are accepted and can afford the tuition (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). They are, however, surprised when they are required to take non-college level developmental courses to make up for their lack of academic skills from high school, based on a placement test that some do not take seriously (Headden, 2011). If students do not complete their developmental courses, they will not be able to complete their college degree (Bailey, 2009). Not completing a degree can be detrimental to their earning power (Dell, 2011).

Placement Testing

Placement tests are usually given to students when they enter the community college to determine their college level reading, writing, and mathematical ability. Test results indicate students' academic readiness to take college level courses. If students score below institutional cut-off score levels, they are required to take non-college credited developmental courses, which they pay for, but do not count towards graduation, and are considered underprepared for college (Conley, 2007). Being underprepared for college can mean that students could have difficulty completing their degree or certificate in a timely manner, since they will need to take additional non-college credited courses to graduate.

Placement testing has been in existence since the 1970's because students were entering college unprepared and then failing their college level courses (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). High school graduates entering the community college for the first time, who do not have sufficient SAT scores to exempt them, are required to take a specific placement test in New Jersey, ACCUPLACER, which is used to determine if they have the ability to do college level academic work. The magnitude of lack of preparation for college shows in the students' placement test scores. "The vast majority of community colleges require students to take placement tests like the ACCUPLACER and more than half of the students who take those tests end up in remediation" (Headden, 2011, p. 33), and need to take additional courses to graduate. Unfortunately, students may not understand how important the placement test is to their success in college.

Hughes and Scott-Clayton (2011) state that "placement exams are not merely used as a measure of skills but rather as a high stake determinant of students' access to

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college level courses" (p. 1). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds entering open-access institutions may be tracked into developmental courses due to their lack of understanding of the high stake nature of this test. Scott-Clayton and Rodriquez (2012) analyzed how well the high stake placement exams predict college success at a large urban community college system. The study focused on placement accuracy rates, including under-placement in which students who placed in remediation could have passed a college level course and over-placement in which students who could not pass the college course were placed in it anyway, by measuring the percentage of students who are placed in a college level course in math or English. Using this format can be challenging, since the majority of students taking the tests are placed in developmental courses, leaving a small number of students for the study. The author suggests that "under-placement errors would be worse than over-placement errors" (Scott-Clayton & Rodriquez, 2012, p. 29). Students feeling that the course is too easy could drop out or not do the work needed to pass. The results of the study show that "placement test scores have much more predicative power in math than in English and are better at predicting who is likely to do well in the college level courses than predicting who is likely to fail" (Scott-Clayton & Rodriquez, 2012, p. 32).

The accuracy of test results is continually being questioned. A study done in 2010 at Northwestern University "found that 74% of the students did not understand the significance of the test and two thirds didn't realize that remedial classes would earn them no credit" (Headden, 2011, p. 34). If students do not take the test seriously they will not prepare for them, which can lead to inaccurate scores. Also affecting the student's placement score can be the fact that most community colleges only allow

students to take the placement test once or twice, unlike the SAT, which can be taken numerous times, and use the score on this test as the only determinant in entering a college credited course (Headden, 2011). If students are not taking the placement test seriously they could be enrolled in developmental courses that they do not need, and do not pass, which can jeopardize completion of their degree (Bailey, 2009).

Bailey (2009) discusses the difficulty in determining what the cut-off placement scores should be since some students who score just below the cut-off might be able to complete college level work. Colleges should combine the placement test scores with other information to decide on placements (Bailey, 2009). Placing students into developmental courses based on their test scores alone could lead to misplacement of students in developmental courses. If students are misplaced they could be deprived of a college education, since many students do not complete their developmental courses (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

Developmental Education

The term developmental education signifies "courses designed to teach literacy – the essentials of reading, writing, and arithmetic" (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 291-292). If placement tests are accurate, the need for developmental courses in reading, writing, and mathematics to accommodate the underprepared student is crucial. However, less than half of the students required to take a developmental course pass them (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Both students and the institution can incur additional costs since students are required to pay a per-credit fee for a developmental course but do not receive college credits toward their degree, and will need to enroll in additional semesters to graduate. To accommodate this population, colleges need to institute additional tutoring

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and small classes to assist students enrolled in developmental courses (Lorenzetti, 2005), which can increase the cost of offering this form of education.

Community colleges offer developmental education in a variety of ways but usually in semester-long individual courses in reading, writing, and mathematics at two or three levels. Students scoring below the cut-off, based on their placement test scores, can be required to take semesters of developmental courses before being allowed to enroll in college credited courses. It is imperative that community colleges find a way to offer developmental education that meets the needs of this student population since the issue has a major impact on the upward mobility and personal and intellectual growth of a large part of the community college population (Achieving the Dream, 2012). If students do not complete a degree their earning power can be affected (Dell, 2011).

In New Jersey, community colleges are beginning to focus on ways to improve the developmental education dilemma. In 2011, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) initiated the Big Ideas Project, which includes Transforming Developmental Education as its Big Idea #1. One of the strategies involves colleges offering "multiple evidence-based, successful developmental education models consistent with the needs of the students" (p. 10). Some community colleges in New Jersey are beginning to use these models. Instead of semester long reading, writing, and mathematics developmental courses, Bergen Community College, Raritan Valley Community College, and Passaic County Community College have combined reading and writing into a single developmental course so students take fewer courses. Sussex County Community College is offering paired courses in which students take a college credited course along with their developmental course and are given additional academic

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support to help them achieve. These new models can help students feel that they are making progress toward completion of their degree and have been shown to increase students completion rate (New Jersey Council of County Colleges, 2011). While lack of academic skills can inform underprepared students' ability to be successful in college, so can social and cultural backgrounds (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Socioeconomic Status and Cultural Capital

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared, are in even greater jeopardy of not completing their degree (Walpole, 2003). According to McDonough (1997) there is an "impact of individual social status on the development of aspirations for educational attainment" (p. 3). If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are faced with semesters of developmental courses, they may decide that completing a degree is not for them (Jenkins, 1992).

How socioeconomic status informs the students' educational experiences can be viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital, which states that the socioeconomic status of students can inform their beliefs and aspirations about becoming successful college students. Since "parents transmit cultural capital by informing offspring about the value and process for securing a college education" (McDonough, 1997, p. 9), students might not understand the college process. If parents, especially first generation parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds, do not have the knowledge and understanding of what preparation students need in high school to be successful, they might not encourage students to take more academically rigorous courses in high school so they were better prepared for college (Reid & Moore, 2008). This can inform the students' cultural capital, and shape their habitus, which guides their

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dispositions, perceptions, and expectations as to what could be needed to be successful college students (Bourdieu, 1977).

According to McDonough (1997), the habitus is "an individual's common set of subjective perceptions held by all members of the same group or class that shapes an individual's expectations, attitudes, and aspirations" (p. 9), and includes how they assess their chances for upward mobility, and the probability that this will occur. If students are enrolled in developmental courses they usually have limited academic skills. These students may not believe that they can actually be successful in college and may not put effort into their studies, giving up when school becomes difficult (MacLeod, 2008).

Many students from low socioeconomic backgrounds choose the community college because their cultural capital is "shaped by local opportunity structures and limited financial resources" (McDonough, 1997, p. 12). With open admissions and lower tuition, the community college can be seen as the best place for students with weak academic skills and limited finances. The fact that they could be required to make up their academic deficiencies with semesters of non-college credit developmental courses, which they pay for, can be hidden, especially to students who have limited knowledge of higher education. Diel-Amen (2011) describes the "ambiguity of definition" (p. 62) of these developmental courses in that they are institution credit bearing so they qualify for financial aid, but do not count toward the courses needed to complete the degree or transfer. When faced with this dilemma many students decide to leave college without completing their degree (Bailey, 2009). Martorell and McFarlin (2011), (as cited in Scott-Clayton & Rodriquez, 2012) find that "assignment to remediation negatively impacts college persistence" (p. 6).

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The experiences that underprepared students encounter within the institution can also be understood through Bourdieu's theory of Field. According to McDonough, Ventresca, and Outcalt (1999) "Bourdieu's theories suggest a framework for understanding how individuals and organizations interact, how dominant groups stay in dominant positions, and how strategic and goal-directed individuals pursue their interests yet manage to create and recreate social structures" (p. 373). If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds view their role from a non-dominant position, they would not question placement in developmental courses, possibly feeling that they may not belong in college because of their lack of academic skills (MacLeod, 2008).

The environment of the college, including its policies, procedures, and practices, along with the college constituencies' expectations and experiences with the underprepared students, create an organizational or institutional habitus that informs the interaction between the students and the college (Nash, 1990). A mismatch between the students' cultural capital, and what the organization values, can inform the students' developmental educational outcomes. How students who are underprepared manage the policies, procedures and practices of the college, and how the college constituencies' perceptions and expectations of the underprepared students inform their interactions with the students, can be a factor in the students' success in college. By exploring what is occurring in this interaction, from both the students' and the college's perspectives, we can begin to understand how best to meet the needs of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in the community college, within the context of developmental education.

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Problem Statement

In America today, not having a college degree can have a detrimental effect on upward mobility, especially for those students with low socioeconomic backgrounds, since not having a degree can greatly affect earning power (Dell, 2011). Lareau (2011) has shown that children from working-class or poor backgrounds have great difficulty obtaining a college education. They enter college unprepared, especially those who graduate from high schools in areas classified as low socioeconomic status (NJ Commission on Higher Education, 2011), such as the students in this study. These students can be required to take non-college credited developmental courses, which many do not pass (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

Students who are underprepared are attracted to the community college because of its access and affordability, especially its open door policy (Shannon & Smith, 2006). All who apply are admitted. However, students who do not have the skills to do college level academic work are usually required to take developmental courses (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Based on placement test scores that some do not take seriously (Headden, 2011), students are not moving through their developmental courses into college credited courses in a timely manner (Bailey, 2009). Not completing their courses could be detrimental to their success in life since students with college degrees have higher earning potential than those who do not (Dell, 2011). At greater risk are students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who might not have the cultural capital to understand what they need to do to be successful college students (Bourdieu, 1986).

It is necessary to determine all the factors involved in the students' progression through their developmental sequence in order to understand what is informing the

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students' ability to enroll in, stay in, and complete their developmental courses. The students' backgrounds, perceptions, expectations, and experiences in college are crucial to understanding what could be informing their ability to succeed in college.

Colleges also have established ways of interacting with students based on the environment of the institution (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The college's policies, procedures, and practices, along with the college constituencies' perceptions, expectations, and experiences with the students who are underprepared, constitute the institutional habitus of the college (Thomas, 2002), which can inform the students' ability to complete their developmental courses. This study focused on understanding how the interaction between the two entities, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enrolled in integrated developmental reading and writing courses at an urban community college and the college environment, impeded or promoted the students' movement through their courses by using a case study approach to research. With this knowledge, changes to the developmental education process can be made to better serve this fragile college population.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to understand how the interaction between the community college and the student from a low socioeconomic background, who is underprepared, positions the student's developmental educational outcomes, as viewed through the theoretical lens of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1977). Developmental educational outcomes were defined as passing or not passing the developmental courses in which the students were enrolled. Students enrolled in integrated developmental reading and writing courses at an urban community college,

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who recently graduated from a high school in a low SES district, were the focus of the study. I examined how the students' socioeconomic background informed their cultural capital, and shaped their dispositions, perceptions, expectations, and attitudes (habitus) toward their interaction with the college. The college environment was also examined to determine how the institutional habitus of the college, including its policies, procedures, practices, along with the college constituencies' dispositions, perceptions, and expectations of the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were underprepared, informed the students' interaction with the college.

The qualitative case study approach was used because it is the best way to understand the research problem, since it focuses on understanding "complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2009, p. 4) and "investigates complex social units of multiple variables of potential importance to understanding the phenomena" (Merriam, 2009, p. 50). There are numerous variables that inform the increase in students having to take, and then not be able to pass, developmental courses. This phenomenon has become a societal problem, since too many students are left without a college education because they could not pass their developmental courses (Bailey, 2009).

Using a qualitative case study approach allowed me to view all the variables involved in this phenomenon. By observing the interaction between students and faculty and students and students in the developmental courses, I was able to see firsthand the attitude and behavior that students were exhibiting in their developmental courses and the responses from faculty teaching the courses. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were underprepared, were interviewed to obtain their educational backgrounds and expectations and perceptions of their experiences in college. Faculty

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and administrators' were also interviewed to obtain their perspectives of their experiences with these students. All were interviewed using semi-structured interview protocols (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Additional semi-structured interviews with upper-level administration, including a Dean and an Associate Dean, were also conducted using semi-structured interview protocols to obtain leadership viewpoints.

Since this study focused on students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and their possible difficulties with higher education, a critical test of a significant theory was utilized. I viewed the students and the institution's experiences through the lens of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1977), including cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice, to determine how these constructs informed the students' and the institution's interaction in positioning the students' developmental educational outcomes. Bourdieu's theories focus on the social and cultural backgrounds that students from low socioeconomic status have and how their backgrounds inform the students' experiences within the college environment.

Research Questions

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the socioeconomic status of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with the college?

2. How do the perceptions and expectations that students who are underprepared have of the institution inform their interaction with college constituents?

3. What college policies, procedures, and practices position the educational outcomes of the students who are underprepared?

4. How do community college faculty and administrators' perceptions and expectations of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with these students?

5. How does the interaction between the community college and the student who is underprepared position the student's educational outcomes?

6. How does the expectations that students who are underprepared have about their educational outcomes compare with the institutional expectations of these students?

Key Terms

Developmental education – Courses which do not count toward degree completion, but help students master the skills needed for successful progression toward their degree (Scott-Clayton & Rodriquez, 2012) and are "designed to teach literacy – the essentials of reading, writing, and arithmetic" (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 291-292).

Underprepared students – Students enrolled in developmental courses (Conley, 2007).

Cultural capital – The general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next (Bourdieu, 1986).

Habitus – A "system of lasting, transposable dispositions which …function at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82-83).

Field – A social system of the college that includes "intimate relationships among culture, power, and stratification" (DiMaggio, 1979, p. 1461).

Practice - How cultural capital, habitus, and field interact to shape behavior and explain the actions of individuals in the field (Horvat, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

This study focused on understanding the interaction between students enrolled in the combined reading and writing courses at an urban community college in New Jersey, who recently graduated from a high school in a low SES district, and the environment of the college, and how the interaction positioned the students' educational outcomes. This interaction was viewed through Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theories of cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice, and included how social reproduction informs the students' experience in higher education.

Cultural Capital

Low socioeconomic backgrounds can inform college students' outcomes through their cultural capital, which "shapes students' experience and outcomes" (Walpole, 2003, p. 46). This general cultural background includes the students' knowledge, dispositions and skills that they acquire from their family and education backgrounds, which "does have a significant effect on (academic) performance" (Sullivan, 2001, p. 893). The concept of cultural capital has been used to understand the differences in academic achievement between social classes since students' socioeconomic status, rather than their abilities, can inform their success in school (Bourdieu, 1986). If students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they may not have the middle class cultural capital that the college values (Horvat, 2001, Lareau, 2011; Winkle-Wagner, 2010) and could have difficulty passing even developmental education courses.

Included in students' cultural capital are language skills (Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005). If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds did not learn the academic reading and writing skills that the college determines is needed for entrance

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into college credited courses, they could have difficulty passing the placement test and be required to take semesters of developmental courses (Bailey, 2009). This mismatch between the students' backgrounds and college standards can inform student success in college (Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

Students who enter the community college underprepared need to know the knowledge and behavior expected by the institution when they enter, so they can succeed in this environment. Unfortunately, students from high schools in low socioeconomic areas may not have this knowledge, which is usually the knowledge of middle class students, and can therefore struggle trying to maneuver through the bureaucracy of admissions, testing, advising, and registration (Lareau, 2011).

Habitus

The students' cultural capital informs their habitus. The habitus is the students' disposition to act and their perception of reality, which guides their interactions within the college, and is acquired and adapted through life-long experiences within the family and school (Nash, 1990; Robbins, 1993; Thomas, 2002). Thomas (2002) states that "central to Bourdieu's notion of habitus… is the need of classes and groups to reproduce themselves, and in society certain classes and groups are dominant and so control access to educational and career opportunities" (p. 430). The habitus of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who can be part of the non-dominant group in college, can inform how they interact with the college environment. These students may not think that they can enter majors that lead to higher level careers, such as medicine or law (MacLeod, 2008), due to their belief that they do not have the academic skills to succeed in these areas (Jenkins, 1992).

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Bourdieu's theory of habitus can also be used to understand organizations. The college's institutional habitus includes how the college structures its relationships and priories, which inform the policies, procedures, and practices of the institution (Thomas, 2002). If colleges establish policies, procedures, and practices that favor middle class students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds could have difficulty succeeding in college (Reay, David, & Ball, 2001; Robbins, 1993; Thomas, 2002).

Colleges may not understand that its policies, procedures, and practices are informing the educational outcomes of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds because these structures can be "internalized principles of the habitus that structure the culture" (Nash, 1990, p. 434) and are "deeply embedded and subconsciously inform practice" (Thomas, 2002, p. 431). If the college does not recognize that it is favoring the backgrounds of middle class students, who usually have the academic skills and knowledge valued by the college, it may not create the structures that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds need in order to succeed in college. Discovering the institutional habitus of the college was necessary in order to understand how the interaction between the college and the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared, informed the students' educational outcomes.

Field

The interrelationships within the community college can be understood through Bourdieu's concept of Field. According to DiMaggio (1979), Bourdieu views higher education as a relatively autonomous *field* operating as a social system that includes "intimate relationships among culture, power, and stratification" (p. 1461). The culture of the institution, the power relationships among students, faculty, and administration, along

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with the socioeconomic status of the students, can contribute to the students' outcomes. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may believe that they have limited power in the institution and not question the way the institution interacts with them.

These students may not question having to take developmental courses based on their placement test scores. If they did, they might realize that they could be successful in college credited courses. Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) found that 72 % of the students who scored into remedial classes, but enrolled in college level courses instead, passed their college level courses. If colleges encouraged students to self-advocate, especially students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, more students may successfully complete their college education.

Even though the accuracy of the placement test as a measure of the students' ability to do college level work is being questioned, colleges in New Jersey use it as the main guide for enrollment. The Academic Officers of the New Jersey Community Colleges determine the type of placement test that all must utilize, ACCUPLACER. Maton (2005) states that "economic and political power play a role in shaping the Field" (p. 189). This is occurring in New Jersey through the requirement to use a measure to test students that may not be the best for all students.

Practice

To understand how cultural capital, habitus, and field interact and shape behavior, Horvat (2001) refers to Bourdieu's concept of practice that explains the actions of individuals in the field. "The habitus and cultural capital of the individual actors in the fields interact within a field and are … shaped by multiple forces including internal

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dispositions and preferences of individuals as well as adherence to rules that govern a field" (Horvat, 2001, p. 31).

Bourdieu (1990) states that practice "can only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the habitus that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented" (p. 56). The cultural capital of the students, which informs their habitus, was constituted through social conditions based on their social and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The institutional habitus of the community college in which the students interact can be considered the college's social conditions, since it informs policy, practice, and procedures. How the cultural capital and habitus of the students relates to the institutional habitus of the college can be found in practice. If we can determine how cultural capital and habitus of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared, informs their interactions with the college environment, we may be able to suggest ways to structure the environment so it better meets the needs of this vulnerable population.

Significance of the Study

Extensive research has been done on developmental education and the students' experience in these courses (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Bettinger & Long, 2005; Conley, 2007; Deil-Amen, 2011; Lorenzetti, 2005; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). Understanding these students' experiences within the entire institution, however, is crucial if we are to discover all of the factors that inform these students' developmental educational outcomes. Therefore, this study focused on the students' beliefs, perceptions, and experiences in college, the college constituencies' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences with these students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are

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underprepared, and how these two interacted. College policies, procedures, and practices that move these students toward successful developmental educational outcomes were also identified and analyzed as to how they contributed to the students' developmental educational outcomes. All were viewed through the lens of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, including cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice (Bourdieu, 1990).

Policy

In New Jersey, the 19 community colleges determine the placement test that colleges should use (ACCUPLACER), but the colleges are able to structure developmental education courses based on what the individual college determines is the best way to offer this form of education. Other State legislatures, though, are now instituting polices that require educational institutions to offer developmental education in specific ways. In Florida, students who test into developmental education are not required to take these courses but are advised of options available, such as supplemental instruction embedded in college level English or math courses, and in Connecticut, colleges can offer only one semester of separate remedial education that is not embedded in a college credited course (Managan, 2016). Both of these models, however, may not address the needs of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who may be very underprepared. Policies must take the needs of this population into consideration when instituting changes to developmental education, so these students are able to complete a degree.

Practice

The urban community college in this study is an ideal setting since it has begun to focus on how best to assist students who are underprepared by offering developmental

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reading and writing as one developmental course. By understanding how the interaction between the students and the college policies, procedures, programs, and services move these students toward completion, this urban community college can become a model for student success. More colleges in New Jersey would begin to offer combined reading and writing developmental courses so students could move more quickly through their developmental sequence.

If we understood what factors inform how students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared, interact with the college environment, then practices that assist these students to be successful could be instituted. Students would then be able to complete their courses and graduate.

Future Research

Very few studies on higher education in the United States utilize Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) theories of cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice. Most of these studies take place in the UK, France, Australia, and other countries. Applying Bourdieu's (1977) theories to the community college system in the United States will be unique and give insight into how these concepts can be used to understand the interaction between the community college student and the community college.

A longitudinal study could be developed that follows the students in this study into future semesters. Data could be obtained to see if students learned to better deal with the environment of the institution to complete their credit courses and graduate, when changes to the college environment were implemented.

Since students' ability to do college level academic work can be traced back to their high school experience, this study could lead to similar studies that focus on

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understanding the interaction between high school students and high schools in districts representing low socioeconomic status, and how this interaction positions the students' interest and ability to do college preparatory academic work in high school. With this knowledge, interventions that move high school students toward increasing their academic skills while in high school could be established.

Delimitations

Since this is a qualitative study, and context-dependent, it is not possible to transfer the findings directly to other institutions, but through "reasoning by analogy" (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 104), we can apply what is learned in this study to studies that are similar. To address validity, credibility and trustworthiness, data collection through multi-level sampling design (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), along with triangulation of the data, was used.

There is a potential for incomplete findings due to the nature of qualitative research. This form of research relies on the researcher's conversion and analysis of the participants' words and at any time could be misinterpreted. Triangulation of data, and member checking, helped to alleviate this problem.

It will be impossible to identify all of the factors that inform the developmental educational outcomes of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared, in this study. The study will not be able to answer if students' psychological make-up, including feelings of self-worth, informs their success, since the study did not obtain that information from the students.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one includes an introduction to the topics of this research and describes the purpose, the research questions, the significance of the study, and its delimitations. Chapter two includes a review of the literature on the topics included in this research and a description of the college in which the research took place. Chapter three is a description of the methodology used in this study. Chapter four includes an overview of the findings. Since this is a manuscript dissertation, chapters five and six include articles on specific findings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Setting of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how the interaction between underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and the community college positions the students' developmental educational outcomes. Underprepared students enrolled in developmental education courses in a community college, who recently graduated from a high school in a district classified as low socioeconomic status, and met the criteria of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds by receipt of need based financial aid (Pell Grants) and low education and occupation levels of parents/guardians (Walpole, 2003), were the focus of the study. Passing or not passing the developmental courses was used to determine developmental educational outcomes. Underprepared students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds were chosen because Walpole (2003) has shown that socioeconomic status can inform students' educational outcomes.

In order to understand how the interaction of these students with the college environment informs their developmental educational outcomes, the students' cultural backgrounds, dispositions, attitudes, perceptions, and expectations of college life, and their experiences with college policies, procedures, practices, and college constituencies, in college, were examined using Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice (Bourdieu, 1990; Horvat, 2001; Lareau, 2011; McDonough, 1997; Nash, 1990; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010; Robbins, 1993; Swartz, 1977; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Theories of cultural and social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Clark, 1960; Giroux, 1983) were also used to understand how

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socioeconomic status can inform underprepared students' interactions with the college environment.

The college environment was also examined to understand how its institutional habitus (Reay, David, & Ball, 2001; Thomas, 2002) informed the underprepared students' interaction with the college to position the underprepared students developmental educational outcomes. The colleges' policies, practices, and procedures, along with the college constituencies' expectations and perceptions of underprepared students were included as part of the institutional habitus.

I am using the manuscript option, so two articles will be produced in place of the traditional chapters five and six and will entail two individual literature reviews. Therefore, this chapter will give an overview of the concepts that will be included in those chapters. The following explain the categories of literature included in this chapter, which relate to the research questions:

1. Developmental education in the community college describes how this form of education has become a major focus of the community college in identifying and assisting, or not assisting, underprepared students to complete their college degree (Bailey, 2009).

2. Cultural and social reproduction includes how cultural and social reproduction theories can inform the underprepared students' educational backgrounds and contribute to the students' developmental educational outcomes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

3. Cultural capital and habitus describes how the theories of Pierre Bourdieu inform the students' interaction with the college environment (Bourdieu, 1990).

4. Community college environment describes the institutional habitus of the college, including how the policies, procedures, and practices of the institution, along with the college constituencies' expectations and perceptions of the underprepared students, inform the students' interaction with the college environment (Thomas, 2002).

5. Interaction between the student and the college describes how Bourdieu's concepts of field and practice offer an overall understanding of the interrelationships between the students and the college environment (Horvat, 2001)

This chapter will also provide a description of the setting of this study.

Developmental Education in the Community College

Underprepared Community College Students

When students enter the community college they are given a placement test that assesses their college level reading, writing, and mathematical ability. Students who score below state or institutional cut-off levels are usually required to take non-college credited developmental courses, which they pay for, but do not count towards graduation. Students taking developmental courses are considered underprepared for college (Conley, 2007). Numerous underprepared students who are required to take developmental courses do not finish college (Bailey, 2009).

Studies have shown that students are underprepared due to a number of factors including lack of academic preparation in high school (Berry, 2003; Davis, 2007; Illowshy, 2008; Long, Iatarola, & Conger, 2009; Williamson, 2008), lack of internal locus of control (Shephard, Fitch, Owen, & Marshall, 2006), and lack of study skills and

poor time management (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005). However, the underprepared status can also be due to cultural and social factors that students internalize from their family and educational background. If high school students had parents or guardians who did not go to college they may not have received the support and encouragement they need to become prepared for college (Reid & Moore, 2008). Parents of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds encourage their children to go to college but may not have the knowledge (academic capital) to help the students maneuver through the difficulties they may encounter in becoming successful college students (Lareau, 2011). There can be a mismatch between what the students understand is expected of them and what the institution expects the students to know.

Placement Testing

"Beginning in the late 1970's, the nation's community colleges moved toward a system of placement testing, restricting admissions to many courses and programs, and integrated developmental programs into the college curriculum" (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 291). This was necessary because students were entering college courses unprepared and failing. High school graduates entering the community college for the first time, who do not have sufficient SAT scores to exempt them from placement testing, are usually required to take a placement test to determine if they have the ability to do college level academic work. According to Headden (2011), two adaptive placement tests, ACCUPLACER and COMPASS, are administered at most colleges with ACCUPLACER used by 62% and COMPASS by 46% of the colleges. Adaptive tests adjust the questions offered to the student based on their answers on prior questions. The magnitude of the lack of preparation for college can be shown in students' placement rates. "The vast

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majority of community colleges require students to take placement tests like the ACCUPLACER and more than half of the students who take those tests end up in remediation" (Headden, 2011, p. 33). Both the COMPASS and the ACCUPLACER test students' abilities in reading, writing, and mathematics. The ACCUPLACER placement test is used in all community colleges in New Jersey. Cut scores, which determine whether or not a student must take a developmental course, are determined by the community college.

The ACCUPLACER placement test consists of three parts, reading, writing, and mathematics (College Board, 2016). In the reading portion students read short paragraphs and then answer 20 multiple choice questions regarding the readings. The questions require the student to use critical thinking skills in order to answer correctly. There are two parts to the writing portion of the test. Students write an essay on a topic that they are given and then answer 20 multiple choice questions that ask the student to select the best sentence structure in a brief statement. The mathematics portion of the test is also given in two parts. Students first take a 12 question multiple choice algebra portion of the test. If they do not pass the algebra test they are then given a basic math test which consists of 17 multiple choice questions to determine their level of math ability. Most students complete the entire test at one time, which usually takes between one and a half to three hours.

If students do not take the test seriously they can find themselves in developmental courses that they do not need. Headden (2011) describes a study done in 2010 at Northwestern University that "found that 75 % of the students did not understand the significance of the test and two thirds didn't realize that remedial classes would earn

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them no credit" (p. 34). If students do not take the placement test seriously, they will not prepare for them, which can lead to inaccurate scores.

The accuracy of the placement test as a measure of the students' ability to do college level work is being questioned. Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) found that 71% of the students who scored into remedial classes, but enrolled in college level courses instead, passed their college level courses. Also affecting the student's placement score can be the fact that most community colleges only allow students to take the test once or twice, unlike the SAT, which can be taken numerous times. Also, the problem with community colleges is that they "tend to use these tests as the main or only determinant of who gets to take credit-bearing courses" (Headden, 2011, p. 35). The randomness of college polices regarding testing and scoring makes it difficult for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to understand what is needed for access into credited courses so they can complete their degree, especially if these students have not had anyone guiding them through the process (Lareau, 2011).

Bailey (2009) discusses the difficulty in determining what the cut-scores should be in that "Within a relatively large range around the cut-off score, there is little difference between students who are assigned to developmental education and those who are encouraged to enroll in college level courses" (p. 231). He also states that the "College Board does advise that colleges should combine ACCUPLACER scores with other information to decide on appropriate placements" (Bailey, 2009, p. 231). This could lead to a more accurate placement of students in developmental courses.

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Structure of Developmental Education

      The terms developmental and remedial education are used interchangeably in the literature and both signify "courses designed to teach literacy – the essentials of reading, writing, and arithmetic" (Cohen & Brawer, 2008, p. 291-292). I will refer to the courses as developmental unless quoting a source that uses the term remedial, since developmental is how most community colleges are currently referring to these courses. If placement tests are accurate, the need for developmental courses in reading, writing, and mathematics to accommodate the underprepared student is paramount. In California, 70-80% of first time community college students needed to take developmental math, English as a Second Language (ESL), writing, or reading courses (Illowshy, 2008). In Minnesota, at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, 55% needed reading, 58% needed writing, and 70% needed developmental math. At Queensboro Community College in New York, 78% of the students needed reading, writing, or mathematics (Chronicle of Higher Education, 10/27/2006). In New Jersey, the need to take at least one developmental course ranged from 64% in rural Sussex County to 99.5% in urban Hudson County (NJ Commission on Higher Education, 2011). In the Achieving the Dream Initiative (2012), which tracked over 250,000 students entering 33 community colleges in 15 states for three years, 59% of the students in the colleges participating in this initiative enrolled in at least one developmental course (Bailey, 2009). This shows again that a large number of students are required to take developmental courses.

      To accommodate the range of unpreparedness, community colleges usually offer different levels of developmental courses in the three subjects. At Sussex County Community College there are two levels of reading, Critical Reading I and II, and two

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levels of writing, Critical Writing I and II. However, there are three levels of mathematics, Basic Math, and Algebra I and II. Students are placed in the different levels based on their placement test scores. Some schools, such as Raritan Valley Community College, Bergen Community College, and Passaic County Community College, now integrate the reading and writing into a single developmental course that means students take fewer courses to complete the developmental sequence.

The success of developmental courses is also now being questioned. According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), "Hundreds of studies reported in the published literature and in the ERIC files suggest that student placement procedures are valid and that students learn to read and write in remedial classes" (p. 296), if they complete them. Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) state, however, that less than half of the students taking developmental courses actually do that. Bailey (2009), using data from the Achieving the Dream initiative, agrees and feels that "developmental education as it is now practiced is not very effective in overcoming academic weakness, partly because the majority of students referred to developmental education do not finish the sequence to which they are referred" (p. 12). Some do not even enroll in the courses at all. Bailey (2009) discovered that "within three years of their initial assessment, about 44% of those referred to developmental reading complete their full sequence and only 31% in math" (p. 14). In order to improve the success rate of developmental education, Bailey (2009) states, "Educators will have to improve the experience in the classes and get students to enroll and stay in those classes" (p. 20).

Developmental education can be costly to the institution since class sizes need to be smaller to allow for more targeted, individual instruction. This weak academic student

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population also requires additional tutoring to supplement what occurs in the classroom (Lorenzetti, 2005). Bailey (2009) states, however, that even "more important, developmental education carries significant financial and psychological costs to the student" (p. 21). In most community colleges students pay the same tuition and fees for the developmental courses as they would for college credited courses. Since developmental courses are not part of the students' college program, students take longer to finish a degree and use more of their financial aid if they need to complete developmental courses along with their college courses.

Reforming developmental education is necessary in order to improve the success of the students so they can complete their college education. Bailey (2009) suggests three directions that reform should take. First, rethinking how colleges do assessment and focusing on what the individual student needs rather than on a one-test fits all process; second, widen the range of cut-scores on the placement test to allow students who score just above or below the cut-score to take college level courses but augment them with supplemental learning since some students who score just above the cut score may also have difficulty in their college level courses; and third, develop accelerated developmental courses that will minimize the time students need to prepare for college courses. Changes to the current system could increase the number of underprepared students who complete their developmental sequence and finish a degree.

The controversy regarding college unpreparedness seems to also revolve around the idea that everyone must go to college in order to have a better life. Statistics do show, however, that students who obtain a college education make more money than those who do not. Dell (2011) has shown that the median annual earnings of a college graduate,

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$53,976, are much higher than a high school graduate at $32,552. If underprepared students complete their education they could increase their earning power and their status in society.

<div align="center">**Cultural and Social Reproduction**</div>

Cultural and social reproduction theorists (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Clark, 1960) state that social status is related to college student outcomes. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may have difficulty completing their college degree. The Marxist reproduction perspective states, "…schools are arenas where capital interests (are) reproduced, maintained, and perpetuated" (Khalanyane, 2010, p. 742). This can contribute to how students behave and are treated in educational institutions. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds could be at a disadvantage when the institution favors students with higher socioeconomic status.

Correspondence Principle

Through their correspondence principle, economists Bowles and Gintis (2002) believe that schools socialize students to be successful in a hierarchical corporate structure based on their economic status. Students from working-class backgrounds are tracked into educational opportunities that prepare them for low-status occupations while middle class students are encouraged to pursue higher-level managerial occupations (Khalanyane, 2010).

MacLeod (2008) states, that according to Bowles and Gintis (2002), "schools socialize students to occupy roughly the same position in the class structure as that of their parents" (p. 13). Bowles and Gintis (2002) quote studies in which "intergenerational economic status transmission is considerable" (p. 3). The authors reference an

unpublished study by Hertz that shows "a son born to the top income decile has better than a 1 in 5 chance of attaining the top decile, while for the son of the poorest decile, the likelihood is 1 in 100" (Bowles & Gintis, 2002, p. 4).

Bowles and Gintis (2002) explain that their correspondence principle also contributes to intergenerational cultural exchange by focusing on how schools "influence which cultural models children are exposed to… immersing children in a structure of rewards and sanctions" (p. 13) that favor the dominant middle class culture. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can be relegated to semesters of developmental courses due to their lack of academic capital. The authors believe that the rewards and punishments students receive in school can have an effect on the cultural values they internalize. If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are rewarded for choosing the occupations of their social class and "punished" for attempting to take courses that would prepare them for higher-status occupations, such as medicine and law, schools play a major role in the reproduction of social status.

The "Cooling Out" Function

The disparity between student aspirations and institutional assistance can be traced back to Burton Clark (1960) and his "Cooling Out" Function. While all students are accepted in an open-door institution, such as a community college, Clark states that some students cannot succeed because they have limited academic ability. Rather than provide the means to help students succeed in occupations in which they aspire, especially those culturally disadvantaged, the students are "side tracked to 'easy' fields of study" (Clark, 1960, p. 571) or to a non-credit training division of the institution. This

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again can stop students from fulfilling educational aspirations that could elevate their social status.

Social-cultural Reproduction Model

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) propose in their social-cultural reproduction model that transference of social stratification is also based on culture, including cultural capital which "mediates the relationship between economic structure, schooling and students' lives" (Macri, 2011, p. 23). Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), is the general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next, with different cultural capital inherited by class (MacLeod, 2008). Swartz (1977) states that cultural capital is "analogous to economic goods that are produced, distributed, and consumed by individuals and groups" (p. 547) and therefore, the dominant middle class culture has specific value in society. He references Bourdieu's theory in that cultural dispositions are internalized and structure behavior in such a way to reproduce class relationships. Winkle-Wagner (2010) further describes the theory in that, "Bourdieu scrutinizes the way that economics and schooling intersect in perpetuating unequal social conditions" (p.4).

For some students, higher education can be a constant struggle but for others, such as members of the dominant middle class, it is what they are expected and prepared to do as part of their background (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Lareau (2011), in a ten year follow-up to her seminal study on childhood and social class, discovered that social class continued to affect the participants through high school and into college. "Social class made a critical difference in the resources parents could bring to bear on their children's behalf… was especially significant in parents interactions with education

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institutions" (p. 262). This affected the educational outcomes of the students in her study in that students from working-class and poor families were less successful in college.

Bourdieu (1977) states that schools perpetuate the social class structure by valuing the cultural capital of those with higher socioeconomic status, and rewarding them accordingly. Swartz (1977) agrees in that "the system of higher education functions to transmit privilege, allocate status, and instill respect for existing social order to… maintain rather than reduce social inequality …. (and can) reinforce cultural and status cleavages among classes" (p. 546).

One reason why the dominant culture continues to dominate can be due to the recognition of the lower classes that this culture is the legitimate one, which can inform their belief in, and attitude toward pursuing higher education. Jenkins (1992) states that, according to Bourdieu students with lower class backgrounds tend to eliminate themselves by defining education as "not for the likes of us" (p. 113). MacLeod (2008) describes Willis's (1977) study that showed how low socioeconomic students rejected school since their chances for significant upper mobility were so remote because of their social class.

Language patterns could also have an effect on the process of social reproduction and the ability of students from working-class backgrounds to be successful in school. Bernstein (1977) (in MacLeod, 2008) states that distinctive class-based forms of speech exist. Working class children use more "restricted" forms of speech while middle class children use "elaborated codes," which could give them an advantage in higher education, which could show how schools value and reward particular speech patterns. Swartz (1977) states "children's academic performance is more strongly related to

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parent's educational history than to parents' occupational status" (p. 547) so underprepared students who have parents who did not go to college might not have the guidance as to how they should communicate in college in order to be successful (Reid & Moore, 2008).

Bourdieu's (1990) theories, however, are unique. He believes that agency and structure work in tandem rather than as separate entities informing students' success. Winkle-Wagner (2010) defines agency as "individual violation, will, and choice" and structure as "institution, field, and social structure" (p. 16). Bourdieu's (1990) theoretical views leave room for the individual to interact with social structure" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 63) rather than the automatic acceptance of inequality in agency and structure postured by other functionalist social reproduction theorists such as Bowles and Gintis (2002). Horvat (2001) states that Bourdieu "offers a more accurate understanding of social life through the integration of individual agency and structure as opposed to viewing them as separate paradigms" and that "both forces dialectically shape one another" (p. 8). Winkle-Wagner (2010) describes Bourdieu's (1990) theories as an "attempt to highlight the interaction of agency and structure or the way that one may be able to use agency to influence social structure in some instances while being affected, even unconsciously, by the social structure in other instances" (p. 5).

The affect that agency and structure can have on one another is described by Giroux (1983) in that we must "understand more thoroughly the complex ways in which people mediate and respond to the interface between their own lived experiences and structures of domination and constraint" (p. 33). Horvat (2001) describes a concept of Bourdieu's, Reflexive Analysis, which focuses on the interaction between individual

action and social structure which can shape interaction. She describes how "the system itself reflexively structures individual pathways, which can shape interaction" based on "hidden and intrinsic rules of the system and defines and perpetuates social rules and status arrangements" (p. 11). It is crucial to understand all the factors in agency and structure by discovering the agency of the students including their disposition, expectations, and perceptions of higher education informed by their social status and the structure of the institution in which they interact to help these students succeed in college.

Cultural Capital and Habitus

The cultural capital that students bring to the educational institution informs their dispositions, perceptions, and the actions they take (habitus) as they interact within the educational institution. Social reproduction theorists have shown that cultural capital obtained through family and educational background can have a major effect on what the students believe and understand about higher education.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986) describes cultural capital as the general cultural background, knowledge, dispositions, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next. Differences in cultural capital can lead to class-based inequities of "culturally relevant skills, abilities, tastes, preferences, and norms which act as a form of currency (capital) in the social realm" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 5). Underprepared students may not have the skills, abilities, or mannerisms that the institution has determined are appropriate for college students' success due to their cultural and social background. They may not recognize that the college rewards students who have the cultural and social capital that it considers legitimate, which is that of the dominant culture (Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

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Horvat (2001) agrees that the dominant culture in education determines what skills, abilities, and perceptions successful students should possess.

Walpole (2003) has shown that socioeconomic status can mediate college students' outcomes through their cultural capital. This can have a significant impact on students' academic performance (Sullivan, 2001). Bourdieu (1986) also describes cultural capital as a way to "explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originally from the different social classes by relating academic success to the distribution of cultural capital between classes and class factions" as opposed to "seeing academic success or failure as an effect of natural aptitudes" (p. 243). Instead of blaming the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds for their lack of academic ability, we can begin to understand, through the concept of cultural capital, how students' cultural backgrounds can contribute to their knowledge and understanding of how the college expects them to perform.

Bourdieu's description of cultural capital also includes the students' language and academic skills that are based on their social class (Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005). In order to succeed in college, the language and skills that underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds bring to the institution may not be what the institution believes is appropriate for college prepared students, affecting how it interacts with these students. Lareau and Weininger (2003) state that the students could experience difficulty when their "knowledge, skills, and competence comes into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation" (p. 569), if they are not the same as the cultural capital that the college values. If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds do not possess the academic skills that are part of the cultural capital that the college values,

they could be relegated to semesters of developmental courses. They may not understand the importance of the mandated placement test if no one from their socioeconomic background also understands the test and can explain the significance of passing it.

In order to succeed in college, underprepared students need to know what knowledge and behavior the institution expects them to have when they enter. If students from high schools in low socioeconomic areas do not have the academic skills and dispositions to be successful college students, they may have difficulty maneuvering through the bureaucracy of admissions, testing, advising, and registration that students with higher socioeconomic status have internalized.

Habitus

Students' cultural capital informs their habitus, which is a collection of their "dispositions, norms, and tastes" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 8). Bourdieu (1977) states that habitus is a "system of lasting transposable dispositions which… function at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions" (p. 82-83).

The habitus of the students includes their dispositions to act and their perceptions of reality, which guide their interactions within the college, and are acquired and adapted through life-long experiences within the family and school (Nash, 1990; Robbins, 1993; Thomas, 2002). Bourdieu (1990) also describes the habitus as principles that determine the practices that adapt to outcomes, but may not be consciously driven. Students may not be aware that their cultural capital affects their perception of "fit", and their dispositions toward, and behavior in college. They may not be aware that they are behaving in a different manner then what is expected by the institution. Through socialization, students "internalize the rules that govern the field of interaction and their place in it" (Winkle-

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Wagner, 2010, p. 9). McDonough (1997) states that within the habitus, members of the same class share common perceptions on their chance for upward mobility, which can affect students' drive and initiative to complete their courses and graduate, especially if they are from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Thomas (2002) states that "central to Bourdieu's notion of habitus…is the need of classes and groups to reproduce themselves, and in society certain classes and groups are dominant and so control access to educational and career opportunities" (p. 430). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may apply to community colleges not only because they are affordable but because they perceive them as the right choice for them. They may lack academic capital and/or knowledge on how to enroll in four year institutions due to their family and high school background (Lareau, 2011). When the community college requires them to take semesters of developmental courses they can become discouraged and drop out of college (Bailey, 2009). If students feel that "they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early " (Thomas, 2002, p. 431).

Community College Environment

There is a definite stratification in the levels of higher education in the United States and in other countries. Deer (2003), in describing the expansion of higher education in France and England, states that this caused "reinforced forms of subdivisions in the higher education market…with stratification according to cultural capital" (p. 197). The explosion of community colleges in the late 1960's can attest to the stratification in the United States. Community colleges were established to educate those

who were not accepted into four year colleges, attracting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds because of open enrollment (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Community colleges instituted policies, practices, and procedures to meet the needs of these students, which can be found within the institutional habitus of the college.

Institutional Habitus

The institutional habitus of the college relates Bourdieu's theory of habitus to organizations (Thomas, 2002). Thomas (2002) states that institutional habitus is "more than the culture of the educational institution… it refers to relational issues and priorities, which are deeply embedded and sub-consciously inform practice" (p. 432). Reay, David, and Ball (2001) describe institutional habitus "as the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behavior as it is mediated through an organization" (paragraph 1.3). In an educational organization this can lead to social and cultural biases that favor the dominant group and can be seen through the relationship between staff and students, and also between students (Thomas, 2002). Robbins (1993) describes these biases as "conspiratorial collusion between middle class staff and middle class students who receive preferential treatment" (p. 153). Reay, David, and Ball (2001) state that "individuals are differentially positioned in relation to the institutional habitus of school or college based on the influence of the students' family and friends" (paragraph 1.7), which can affect the students interaction with the college. If the students' friends are having difficulty maneuvering through the policies, practices, and procedures of the college, these students could also have difficulty.

McDonough (1997) describes a similar concept, organizational habitus, occurring in high schools, when describing college choice. The concept of organizational habitus

links the high schools organizational culture to the socioeconomic status culture of the high school and is manifested through organizational climate. The author states that there are "specific patterns of college choices and behaviors that are manifested in schools with similar socioeconomic status environments" (McDonough, 1997, p. 108). The socioeconomic culture encompasses how valuable the college degree is to the students, which can shape their perception of college choice. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may see their only option is the community college and not a four year degree. The organizational culture includes the high schools' values and beliefs of the type of college that students should attend, related to the students' socioeconomic status. The combination of organizational culture and socioeconomic culture is the organizational climate of the school manifested through the interaction between the students and the organization's constituencies. Counselors and others who interact with students may assume because students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they may not be successful in a four year college and encourage the students to enroll in a community college.

How the college relates to the identity of the underprepared student (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010) can affect the students' feeling of belonging. In classifying students as underprepared, community colleges place a label on the student thereby viewing these students as not capable of doing college level work. If this is transmitted to students they may again feel that education is not for them (Willis, 1977).

Nash (1990) states that the "internalized principles of the habitus are the principles which structure the culture" (p. 434). These principles can be "deeply embedded and subconsciously inform practice" (Thomas, 2002, p. 431). The college may

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not realize how its culture, manifested through its policies, procedures, and practices, inform the students' educational outcomes. If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds do not pass the placement tests, they are relegated to semesters of developmental courses, which many do not pass. They may decide to withdraw from college because they do not see how they could ever complete a degree. If students feel that "they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is undervalued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early" (Thomas, 2002, p. 431).

Discovering the habitus of the college faculty and administration, which is part of the institutional habitus of the institution, is also necessary in order to understand the interaction between the college environment and the underprepared student. In describing Bourdieu's concept of Symbolic Violence, which can affect a student's success, Robbins (1993) states that a "cultural mismatch between staff and some students (can) result in the failure of the students" (p. 158). Students and college constituencies need to know what each expects of the other in order for the underprepared student to be successful in college.

It is important to recognize that habitus can be altered through experience. Reay, Crozier, and Clayton (2010) state that according to Bourdieu, an individual's habitus "constantly performs an adaptation to the outside world" (p. 108). Through interaction with the institution students can begin to understand what behaviors and attitudes are needed in order to be successful college students. This can occur as long as the institution recognizes that it must create an institutional habitus that does not reinforce the habitus of

the dominant groups in society and education" (Thomas, 2002, p. 433) but meets that needs of all students.

Interaction Between the Student and the College Field

An overall understanding of the interrelationships within the community college can be viewed through Bourdieu's concept of Field. McDonough, Ventresca, and Outcalt (1999) describe Field as a "dynamic interaction between individuals and institutions" (p. 373). Naidoo (2004) considers the field as a structured hierarchy in which "agents and institutions occupy dominant and subordinate positions" (p. 458). The policies, procedures, and practices that colleges institute create the structures that students must pass through in order to complete their college education.

According to DiMaggio (1979), Bourdieu views higher education as a relatively autonomous field operating as a social system that includes "intimate relationships among culture, power, and stratification" (p. 1461). Winkle-Wagner (2010) describes Bourdieu's concept of field as "class based" in which members compete for valued practices. If the institution favors students from the dominant middle class culture, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds could have difficulty interacting with college constituencies. They may feel that they have limited power to improve their status within the hierarchy of the institution. Horvat (2001) states that the "concept of field is the embodiment of the rules of the game, as well as the site wherein the struggle to own or control these rules takes place" (p. 29) all occurring unconsciously, based on habitus and cultural capital.

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The culture of the institution, and the power relationships among students, faculty, and administration, can affect students' outcomes. Both Kloot (2009) and Taylor and Boser (2006) emphasize the importance of power within the institution. Kloot (2009) describes Bourdieu's concept of Field as a "network of power relations that shape higher education (p. 471). According to Taylor and Boser (2006), this can "hamper and constrain the ways in which universities contribute to development and social change" (p. 111) of the students. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may not recognize or understand how power relationships within the institution contribute to polices, practices, and procedures, and their interaction with college constituencies and other students and may give up when faced with the need to confront inequalities that they may encounter.

Practice

Habitus, cultural capital, and field all come together in practice. In practice, cultural capital and habitus direct the interactions of the participants in the field, including adherence to the rules of the field (Horvat, 2001). Winkle-Wagner (2010) describes practice as a social action "that one exhibits in a particular lifestyle" (p. 16), which can be based on the cultural capital that the individual possesses. The cultural capital then informs the individual's habitus and how he or she interacts in the field.

Bourdieu (1990) emphasized that practice "can only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the habitus that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented" (p. 56). The cultural capital of the students, which informs their habitus, was constituted through their social and cultural conditions they experienced from their family and educational backgrounds (Bourdieu & Passeron,

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1977). When students from low socioeconomic backgrounds' social conditions are related to social conditions of the community college, including the college's policies, practices, procedures, and college constituencies' perceptions and expectations, we can understand how these conditions inform student interaction through Bourdieu's (1990) concept of practice.

By discovering the interrelationship of cultural capital, habitus and field, we can better understand the interaction of underprepared students and the college. If we can gain insight into how cultural capital and habitus of underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds inform their interaction with the college environment, we may be able to suggest ways to structure the environment so that it better meets the needs of this vulnerable population.

Conclusion

It is important to recognize that habitus can be altered through experience. Reay, Crozier, and Clayton (2010) state that according to Bourdieu the habitus "constantly performs an adaptation to the outside world" (p. 108). If both underprepared students and the community college in which they are enrolled learn what each needs to do in order to alter the interaction between the student and the college so that the underprepared students move forward, more of these students will complete their degrees. This can lead to a better life for these students.

Setting of the Study

The study took place at a two year urban educational institution located in New Jersey. Students from high schools in low SES districts attend this community college. Total enrollment at the college for fall 2013 was 9,129 with 36.9% of the students

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enrolled full-time and 63.1% enrolled part-time. Fifty-one percent of the fall 2013 students listed their race/ethnicity as Hispanic, 15.3% listed themselves as Black, and 19.3% were listed as White. Sixty percent of the total population was listed as female with 40% listed as male.

Seventy-one percent of all incoming freshman in fall 2013 were enrolled in one or more basic skills (developmental education) courses, with 14% enrolled in ESL courses. For fiscal year 2012-13, 71% of the students received federal grants and 21% state/local government grants, which are need-based. The high number of students from urban high schools and the large number of students receiving financial aid, make this urban community college an ideal setting for this study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand how the interaction between underprepared students and the community college positions the students' developmental educational outcomes, viewed through the lens of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1990). Developmental educational outcomes were defined as passing or not passing the developmental courses in which the students who participated in the study were enrolled. Many students enrolled in developmental courses do not pass them (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Students enrolled in integrated developmental reading and writing courses at an urban community college that recently graduated from a high school in a low SES district in the County, and matched the criteria for low SES based on income, education, and occupation (Walpole, 2003), were the focus of the study. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are in greater jeopardy of not completing college (Walpole, 2003).

The low SES districts were selected based on the NJ Department of Education District Factor Groups (DFG) for School Districts. The DFG's are calculated based on six variables closely related to SES and include adult education level (percentage with no high school diploma and percentage with some college education), occupational status, unemployment rate, percent of individuals living in poverty, and median family income. The three school districts selected were classified as A or AB school districts with district A being the lowest level of socioeconomic status (State of New Jersey, Department of Education, 2004). The criteria used for the selection of students from low socioeconomic

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backgrounds was based on the students' or parent/guardian's income level, determined by student receipt of financial aid, and the educational level and occupational status of parents/guardians. Students were selected for interviews if they received a Federal Pell Grant (Federal Student Aid, 2013), which indicated that they had financial need, and had parents/guardians with no education greater than a high school diploma. To determine parents/guardians occupational level, a socioeconomic indicator (SEI) was used (Nakao & Treas, 1994) focusing on students with parents/guardians who had no occupation or occupations at the low end of the indicator. Students were selected for interviews based on a survey given in class (Appendix B), which asked if they received a Pell Grant, the education level of their parents/guardians, and occupations of their parents/guardians. If a student received Pell, had parents/guardians with no education greater than a high school diploma and had parents/guardians with occupations rated at the lower end of the SEI scale, they were scheduled for an interview upon their consent.

Utilizing Bourdieu's (1977) unique theory of how structure and agency work in tandem rather than as separate entities, I examined how the students' socioeconomic backgrounds, based on their family income, and parent/guardian education and occupation levels informed their cultural capital and guided their dispositions, perceptions, expectations, and attitudes (habitus) toward their interaction with the college environment. The college environment was also examined to determine how the institutional habitus of the college, including its policies, procedures, practices, and constituencies' disposition, perception, and expectations of the underprepared student, informed the student's interaction with the college.

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Research Questions

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the socioeconomic status of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with the college?

2. How do the perceptions and expectations that students who are underprepared have of the institution inform their interaction with college constituents?

3. What college policies, procedures, and practices position the educational outcomes of the students who are underprepared?

4. How do community college faculty and administrators' perceptions and expectations of student who are underprepared inform their interaction with these students?

5. How does the interaction between the community college and the student who is underprepared position the student's educational outcomes?

6. How does the expectations that students who are underprepared have about their educational outcomes compare with the institutional expectations of these students?

Rationale for and the Assumptions of Qualitative Research

Rossman and Rallis (2012) state learning is the essence of qualitative research. In this format knowledge is constructed through naturalistic inquiry based on the reality of the participants involved in the research. It focuses on the way the participants make sense of their world (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2007) states qualitative research encompasses multiple realities and must include the different perspectives of all participants. In so doing, we "gain a holistic overview of the context under study" (Miles

& Huberman, 1994, p. 6). Therefore, both the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and the college constituencies who interact with these students were included in the study.

According to the tenets of qualitative research, reality is socially constructed in that "meaning is not discovered but constructed" (Merriam, 2009, p. 2). This is obtained through interaction with the participants to obtain their subjective meaning of their experiences (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the perspective of both the underprepared students and the college constituencies were obtained to understand the expectations each had of the other, which can inform and shape the students' developmental educational outcomes.

To truly understand the participants, qualitative research must also be conducted in the field where participants live and work (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Through direct experience with the participants, this empirical process enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon through all senses, to see, hear, and feel the nature of the reality of the participants (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This was important because I needed to obtain the total experience of the participants in order to understand what is occurring in their interaction with the college, from their points of view.

Qualitative research is an inductive, emergent process based on rich descriptions of the interaction between researcher and participants (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009), which take place in the field. Rossman and Rallis (2012) state that the focus must be on the context and the researcher must "seek depth rather than breadth and describe and interpret rather than measure and predict" (p. 9). This was necessary because I needed to

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view the participants' experiences holistically, not as discrete variables, to gain an understanding of their experiences within the college environment.

Because in qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, data must be captured through "deep attentiveness, empathetic understanding, and suspending (bracketing) preconceptions about the topics under discussion" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6). It is crucial to admit the values and biases that the researcher may have toward the process and the participants (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). As a college administrator who has worked extensively with underprepared students, I was aware that I needed to be careful to not let my past experience interfere with how I conducted the interviews and interpreted the data. Because students enrolled in developmental courses are less likely to complete a degree (Bailey, 2009), especially students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Walpole, 2003), I focused on discovering the students' perspectives of their experiences. This was crucial in order to understand the lack of completion in developmental courses.

The study, therefore, involved the students' description of their interaction with the college environment. This led to an understanding of how the students viewed the interaction and how this view, along with the college constituencies' view of the students, positioned the students' developmental educational outcomes. The policies, practices, and procedures that the college establishes, in which students interact, can also inform the students' success or failure within their developmental courses and were obtained for analysis.

Strategy of Inquiry

The qualitative single-case study was used because it is the best way to "understand complex social phenomena"… and "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, p.4). Merriam (2009) states, "The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomena" (p. 50). There are numerous variables that affect the increase in students having to take, and then not be able to pass, developmental courses (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). This phenomenon has become a societal problem, since too many students are left without a college education because they could not pass their developmental courses. Viewing this phenomenon through a case study approach allowed me to view all the variables that are involved in this phenomenon, including students' experiences and the college environment, and how these two interact.

A major variable included in this phenomenon is the student's socioeconomic background. Walpole (2003) has shown that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can have difficulty completing their education. This case study strategy of inquiry took into consideration all of the factors involved in the educational outcomes of the underprepared students, focusing on students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were enrolled in developmental courses, to understand how the interaction between these students and the college positions the students' educational outcomes. By using the case study approach, I focused on understanding all the variables in this real-life phenomenon of students not completing their developmental courses. I included how this relates to the context of the community college, viewed through the lens of the students'

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cultural capital and habitus and the institutional habitus of the college, based on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1990).

Merriam (2009) defines a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). This case study involved understanding the phenomenon through the analysis of a bounded system in that it focused on the interaction of the underprepared students with the college environment, enrolled in a developmental course, in the specific setting of an urban community college.

This single-case study of the underprepared students represents a critical test of a significant theory (Yin, 2009, p. 48), Bourdieu's (1977) theory of cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice. These theoretical constructs involve how students' socioeconomic status, viewed within cultural and social reproduction, inform the students' cultural capital, which guides, through their habitus, how they interact with the college environment. This urban community college's innovative integrated reading and writing developmental courses focus on assisting underprepared students to succeed. However, underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are enrolled in these developmental courses, can have different experiences than students from high socioeconomic backgrounds, due to their cultural capital (Walpole, 2003). Understanding how students from low socioeconomic backgrounds interact with the institution's environment provided insight into how the existing social structures and patterns within the college informed the students' developmental educational outcomes (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Yin (2009) states that the critical case must meet the criteria for a "well-formulated theory…with a specified clear set of propositions as well as the circumstances

within which the propositions are believed to be true and can confirm, challenge or extend the theory" (p. 47). Students' descriptions of their experiences, viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's (1990) theories of cultural capital and habitus, indicated that socioeconomic status was a factor in the students' interaction with the institution.

Context of the Study

The setting of the study took place at an urban community college in New Jersey. According to the NJ Commission on Higher Education (2011), 71.6% of the first time/full time students entering the college in fall 2013 were enrolled in one or more developmental courses. Forty- two percent were enrolled in a combined reading/writing developmental course. The college was selected because in the spring 2013 semester it began to offer a unique model of developmental education that integrates reading and writing into a single course. Colleges are beginning to use this new model to increase the completion rate of students in developmental courses (Bailey, 2009). Most colleges do not combine reading and writing but offer separate courses in each subject. Students, therefore, take additional courses in order to complete their developmental requirements. By combining the courses, students can progress more quickly through the developmental sequence. This can be beneficial to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who may feel overwhelmed by the number of courses they would need to complete before starting college level courses and decide that higher education may not be for them (Jenkins, 1992).

This urban community college enrolls a number of high school students from three school districts classified as low socioeconomic status by the State of New Jersey Department of Education District Factor Groups for School Districts (DFG). Students

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graduating from high schools in these districts are more likely to be identified as students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, which is the population that I am studying. These students are in jeopardy of not completing their college courses (Walpole, 2003).

Participants and Sampling

The participants were selected through a purposeful sampling strategy. I used this design to identify students and college constituencies who were information-rich cases and could contribute to the issues being studied (Merriam, 2009). I initially observed a sample of integrated reading and writing developmental courses to obtain a "first hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009), developmental education. All of the faculty members at the urban community college teaching the integrated reading and writing developmental education courses were sent an email requesting permission to observe their courses (Appendix A). Two first level reading/writing courses (DE 010) and two second level reading/writing courses (DE 020) were selected for observation based on faculty responses agreeing to the observation. Each course met twice a week for a total of five hours a week. The four courses were observed for two weeks in April 2014 for a total of 37.5 hours. One first-level courses only met once during the first week. After observing the interaction of students and faculty in the courses selected for observation, students enrolled in the courses were asked, through the use of a brief survey given in class by the instructor (Appendix B), if they would be interested in being interviewed. The survey attempted to determine the low socioeconomic status of the students by asking if they received a need based Federal Pell Grant, had parents/guardians who had no education greater than a high school diploma, and had parents/guardians who were not employed or were employed in an occupation

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that was rated low on the Socioeconomic Indicator rating scale (Nakao & Treas, 1994). Forty-nine students who were in attendance when the survey was distributed answered the survey. Thirty students stated that they agreed to be interviewed. Seventeen students who matched the low SES criteria, who stated on the survey that they agreed to be interviewed, were contacted by phone, email, and text to schedule an interview at their convenience. Interviews were scheduled for all 17 students but only six students actually attended an interview. A semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix C) was used to interview the six students. The students interviewed were asked about their prior and current educational experiences, perceptions of college, and expectations on obtaining a college degree. Students interviewed were considered "information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002) since they were able to offer in-depth knowledge on how underprepared community college students from low socioeconomic backgrounds interact with the college.

To obtain information-rich cases from college constituencies, faculty who taught the developmental integrated reading and writing courses that I observed were asked in person to be interviewed. Three faulty teaching the four courses that were observed consented to be interviewed. One faculty member observed taught two courses. The fourth faculty member interviewed taught the developmental courses but did not consent to be observed. All faculty members were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol to obtain their perceptions and expectation of the underprepared students (Appendix D). Administrators, who interacted directly with underprepared students, were contacted in person asking if they would consent to be interviewed. Two administrators consented to be interviewed about their perceptions and expectations of underprepared

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students and how the college's policies, procedures and practices can inform student interaction using the same semi-structured interview protocol as was used to interview faculty (Appendix D).

Upper-level college administrators, a Dean and an Associate Dean, were contacted by email to schedule an interview. A semi-structured interview protocol was used in these interviews to obtain upper-level administrators' understanding of the interaction between the college and underprepared students (Appendix E). As college leaders, they shape the policies, procedures and practices of the college in which the students interact (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). All participants who were interviewed signed a consent form prior to the interview (Appendix F).

Data Collection

The data for this qualitative case study was collected following Yin's (2009) case study protocol. Yin (2009) states multiple sources of evidence must be obtained to increase the validity of the case study, including "convergent lines of inquiry" (p. 42). Both underprepared students and college constituencies were asked similar questions to ascertain their perceptions and expectations of how the interaction between the students and the college positions the students' developmental educational outcomes. Rossman and Rallis (2012) state that "interviewing, observing, and studying material culture are primary ways to discover and learn in the field" (p. 168). Therefore, the following data was collected:

1. Observations of student-faculty and student-student interaction in integrated developmental reading and writing courses.

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2. Individual interviews of underprepared students, faculty, and college personnel who interact with the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and upper-level college administrators.

3. Material culture, including artifacts and written material that are relevant to the underprepared students, and the culture and operation of the college (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Observations

Merriam (2009) describes observation as "first-hand encounters with the phenomenon of interest…in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs" (p 117). Underprepared students' experiences in developmental courses can inform their developmental educational outcomes (Bailey, 2009). By observing firsthand what was occurring in the developmental education classroom, I was able to record and interpret interaction as it was happening (Merriam, 2009).

Observation helps to understand the context of the study, which was developmental education in urban community colleges, and the "multiple and complex" actions within the context (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 193). The authors state that "observation takes you inside the setting and helps discover complexity in social setting by being there" (p. 192).

Faculty teaching integrated developmental reading and writing courses, DE 010 and DE 020, were contacted by email for permission to observe their classes, for two weeks during the spring 2014 semester (Appendix A). Since the courses meet twice a week, for two and a half hours per class, each course could have been observed 5 hours a week for a total of 10 hours each. With permission, four sections of developmental

education courses, two sections of first level Academic English I and two sections of second level Academic English II were observed in order to obtain information on how students and faculty were interacting. One section of a first level course was observed only seven and a half hours since it met once during one of the observation weeks. The interaction was viewed through the lens of cultural capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1977).

An understanding of the underprepared students' cultural capital and habitus was obtained by viewing the students' academic skills, knowledge, behavior, and attitude exhibited in class in relation to what the college considers behavior needed to succeed in college. Students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds usually exhibit behaviors such as study skills and time management (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005), which they obtained from their prior education and through parents/guardians knowledge of what is necessary for success in college (Lareau, 2011). How faculty interacted with the students also gave insight into their expectations of the students' success in the class (faculty habitus). The physical setting of the classroom and non-verbal communication between the participants were also observed since they can inform interaction (Merriam, 2009).

Initially introduced to the class by the faculty member teaching the class, my role in the class was that of observer as participant, since my purpose and activities were known to the students (Merriam, 2009). I explained that I was doing research on students and their experience in developmental courses.

Extensive field notes were taken during the observation. They included both a highly descriptive component in the form of a running record of what was occurring in the physical environment, along with the activities and interactions among the participants, and a reflective observer commentary. This commentary included

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questions, analytic insights, and my reaction to what was occurring during the class (Merriam, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Handwritten field notes were taken in a field notebook and transcribed into computerized data as soon as possible. The transcription clarified and expanded on what was observed and how the information obtained related to the purpose of the study (Glesne, 2006).

Interviews

Seidman (2006) describes the importance of piloting the study. Therefore, all protocols were pre-tested using faculty, students, and administration from Sussex County Community College (SCCC), where I was employed.

Students observed in the developmental courses in the urban community college, who were identified as qualified for the study and agreed to be interviewed, were scheduled for an interview in one of the private rooms in the college's tutoring center. In order for students to feel comfortable and agree to be interviewed, I attempted to develop a rapport with them in class by sharing my educational background. I have a GED and needed to take developmental courses my first semester in college. My demeanor in class was warm and friendly and non-intrusive. All questions asked by students and faculty were answered honestly throughout the two weeks of observation.

A semi-structured interview protocol (Seidman, 2006) was used during the interviews to elicit students' backgrounds, expectations, and perspectives about their educational experience (Appendix C). Bourdieu (1977) has shown that students' cultural capital and habitus can inform students' education outcomes. Interview data gave insight into the students' cultural capital, which informed their dispositions and attitude towards

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their college experiences (habitus). Six students enrolled in the integrated reading and writing developmental courses were interviewed, using a semi-structured protocol (Appendix C), for 30-40 minutes, to obtain data on their experiences until saturation was obtained (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.67).

Three faculty members who taught the developmental courses in which I observed, and one faculty who taught a developmental courses but was not observed, were interviewed to determine their perception and expectations of underprepared students, which encompasses their faculty habitus (Appendix D). Two administrators who interacted with underprepared students and who agreed to be interviewed were interviewed using the same protocol as the faculty (Appendix D). They were also asked their perception and expectations of underprepared students, which is part of the institutional habitus of the college.

Individual interviews with two upper-college administrators, a Dean and an Associate Dean, were also conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix E). They were asked to discuss their expectations and perceptions of the underprepared students. Their reality of student and college interaction led to a greater understanding of how institutional habitus leadership can inform student interaction (Thomas, 2002).

Material Culture

Artifacts from the developmental courses, including syllabi, assignments, and criteria for passing the courses were obtained. Students interviewed gave written permission for me to obtain their final grades in their developmental courses to determine the outcomes of the study.

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<center>**Data Analysis**</center>

Yin (2009) states that a case study approach must follow an analytic strategy that will "define the priorities for what to analyze and why" (p. 126). I utilized Bourdieu's (1977) theoretical propositions of cultural capital and habitus as the focus of this case study since cultural capital and habitus can inform both the students' and institutions' interactions. Bourdieu's (1977) propositions of field and practice were also included to understand how interaction within an educational setting can inform student outcomes.

Coding

Data obtained through observations, field notes, and interviews, which were transcribed from audio recordings and material culture, were initially analyzed through a coding process. In this process an attribute, a word or phrase, was assigned to a portion of the data that summed up a concept or "captured the essence of the language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2009, p.3), seeking repetitive patterns.

In a cyclical nature, data obtained from coding was then recoded and grouped into categories that included similar characteristics. First cycle codes (Saldana, 2009) were assigned to the data, including In Vivo Coding to capture the voice of the students and the college constituencies obtained through observation and interviews, because, as a qualitative study, the subjective meaning of the participants is what is sought. Hypothesis Coding was also used because it represents "theory/prediction about what will be found in the data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 123), which is the basis of the critical test of a significant theory used in this study.

For second cycle coding, Pattern Coding, which included "explanative or inferential codes that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (Miles

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& Huberman, 1994, p. 69) was used. This led to categories and then themes which

showed how the cultural capital and habitus of the students, and the institutional habitus

of the college, contributed to the interaction between the students and the college,

positioning the students' developmental educational outcomes.

Analytic Memos

Analytic memos were also written reflecting on the coding process and my choice

of codes, patterns, and categories. This analysis led toward understanding how the

theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1990) help us understand how the students cultural capital

and habitus, and the institutional habitus of the institution, inform interaction and position

the students' developmental educational outcomes.

Logic Model

Data obtained through the general analytical strategy of relying on theoretical

propositions, based on Bourdieu's (1990) theories, were analyzed using the logic model

technique for analyzing case studies because this technique "stipulates a complex chain

of events over an extended period of time" (Yin, 2009, p. 149). This model is appropriate

because students experienced a series of sequential events through their semester, which

were dependent on each other. Students initially apply to the college and then take a

placement test to determine what courses they may take. Students then obtain financial

aid, meet with an advisor to select their courses, register for courses, attend class, seek

academic and/or personal support if needed, and pass, withdraw, or do not pass their

developmental course. If students have difficulty with one of the steps in this "cause and

effect sequence" (Yin, 2009, p. 150), it can affect their developmental educational

outcomes. For example, if students have difficulty with placement testing they may not

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feel that they belong in the developmental courses, which could affect how they interact within the course (Bailey, 2009).

The data obtained showed, however, that the only process in the chain of events in which students experienced difficulty was in taking the placement test. They had no difficulty with other interactions such as advising, registration, or obtaining financial aid.

Data Quality and Rigor

Trustworthiness was addressed in data collection through a multi-level sampling design (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) in which perceptions and expectations of students' experiences were obtained from both students and college constituencies including faculty and administrators. Through information obtained from the initial survey of students enrolled in the developmental courses that were observed (Appendix B) and follow-up questions during the student interviews (Appendix C), the SES status of the students interviewed was verified. To assure that they represented low SES status, students were asked demographic questions in the interview such as did they receive a Pell Grant, and the education level and occupations of their parents/guardians. Fully understanding students' experiences in college was important to the success of this case study so students were interviewed toward the end of their semester to ensure they had numerous interactions with faculty, administration and other students.

Triangulation of the data was also used to address trustworthiness through the use of multiple sources of evidence, which Yin (2009) states is a major strength in case study research. Similar interview questions were asked of students and college constituencies regarding students' experiences within the college environment. Analysis of answers to research questions on students' perceptions and expectations of their college experience,

and on faculty and upper-level management perceptions and expectations of the students was used to understand how expectations of college constituencies matched student expectations. Findings were continually connected to Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital, habitus, field and practice to determine how the students' backgrounds, perceptions, and expectations informed their interaction with the Institutional Habitus of the college.

In addressing validity and reliability, Yin (2009) states "the potential problem of construct validity can be addressed because multiple sources of evidence provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon" (p. 116). In this study, student, faculty, and administration interviews were used, along with artifacts on college policies, procedures, and practices, to understand how student interaction with the college environment (Institutional Habitus) can position students' educational outcomes.

A data base of all case study data that was used for the case study report was created, without identifying information, and included specific information so that others could replicate the study and view additional evidence used in the case study conclusions. This increases the reliability of the case study (Yin, 2009). A chain of evidence was also established to increase construct validity and reliability (Yin, 2009). Research questions were linked to student and college constituency protocols and documents, which were linked to evidentiary sources in the case study data base, and then linked to the case study report itself. Internal validity was obtained through the use of the logic model. Analytical generalizations represented internal validity in that the results can be generalized to a broader theory (Yin, 2009).

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Researcher bias might have been a threat, since I have worked extensively with underprepared students for many years and have seen the developmental education system fail many of these students. As a counselor I have been trained to listen objectively, and to focus on the clients' point of view in order to understand what is occurring in the situation, which is how I conducted all of the interviews. However, to ensure that I was not shaping the data collection process by my views, I practiced reflexive bracketing (Ahern, 1999) constantly reflecting on how my experience with underprepared students might affect what information I collect and use to analyze the data. By being aware of these effects I was able to "bracket" them, becoming aware that they could affect my decisions, so they did not affect my research.

I established rapport with the students in the observed classes by initially sharing my educational background, which includes a GED and having to take developmental courses my first semester in college. My demeanor while observing the courses was warm and friendly and non-intrusive. I explained that I wanted to understand how the interactions they had with their teacher and each other helped them to pass the course. I answered all questions that the students and faculty had throughout the two weeks that I observed regarding the research so they would want to become a part of the project.

<div align="center">**Ethical Considerations**</div>

Merriam (2009) states that the ethics of the researcher are a major focus in the validity and reliability of the study and that "we have to trust that the study was carried out with integrity" (p. 229). We cannot depend on the findings if the researcher does not utilize ethical practices, such as disclosing any bias that might be occurring. I disclosed

my familiarity with underprepared students when discussing data quality and rigor and how I was going to manage it through reflexive bracketing (Ahern, 1999).

It was impossible to identify all of the factors that influence the underprepared students' educational outcomes in this study. The study could not answer if students' psychological make-up, including feelings of self-worth, influenced their success, since the study did not obtain that information from the students.

Creswell (2007) states the researcher must protect the "anonymity of individuals, roles, and incidents in the project" (p. 91). In this study all responses were kept confidential. Aliases were used to describe the participants interviewed. Identifying information was kept in a separate file on a password-protected computer and in a locked filing cabinet. All data was kept in a separate password-protected computer folder on a password-protected computer and in a different locked filing cabinet. Only I have access to this information.

Role of Human Subject Training and IRB

By obtaining formal approval from the Institutional Review Boards of both the urban community college and Rowan University, ethical treatment of human subjects was included in this study. All those interviewed signed informed consent forms (Appendix F), which included the reason for the research, participant rights to withdraw at any time, confidentially of the participants, and the risks and benefits of participating in the research study (Seidman, 2006).

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Timeline

I collected data at the urban community college as follows:

1. November 2013 – received IRB approval from the urban community college and Rowan University.

2. April 2014 – observed developmental courses; interviewed upper-level administration, faculty, and students, obtained artifacts on curriculum and assignments in developmental courses.

3. May 2014 – obtained information on student educational outcomes.

Conclusion

Studies have shown that a student's cultural and social background (cultural capital) can inform the student's educational outcomes, especially students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Maldonado, Rhoads, & Buenavista, 2005; Sullivan, 2001: Walpole, 2003). This background can influence how the underprepared student perceives the educational experience (habitus) and interacts with the various constituencies in the college (Nash, 1990; Robbins, 1993; Thomas, 2002).

How the college perceives the underprepared students can guide the policies, procedures, and practices that it institutes (Institutional Habitus) to assist the students, especially the support services it makes available, and the developmental courses that a student is required to pass through in order to enter college credited courses (Nash, 1990; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010; Thomas, 2002). To understand what informed the developmental educational outcomes of the students who were underprepared, determined by passing or not passing their developmental courses, I identified the

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student's educational background and perception of the college, the college's policies, procedures, and practices, and the perception that college constituencies, such as faculty and administrators, have of the underprepared student.

Observations of developmental courses and semi-structured interviews with underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and upper-level college management, faculty, and administrators who interact with these students, answered the research questions. Data collected indentified the students' perceptions, expectations, and experiences with the institution and the institutions constituencies' perceptions, expectations, and experiences with underprepared students. Comparing and contrasting the perceptions, expectations, and experiences of the two groups, the students and the college constituencies, lead to an understanding of how the interaction between them informed the students' educational outcomes, viewed through the lens of Bourdieu's (1990) theories of cultural capital, habitus, field, and practice.

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Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presents an overview of the findings determined from this qualitative case study analysis of the interaction between students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared and enrolled in developmental courses, and the community college in which they were enrolled.

The case study used a critical test of a significant theory to understand how the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1990) shaped the interaction of student agency and institutional structure and positioned the educational outcomes of the underprepared students. A code map constructed from emergent themes as a result of the data analysis is also provided. Lastly, this chapter will act as a bridge to the following manuscripts and include the rationale for findings presented in each article.

Overview of Findings

Interview transcripts, field notes of classroom observations, artifacts, and student outcome data served as the primary data set for this qualitative case study. Faculty, administrators, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who were underprepared, that were involved with developmental education at the community college, were interviewed using a semi-structured, open-ended questions protocol (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to solicit information on their experiences with developmental education at the college. Observations of students and faculty in developmental courses were used to understand the context of the study and the "multiple and complex actions within the context" (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 193). Artifacts were collected on the college and the developmental courses in order to provide data and corroboration (Yin, 2009).

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As viewed through the lens of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, this study showed that based on social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were underprepared, brought to the institution informed their perception of and disposition toward education (habitus) and interaction within the college. It is consistent with the work of Horvat (2001) and Winkle-Wagner (2010), which show that these students' backgrounds can affect how they manage their interactions. While students struggled to obtain the skills and behaviors needed for college success they were able to persevere by using community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), which includes the students' aspirations and encouragement from family and other social networks (Coleman, 1988). The academic institution in this study also modified its habitus through the use of validation (Rendon, 1994) to better meet the needs of these students.

Within this college's field of education (Bourdieu, 1990), the administrators and faculty made continual changes to the institutional habitus of the community college in response to their interaction with these students. They adjusted the requirements of the developmental reading and writing courses from two separate courses to one course, validated the students' culture through curriculum changes that reflect the students own cultural backgrounds, and offered positive, supportive feedback (Rendon, 1994) to encourage students to persevere as they attempted to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the academic culture. These interactions in turn fostered changes in students' transposable habitus, including their perceptions, expectations, and behavior, which depict Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1990). In practice cultural capital and habitus interact within a field (Horvat, 2001) and can inform student agency and

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institutional structure. The students began to obtain the behaviors and mindsets of successful college students by doing homework, coming to class, participating in discussions, and exhibiting other behaviors associated with successful college students. Therefore, Bourdieu's (1977) theory that interaction between students and the institution shapes both the students' agency and the social structure of the institution was seen in this study. Both the students and the faculty and administration within the institution adjusted their perceptions, expectations, and behavior to better position the students' educational outcomes. This chapter provides an abridged discussion of these findings as well as introduces the two manuscripts that follow in chapters five and six.

The Influence of Low Socioeconomic Status

Community college students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are underprepared, can begin their college career at a major disadvantage. Students in this study had low academic cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that could be a sign of social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Through social reproduction, the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds obtained culture, values, and knowledge from their family and the education system in which they participated, and brought this background to their higher education experience (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Students interviewed graduated from high schools in districts classified as having low socioeconomic status that did not emphasize academic rigor. They had parents or guardians employed in low level occupations who had no college experience in the United States. While students' parents or guardians encouraged them to pursue education, they could not usually help the students successfully maneuver through the bureaucracy of the higher education

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system, which at times made it difficult for the students to understand what they needed to do to succeed in college.

Immigrant background. Some of the students interviewed had parents or guardians with college degrees from their home countries, such as the Dominican Republic, but were not able to translate that educational experience to the educational structure of the United States to help their son or daughter become a successful college student. Many lacked English language skills. Parents of the students interviewed were also underemployed, working many hours in low-level occupations in the United States, such as an assembly worker or store manager, even though they had college degrees, even doctorates, from their home countries. Education was encouraged by family members but parents or guardians could not help the students academically.

While students interviewed felt that college was necessary in order to advance in this country, they were having difficulty spending time studying and doing what was required in order to pass the courses. They had weak English skills even though most of them came to the United States with their parents as young children and were enrolled in education beginning with elementary school. They also worked many hours, usually in a family business, to help parents.

Transitions. The students had difficulty transitioning from high school to college. They had weak academic skills due to easy high school courses and had experienced no accountability in high school for poor performance. They graduated from high school even though they had weak reading, writing, and mathematics skills. Students also lacked college management skills which made it difficult for them to juggle work, school, and family. Developmental faculty interviewed stated that students' views of higher

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education were based on the students' experiences in high school leading to misguided notions that the academic skills they were learning in the developmental courses were not needed in the outside world for a successful career, which informed the students' motivation levels. Faculty observed in class had to constantly try and convince students to do the homework, go to the lab, study for the tests, and write and re-write papers so they learned the skills required to pass the developmental course and move onto college level courses and graduate.

Unconscious Misperceptions

The cultural capital of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds informed their habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), which contributed to the students' agency, including their perception of, and disposition toward, education and what they expected to encounter when they enrolled in college. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were underprepared and enrolled in developmental reading and writing courses, had unconscious misperceptions (Bourdieu, 1990) as to what they needed to do in order to attain success in college and a career, even questioning if college was for them. Students missed assignments and had poor attendance, but still expected to pass the course. They did not recognize that there were different requirements for success in college than there were in high school. Class observations showed that students wanted the instructor to just tell them what they needed to know and not challenge them. Students were also passive and did not ask for help or tell the professor they were having difficulty. In interviews, students stated that they thought the instructor would just continually review their progress and remind them to do their work, which happens in high school. Students even questioned why they were going to college feeling that they did not belong because it was

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so difficult. This relates to Bourdieu's premise that students from lower class backgrounds may define education as "not for the likes of us" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 113).

Unrealistic goals. Some students interviewed also had unrealistic goals and thought that they could easily become a lawyer, engineer, or nurse even though they have very weak academic skills and low motivation to learn the skills needed to be successful college students. Not all students observed and interviewed, however, exhibited these behaviors. There were students in the classes who were motivated and interested in obtaining the skills needed to succeed in college, but many of these students were struggling since English was not their first language. The majority of the students observed and interviewed had weak reading and writing skills making it difficult for them to obtain the skills needed in one semester to advance into a higher level academic course, which relegated them to semesters of developmental courses. Students needing numerous semesters of developmental education do not usually complete a degree (Bailey, 2009).

Student agency. Student agency informed students' interaction with instructors. Students' strong individual volition and will led them to make choices (Winkle-Wagner, 2010) that could hinder their academic success. They pushed instructors to make the course easier by decreasing the academic rigor of the assignments and other course requirements. Administrators and faculty interviewed described the students' misperceptions on how they should behave in an academic setting. Students were confrontational and used inappropriate language. Instructors needed to constantly remind students that college was different from high school and that the high school behavior and mindset that they were exhibiting would not lead to successful completion of college.

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Collision of Cultures

Difficulties that students, faculty, and administrators had when interacting with each other can be viewed through Bourdieu's (1977) concept of field, in which hierarchy and power struggles contribute to interaction. Relationships between faculty and administrators and students created a structural hierarchy with "dominant and subordinate positions" (Naidoo, 2004, p. 373). Faculty and administration expected students to be respectful of their position in the hierarchy of the educational institution, which did not occur in certain instances and power struggles ensued.

Power struggles. The behavior and language that students needed to use in order to survive in an urban environment collided with what faculty and administration expected them to exhibit as college students (Carter, 2003). Confrontational behaviors and inappropriate language that students may use in order to be accepted by peers were not appropriate to the academic culture of the educational institution. Faculty requiring middle class culture stated that students were not respectful of them, each other, or of the authority of the classroom, and that they constantly needed to model appropriate behavior, such as keeping calm and not raising their voice, and not allowing students to be disrespectful. Some students, however, live in a world where drug deals and violence are daily occurrences. In order to be successful in college, students had to learn how to navigate both cultures.

Family first. Collisions also occurred when students chose to spend time working in the family business rather than following the rules of the course that included going to class and studying. Students had difficulty adapting to the rules and regulations of the

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academic culture since their own personal culture emphasized the importance of assisting family before education.

Modifying the collision. Students used capital, such as Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005), to persevere when faced with the difficulty of obtaining the behavior and skills that the college determines is needed to succeed in the academic culture. They focused on their goals and aspirations and used family and community encouragement to help them complete their developmental courses. The college also modified the collision by making changes to its institutional habits in a form of validation of the students (Rendon, 1994). This process involved including the students' culture in the curriculum, pedagogy that offered students opportunities to succeed, and positive and supportive feedback.

Challenges to Faculty Pedagogy

Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice showed how the integration of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds' cultural capital, and habitus, including their misperceptions and cultural collisions, took place within the field of education in this community college, and informed the students' interaction with the college's academic rules and regulations. This can be viewed as an example of the challenges that faculty experienced when students' habitus collided with the social structure of the institution. College constituencies struggled between challenging the students to meet the high expectations that the college espouses for student success and how much support the students needed in order to obtain a college degree or certificate. Faculty interviewed believed that students were capable of passing the developmental course but recognized that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds came to college with limited skills

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and knowledge of the academic experience, and that they needed to create pedagogy and curriculum that will assist them. College rules and regulations, however, especially those regarding placement testing, added additional challenges to how faculty could teach the developmental courses.

Placement testing. The college placed students in developmental courses based on their scores on the ACCUPLACER placement test, which most entering students are required to take. According to faculty and administrators, students were required to review sample tests prior to testing but few did, and no one checked to see if they had actually reviewed the material before testing. Students were also hindered from easily retesting if they felt their scores were not accurate. College retesting policies required students to do some type of preparatory work prior to retesting to increase their scores. Few students did any type of review, choosing to just take the developmental course in which they were placed. Students interviewed claimed that they had no knowledge of retesting procedures, and would probably not have pursued the process even if they had the knowledge. They decided to just take the developmental course, which showed a lack of understanding that students have on how developmental education can affect their educational outcomes (Bailey, 2009), and also a lack of explanation on the part of the college. Students interviewed stated that they did not really understand that the developmental courses carried no college credits and did not count toward graduation when they first enrolled (Bailey, 2009).

Misplaced students. Lack of student retesting led to misplaced students. Two of the students interviewed, who were enrolled in the lower level course, had better writing skills than other students in the class and may have been able to take a higher level course

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but did not pursue retesting. Faculty teaching developmental courses were frustrated dealing with misplaced students, especially those who had very poor English skills and should have been placed in an ESL course. Faculty described the dilemma they experienced in determining how much academic support to offer students without compromising the integrity of the course. They said that if the course was too easy students would not obtain the skills or knowledge needed to succeed in college credited courses but if they put too much pressure on the students, they would stop coming to class.

Faculty conflict. Another dilemma that faculty interviewed dealt with was how to enforce appropriate classroom behavior without alienating the students. These additional challenges that faculty encountered stemmed from the collision of cultures in which students exhibited inappropriate language and confrontational behavior. If faculty allowed talking and confrontational behavior the students would not learn that these behaviors were not the behaviors that can help students succeed in college. Faculty interviewed, however, recognized that not all students would succeed no matter what they did. They stated that students needed to be willing and able to adapt to the academic culture in order to pass the courses. Faculty did, however, continually express how much they wanted students to succeed.

Freedom to Change

In order to meet the needs of the developmental students in the community college depicted in this study, academic leaders in this college offered faculty and administration freedom to institute changes they deemed necessary for student success by shaping the way developmental education courses and instruction were constructed.

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Based on Bourdieu's theory (1990) that shaping the intuitional habitus of the college in response to the needs of the students will shape student behavior and mindset, developmental courses were restructured combining separate reading and writing courses into one course. This restructuring was based on best practices which suggest that changes such as these will help students move quicker through the developmental course sequence so they could begin college credited course in a timely manner (Bailey, 2009). This change, however, led to very long classes in which faculty were continually challenged to keep the students engaged.

Different methodologies. Faculty interviewed used different methodologies to teach the developmental courses based on what they felt would be the best way to reach the students in their respective classes. They used YouTube videos, music from the students' culture, and assignments that validated students' backgrounds. This is an example of Bourdieu's (1977) premise that students and the college can shape one another through interaction in order to meet the needs of the students, which can position the students' educational outcomes.

Rules to strategies. The use of innovative teaching methods kept students engaged in the classroom and met the needs of the specific student population in their classes. Faculty were allowed to alter how course requirements were presented with one instructor substituting the required mid-term exam with a series of smaller exams so students met short term goals throughout the semester and experienced success. This was an example of Bourdieu's (1990) concept of rules to strategies in that faculty were able to apply different strategies to modify the strict rules of the highly structured developmental course, if they felt these changes could better assist students.

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Validation. Faculty and administration also validated the culture of the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds by modifying the academic curriculum to include material on the students own culture, and through positive, supportive feedback to show that they valued the students enrolled in the developmental courses (Rendon, 1994).

Reflexivity of the enterprise. To ensure that the changes instituted were meeting the needs of the students, the college administration constantly assessed student outcomes to determine if students were passing the developmental courses and moving on to credit courses. This example of reflexive analysis (Bourdieu, 1990) shows that the system can structure pathways (Horvat, 2001) that inform students' success, since changes were constantly made to programs based on the assessments.

In this study, freedom to institute change gave the college constituencies the ability to shape the structures of the institution, including developmental course framework and instructional methods, in response to the behaviors and misperceptions that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were underprepared, could bring to the institution. This then shaped the agency of the students so they began to obtain behavior and skills needed to succeed in college. This interaction showed how students and the college can shape each other through modification of the field in which the interaction takes place. Changes to the interaction influenced practice (Bourdieu, 1977), and positioned the students' educational outcomes, which can be shown by the success of students enrolled in developmental courses at this college.

All students interviewed passed their respective developmental courses. Passing rates in the developmental courses at the community college in this study were higher than the average passing rates at community colleges around the country (Bailey, 2009).

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Passing rates for students enrolled in a fall semester, however were higher than for students enrolled in a spring semester. The college is currently studying why this is occurring.

These findings are shown in the code map (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002) that follows displaying for the reader the emergent concepts, themes, data application, and interpretation of the data as a whole.

Table 1

Code Map for Research Data

Research Questions	
1. How does the socioeconomic status of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with the college?	4. How do community college faculty and administrators' perceptions and expectations of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with these students?
2. How do the perceptions and expectations that students who are underprepared have of the institution inform their interaction with college constituents?	5. How does the interaction between the community college and the student who is underprepared position the student's educational outcomes?
3. What college policies, procedures, and practices position the educational outcomes of the students who are underprepared?	6. How does the expectations that students who are underprepared have about their educational outcomes compare with the institutional expectations of these students?

Third Iteration: Interpretation
Community colleges in urban environments are faced with the difficult task of developing and implementing policies, practices, and procedures that shape the behavior and mind-sets of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds so they obtain the academic skills necessary to complete a college degree. Students' misperceptions and use of non-academic behavior, however, informed a collision of cultures that challenged faculty. By using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of shaping students' agency through shaping their own structure, the institution informed students' educational outcomes by making changes to pedagogy and curriculum that validated the students' culture and offered students positive and supportive feedback, which moved students toward degree completion without alienating them from the college experience.

Second Iteration: Themes/Data Application	
1. Influence of Low Socioeconomic Status	4. Challenges to Faculty Pedagogy
2. Unconscious Misperceptions	5. Freedom to Change
3. Collision of Cultures	

First Iteration: Initial Codes/Surface Content Analysis	
1A. Low Performing High Schools	4A. Faculty Expectations
1B. Weak Academic Skills	4B. College Testing Policies
1C. Parent/guardian Guidance	4C. Developmental Education
1D. Difficult Transitions	4D. Student Expectations
2A. Student Agency	5A. Institutional Leadership
2B. Unrealistic Expectations	5B. Course Restructuring
3A. Academic Culture	5C. Innovative Teaching Methods
3B. Personal/Ethnic Culture	
3C. Validation	
3D. Community Cultural Wealth	

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Chapter 5

Shaping the Interaction of Student Agency and Institutional Structure through Freedom to Change: A Critical Case Study of an Urban Community College

Abstract

This article draws on a qualitative critical case study that used the theories of Pierre Bourdieu to describe how the agency of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enrolled in developmental, non-college credited courses in an urban community college in the United States, and the social structure of the community college in which they were enrolled, could both be shaped through the interaction of habitus and field. Faculty and administration in the community college were given freedom to modify social structures of the institution by making changes to pedagogy and curriculum in response to the unconscious misperceptions and inappropriate behavior of the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with whom they interacted. These changes then reshaped the students' transposable habitus so that they obtained the skills and behaviors of successful college students. This article shows the need for institutions to develop flexible models of interaction in order to address the dilemma of underprepared students not completing college.

Key Words

Pierre Bourdieu; low socioeconomic status; developmental education; urban community college; student agency; case study.

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can encounter difficulty in higher education if they enter the institution with different skills than those of middle class students (Bourdieu, 1990; Deer, 2003; Lareau, 2011; McDonough, 1997; Naidoo, 2004; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). Middle class students bring to the education process "academic capital, an institutionalized form of cultural capital based on properties such as prior educational achievement, and a disposition to be academic" (Naidoo, 2004, p. 458), all needed for success in college. If higher education institutions' policies, practices, and procedures focus only on the needs of the middle class students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may feel that higher education is not "for the likes of us" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 113). These students can have different needs than middle class students since they may have weak academic skills, and lack understanding of the higher educational process (Walpole, 2003). Many of these students have graduated from high schools that do not emphasize academic rigor or foster the behavior necessary for success in college. High school policies, practices, and procedures that emphasize just passing, rather than academic rigor, manifest in the organizational habitus of the high school. If the organizational habitus of high schools in low socioeconomic districts does not value academic rigor, the high school might not prepare students for success in college (McDonough, 1997). The college experience could then be overwhelming for these students and many could drop out before completing a degree (Bailey, 2009).

Since students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may come to college without the academic skills of middle class students, they need to learn these skills while enrolled in college, which can be costly both in time and money. In the United States, these students are often subjected to semesters of non-college credited developmental

courses that they pay for but that do not count toward graduation. Enrollment in these courses is based on placement testing required in most community colleges. Students who test below a placement score that the college has determined to be indicative of college readiness could be required to take two semesters of developmental reading and writing courses and possibly three to four semesters of developmental mathematics before being allowed to take college credited courses. Students who may need semesters of developmental courses often do not complete them, thus inhibiting their ability to obtain a college degree to become upwardly socially mobile (Bailey, 2009). Not obtaining a degree hampers students learning power since the median annual earnings of four year college graduates is $53,976, which is much higher than the $32,552 median annual earnings of high school graduates (Dell, 2011).

The difficulty that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds could have in college has been widely attributed to the students' family and educational backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1990; Horvat, 2001; Lareau, 2011; McDonough, 1997; Walpole, 2003; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). While Bourdieu's theories have been used to "unveil the true social role and internal functioning of education systems" (Deer, 2003, p. 195), and to "expose higher education as a powerful contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequality" (Naidoo, 2004, p. 459), there is also a "transformative potential in Bourdieu's theoretical construct (that can be used to) improve the educational outcome of marginalized students" (Mills, 2008, p. 79). Bourdieu's (1977) reproduction theories show that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may have different college experiences than middle class students, and can struggle to obtain the skills needed to

succeed in college (Lareau, 2011), but how the institution interacts with the students can transform them into successful college students (Mills, 2008).

Based on findings from a qualitative critical case study of an urban community college in the United States, the transformative aspect of Bourdieu's theories show how the ability of college constituencies to have freedom to make continual changes to its institutional habitus (developmental education course structure), in response to students' habitus who were enrolled in developmental education courses, transformed the habitus of these students so they successfully completed their developmental courses. This is an example of Bourdieu's theory in which agency and structure shape each other to inform students' educational outcomes (Bourdieu, 1990). The institution's ability to continually respond to the needs of these students was a major factor in helping them complete their developmental courses. This paper will describe how the developmental education crisis in the United States is contributing to the lack of social mobility for a large segment of the population from low socioeconomic backgrounds. It will also show how, through the transformative lens of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, an urban community college in the United States addressed this situation by shaping the skills and behaviors of the students enrolled in developmental courses so they became successful college students.

Transformation and the Theories of Pierre Bourdieu

Social reproduction theories state that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds obtain culture, values, and knowledge from their family, and academic skills and understanding of education from their experience in school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Both determine the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that the students bring to their college experiences, which can inform the students' interaction

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in higher education, since cultural capital informs the students' habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu (1977) describes habitus as a "system of lasting dispositions which function at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions" (p. 82-83), and occur at a subconscious level (Horvat, 2001). Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can lack power in the field of education based on cultural capital that they bring to the educational experience. They can have weak academic skills obtained from inadequate high schools, and may have limited knowledge of the college experience due to their parents or guardians' lack of college education in the United States. These students may struggle in college since they enter at a greater disadvantage than middle class students who graduated from academically oriented high schools and have parents or guardians with college experience (Horvat, 2001; Lareau, 2011; Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

Habitus

The students' habitus is manifested in their agency and includes their perception of and disposition toward education, and what they expect to encounter when they enroll in college (Horvat, 2001). If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds expect college to be the same as high school, for example to not be challenging academically, they will have difficulty completing their college courses.

Bourdieu (1990) defines habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" (p. 53). It is durable because it is "embodied history, internalized in second nature and so forgotten as history" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 56) operating on an unconscious level. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds' durable habitus "could lead the students to have lower aspirations as well as predispose the students to use strategies that

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might not be successful…and resist adopting new habitus elements" (Walpole, 2007, p. 17). Habitus, however, is also transposable in that it can "adopt new values or habitus elements as a result of novel experiences, historical changes in the material environment, or exposure to another habitus" (Walpole, 2007, p. 17). If the college, through its institutional habitus, offers students experiences that will assist them in passing the developmental courses, students will be able to make changes to their habitus based on its transposable nature.

Habitus is the "filter or lens through which an individual interprets the rules of the field and generates potential courses of action and eliminates others" (Horvat, 2001, p. 38). It is class based and can be transformed (Lehmann, 2012) through interaction between agency and institutional structures since habitus "shapes but does not determine our life choices" (Mills, 2008, p. 82). Agency can be described as students' "individual volition, will, and choice, and structure as institution, field, and social structure" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 16). Bourdieu believes that "habitus is a mechanism whereby individual action is shaped by and in turn shapes social structures in a continuous dialectical reformation" (Horvat, 2001, p. 22), however, "in any given field, agents are found to act primarily according to their own arbitrary needs and ends" (Deer, 2003, p. 196). This can can make changing the habitus of students with strong volition difficult. "Family background and the cultural capital held by the family as well as the habitus influences how a student will receive educational instruction" (Horvat, 2001, p. 25). In interaction "both habitus transformation and resistance require individual agency to either embrace new experiences or resist them" (Lehmann, 2012, p. 542). If these students believe that their current habitus is not appropriate, they can experience strong feelings of habitus

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dislocation and become disinterested in working hard to achieve the skills needed to become successful college students, even doubting that education is for them (Jenkins, 1992; Lehmann, 2012). The interaction of habitus and field, however, can mediate students' feelings of inadequacy.

Field

Field is described as a "dynamic interaction between individuals and institutions" (McDonough, Ventresca, & Outcalt, 1999, p. 373) that takes place within a structured hierarchy in which "agents and institutions occupy dominant and subordinate positions" (Naidoo, 2004, p. 458). If the policies, procedures, and practices that colleges institute within the field of education create non-flexible structures, such as placement tests that require students to take numerous developmental, non-college credited courses that they must pass through in order to complete their college education, students will have limited power within the institution to have their needs met. The rules that the college institutes regarding testing, such as a hidden retesting policy, could be considered a moment of exclusion (Lareau & Horvat, 1999) if students are unable to activate the cultural capital that they may possess to help them pass the test because they did not know they could re-test, which limits their power in the institution.

Bourdieu views higher education as a relatively autonomous field operating as a social system that includes "intimate relationships among culture, power, and stratification" (DiMaggio, 1979, p. 1461). This field is "class based" in which members compete for valued practices (Winkle-Wagner, 2010), such as assistance in transferring to an elite four year college if enrolled in a community college. Even if students from low socioeconomic backgrounds understand the importance of a degree for social

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mobility, they may "struggle with understanding the procedures, processes and expectations that actually define it" (Lehmann, 2012, p. 530).

The "concept of field is also the embodiment of the rules of the game, as well as the site wherein the struggle to own or control these rules takes place" (Horvat, 2001, p. 29). If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds do not have knowledge of, or understand, the "rules of the game" they will have difficulty succeeding in college (Lehmann, 2012; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). However, interactions between students and faculty and administrators within the institution can assist students in understanding these "rules" because institutional habitus is "more than the culture of the educational institution, it refers to relational issues and priorities which are deeply embedded and sub-consciously inform practice" (Thomas, 2002, p. 432).

Institutional habitus is a major factor within Bourdieu's concept of field when viewed as a "network of power relations that shape higher education" (Kloot, 2009, p. 471). This network can "hamper and constrain the ways in which universities contribute to development and social change" (Taylor & Boser, 2006, p. 111). Bourdieu's concept of Symbolic Power is "power that is often masked, unrecognized, or posed as a cultural norm in a manner that maintains social stratification" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 5). This concept can show "how students' choices can be structured by societal organizational forces" (Horvat, 2001, p. 11), such as an advisor who recommends to a student from a low socioeconomic background that the student pursue a lower level occupation, such as a home health aide, when the student wants to pursue nursing. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may not recognize or understand how hidden power relationships within the institution contribute to polices, practices, and procedures, and

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their interaction with college constituencies and other students, and may give up when faced with the need to confront inequalities they encounter. If college constituencies recognize these students' specific needs, and are able to establish policies, practices, and procedures that address these needs, they can positively inform students' educational outcomes.

Practice

Habitus, cultural capital, and field all come together in practice (Bourdieu, 1990), which is used to "understand individuals' actions in the social world" (Horvat, 2001, p. 33). In practice, cultural capital and habitus direct the interactions of the participants within the field, including adherence to the rules of the field (Horvat, 2001). Practice can be described as a social action "that one exhibits in a particular lifestyle" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 16) based on the cultural capital one possesses. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds' cultural capital informs the students' habitus and how they interact in the field. How the institution reacts to students in the field, through its' institutional habitus, can inform student success within the institution. Bourdieu (1990) emphasized that practice "can only be accounted for by relating the social conditions in which the habitus that generated them was constituted, to the social conditions in which it is implemented" (p. 56). By understanding how the family and educational backgrounds of the students relates to the institutional habitus of the community college, changes to both the agency of the students and the structure of the institution can be implemented to position the students' educational outcomes. These changes could be considered moments of inclusion, in that they offer an opportunity for the students to succeed, (Lareau & Horvat, 1999), especially if the institution's response to the students' needs

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includes pedagogy and curriculum that focus on the students' cultural capital and how the students' background can be used as examples to help them learn the skills needed to pass the developmental courses (Rendon, 1994).

Reflexive Analysis

In order to institute change, so underprepared students pass their developmental courses, it is necessary to "understand more thoroughly the complex ways in which people mediate and respond to the interface between their own lived experiences and structures of domination and constraint" (Giroux, 1983, p. 33). Bourdieu's concept of reflexive analysis deals with the interaction between individual action and social structure. "The system itself reflexively structures individual pathways which can shape this interaction" based on "hidden and intrinsic rules of the system and defines and perpetuates social rules and status arrangements" (Horvat, 2001, p. 11) that can bridge the gap between agency and structure. If the community college makes changes to its institutional habitus in response to its analysis of the needs of the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, these students will be better able to complete their developmental courses and move into college credited courses to complete a degree.

Bourdieu's (1990) theories are unique in that agency and structure work in tandem rather than as separate entities affecting students' success. He focuses on the interaction between agency and structure to understand human behavior. Bourdieu (1990) "offers a more accurate understanding of social life through the integration of individual agency and structure as opposed to viewing them as separate paradigms" and adds that "both forces dialectically shape one another" (Horvat 2001, p. 8). This is different from the dichotomist view of social life posited by Sartre who emphasized the role of

individual choice to understand social life, or Levi-Strauss who focused on structural forces as the driving factor in shaping individual behavior (Horvat 2001; Levi-Strauss 1974; Sartre 1973). Bourdieu's theories are an "attempt to highlight the interaction of agency and structure or the way that one may be able to use agency to influence social structure in some instances while being affected, even unconsciously, by the social structure in other instances" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 5). By focusing on students' habitus, including their disposition, expectations, and perceptions of higher education, the faculty and administration within this urban institution were allowed to make continual changes to the social structure of the institution based on what they determined was needed to help students from low socioeconomic backgrounds succeed in college. Therefore, both students' agency and the social structures of the institution played an equal part in the changes that the interaction fostered to position the students' educational outcomes.

The Research

Context

Developmental education currently is undergoing a crisis in the United States since students required to enroll in these courses, based on placement testing, are not completing them (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). If students do not complete developmental courses they cannot take college credited courses to complete their degrees. In the United States, community colleges have open enrollment, which requires the college to accept all students who apply no matter how prepared they are for college. There are numerous studies that show high schools are graduating students not prepared for college (Berry, 2003; Conley, 2010; Illowshy, 2008; Long, Iatarola, & Conger, 2009;

Williamson, 2008). The magnitude of this dilemma can be shown by national data from the Achieving the Dream Initiative, which tracked 250,000 students in 33 community colleges in 15 states for three years. The data showed that 59% of the students were required to enroll in a least one developmental course, with a much higher percentage of students in urban community colleges required to take these non-college credited courses (Bailey, 2009).

Within the urban community college in this study, 71.6% of full-time/first-time students enrolled in the fall 2013 semester were required to take one or more developmental courses with 42% of these students required to take a developmental reading and writing course. In order to understand students enrolled in developmental courses in this urban community college, who were the participants in this study, research was conducted in the field (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) including observation of 49 students enrolled in two levels of developmental reading and writing courses in the community college for two weeks, for a total of 37.5 hours in April 2014. After observation, six students enrolled in the courses observed, who met the criteria for being from low socioeconomic status backgrounds and agreed to be interviewed, were interviewed. Since the focus of the study was on interaction between students and the college, four faculty members teaching the developmental courses and four administrators who interacted with underprepared developmental students, were also interviewed.

The Strategy

This qualitative critical case study used Pierre Bourdieu's theories as a critical test of a significant theory to understand how the *interaction* between the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were enrolled in an urban

community college in the United States, and the institution in which they were enrolled, positioned students' educational outcomes. The study answered the following research questions:

1. How does the interaction between the community college and the student who is underprepared position the student's educational outcomes?

2. How does the socioeconomic status of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with the college?

3. What college policies, procedures, and practices position the educational outcomes of the students who are underprepared?

4. How does the expectations that students who are underprepared have about their educational outcomes compare with institutional expectations of these students?

Faculty teaching the integrated developmental reading and writing courses in the urban community college were solicited through e-mail requesting permission to observe their courses to obtain "a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009), developmental education. Two developmental faculty teaching first-level reading and writing and one developmental faculty member teaching two sections of the second-level reading/writing developmental course agreed to allow observation of their courses. One first level developmental faculty agreed to be interviewed but would not allow observation. Two of the second level faculty's courses were observed based on a suggestion from the faculty member who stated that there were very different students enrolled in each of the courses. Therefore 49 students enrolled in four developmental reading and writing courses, two first-level courses and two second-level courses, were observed for a two week period, a total of 37.5 hours, to understand the context of the

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study (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). At the end of the two week period students enrolled in the courses were surveyed to determine if they met the criteria for low socioeconomic status and were interested in being interviewed. Six students enrolled in the courses observed, who matched the criteria for low socioeconomic status based on financial need and parents or guardians with no college education in the United States who worked in low level occupations (Walpole, 2003) agreed to be interviewed. These students were interviewed at the college using a semi-structured interview protocol to obtain their perceptions and expectations of their college experience (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Four faculty members, three who taught one of the developmental courses observed and one faculty member who did not allow observation, and four administrators who interacted with students enrolled in developmental courses, were all interviewed also using a semi-structured interview protocol (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), to obtain their perceptions and expectations of the students enrolled in developmental courses in this urban community college. Artifacts were obtained on the college's developmental courses, including completion rates and developmental course syllabi and assignments.

All data collected was analyzed through a coding process (Saldana, 2006). In a cyclical manner, data was coded and then recoded initially using in vivo coding as first cycle coding (Saldana, 2006) in order to capture the voice of the students and the college constituencies, since the subjective meaning of the participants was sought. Because this study is a critical test of a significant theory (Yin, 2009) hypothesis coding was also used (Saldana, 2006) to develop a list of codes based on Bourdieuian theory. For second cycle coding, pattern coding (Saldana, 2009) was used to identify categories and themes that could be used to understand how student habitus can be transformed through student

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interaction within an institution that allows its constituencies freedom to change the social structure of curriculum and pedagogy to address the specific needs of its student population.

The Influence of Low Socioeconomic Status

If students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enter the community college underprepared, they can begin their college career at a major disadvantage (Walpole, 2003). Students in this study were enrolled in developmental courses since they had academic cultural capital not valued by the institution (Bourdieu, 1986), which informed their habitus and guided their disposition toward, and perception of higher education. They had poor academic skills having attended high school in a low SES district and little knowledge of higher education since their parents or guardians did not have any college education in the United States and could not guide them through the education process. Students' interaction within the institution was informed by this cultural capital since cultural capital informs the habitus and the "types of social practice and behavior that agents inherit during the various stages of their socialization and inform other further interaction with other social environments" (Deer, 2003, p. 195). Students interviewed struggled when taking the placement test and also in their developmental courses, since they had no one to guide them on how to manage these academic initiatives. An administrator described the students' dilemma.

> Students just don't know what to expect from the college experience, not
> understanding how to interact with their peers, their professors, what is required
> of them. (They) lack knowledge about protocols of being in college. It's not
> every-day knowledge so they don't have people to ask especially first generation
> college students (Administrator #2).

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The faculty needed to teach the students college protocol along with academic skills in order to transform the students' behavior and mind sets so they became successful college students.

Faculty and administrators, however, faced numerous challenges when trying to transform these students. While five of the six students interviewed came to the United States with their parents as young children and attended school in the United States, they still struggled with English. Fifty-one percent of the students enrolled in the community college depicted in this study were Hispanic. Interaction with faculty was hampered by the students' high school backgrounds, if students were allowed to graduate high school with inadequate English skills. A student described her educational experience in the United States beginning with elementary school.

> I was enrolled in ESL classes but then from 7th to 12th grade I was in regular classes, but still it was a little harder cause I didn't really know English. In high school I failed English 1 (9th grade) and 2 (10th grade) and had to go to summer school and then I passed English 3 (11th grade) and English 4 (12th grade) (Student #1).

During the interview, this student had difficulty communicating in English and understanding what was needed to be successful in college even though she graduated from high school in the United States.

Since students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in this study had parents or guardians with immigrant backgrounds who had not attended college in the United States, and were employed in low level occupations, students had no one to help them deal with college bureaucracy since their parents or guardians had little knowledge of the

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higher education process in the United States. One student described the difficulty that immigrant parents can experience when relocating.

> My mom, she went to college (in the Dominican Republic). She went to be a
> lawyer but she didn't finish (be)cause she was coming to this country. But when
> she came here she didn't speak English, so six years ago she started to go to
> (Community College) but she dropped out. She started doing the basic English
> level. (Now) she's a home health aide. He (dad also from the Dominican
> Republic) works in a factory (Student #1).

Another student stated that her parents had degrees from the Dominican Republic but that did not help them obtain professional employment in the United States. "My dad is a doctor but he is working in a store" (Student #5). Observation in the classes showed that faculty and administrators had to constantly remind students of college protocol when interacting with them so students made better decisions dealing with other constituents in the college.

While education was encouraged by family members, the students' parents or guardians could not help them successfully maneuver through the bureaucracy of the higher education system, which made it difficult for the students to understand what they needed to do to succeed in college (Lareau, 2011). Since family members had no educational background in the United States "the task of compensating what they perceived to be gaps in their children's educational provision" (Mills, 2008, p. 84) would be difficult since they may not always understand why their son or daughter was having difficulty completing courses in college. Administrators and faculty recognized the difficulties that parents could have in assisting their children.

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> I doubt it very much there is a parent or home that doesn't think that there is all kinds of benefits for having college education but knowing is not sufficient to give your kids the support and direction that they need in what they are struggling (Administrator #1).

Family lack of knowledge could inhibit the transformation of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds into successful college students. Since colleges also operate based on assumed knowledge, faculty and administrators need to recognize that students may not have the knowledge necessary to succeed in college and then determine how they can help the students understand the level of academic rigor and appropriate classroom behavior needed so students complete their developmental courses.

Other challenges faculty and administrators faced when attempting to transform the students were the students' lack of basic needs.

> If I told you how many times I've taken two dollars out of my pocket to give a student car fare, you realize that the student is not going to do well in math if they're hungry, so I keep a file cabinet full of granola bars and water (Administrator #3).

Students enrolled in community colleges in urban areas have to also deal with negative stereotypes. "In the world at large people's attitudes toward our student population are just so negative. They're dehumanized and limited to stereotypes by their race or class" (Faculty #4). Observations showed that when interacting with students, faculty continually focused on the students' needs and constantly reminded them that they could be successful.

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Unconscious Misperceptions

Helping students to recognize the depth of academic rigor needed to pass college courses could be difficult for faculty and administrators when interacting with the students, since the students had unconscious misperceptions (Bourdieu, 1990) within their habitus as to what they needed to do in order to attain success in college and a career. Students interviewed, however, did feel that college was necessary in order to advance in this country and had important reasons for attending. One student, whose mother is a home health aide, wanted a better career.

> I want a future. I want to be somebody. I don't want to be like my mother in this country. I want to start doing something. Even if I change my mind at least I'm doing something for now (Student #1).

A single mother emphasized the importance of helping her child.

> I'm doing it for my daughter, mainly, and I'm also doing it for me. But overall I'm doing all this for my daughter so she could live a really good life (be)cause I didn't. I want to give her everything I didn't have (Student #2).

While students in this study were passionate about education, some had weak academic skills but very high career aspirations, which could lead to unrealistic expectations of careers they could enter. "I want to be a lawyer. I want to do advocacy for a child, that's what I want to do, juvenile abuse, and maybe later be a judge or something" (Student #4). The students' weak skills and lack of knowledge as to the magnitude of academic skill needed to accomplish that goal could make attaining these goals extremely difficult. An administrator interviewed confirmed these misperceptions.

Students need to understand that yes they have a high school diploma or

equivalency but they have great aspirations and there is nothing wrong with that

but they really do not have any understanding of their ability and skill level.

(They) want to study computer science or nursing and in two years graduate and

start working (and) reality is far from that (Administrator #1).

Complicating faculty interaction with students was the students'

misunderstanding of the amount of academic rigor needed for even a developmental

course and why this was important. Faculty felt that students' high school experience

informed the students' habitus and expectations as to what was important in college.

Students have this misguided notion that writing and reading do not weigh in that

significant to their career aspirations, which is absolutely false. Classes that they

have in high school, in particularly English classes, may have not been so

successful in terms of having these students understand how fundamental reading

and writing skills are which often gives the impression to the students that these

skills are really not worth working toward to master (Faculty #1).

Mismatched cultural capital was evident in that students had difficulty understanding

why they needed to learn these skills.

For many students, especially in an English class, we're asking them to write in

an academic way and speak academically. It's a direct challenge to everything

else that they've done. Students say so why should I do this when what I've been

doing has gotten me through my life so far (Administrator #2).

Students interviewed stated that they did not understand the purpose of study labs

so they did not attend. They did not recognize that not attending could affect their grade

in the developmental course even though this information was included in the course

syllabus. Faculty described how students missed assignments and had poor attendance

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but still expected to pass the courses. Students' habitus was focused on what constituted acceptable behaviors in high school and they did not understand that this was not acceptable behavior in the academic culture. Class observations showed that students wanted the instructor to just tell them what they needed to know and not challenge them to think critically.

Faculty struggled with how much they could require of students in order to transform them into successful college students. As part of the habitus of the institution (Thomas, 2002), they expected students come to class, do the challenging assignments, and become engaged in the learning process. Faculty interviewed stated:

> What I generally expect from level-one students is this realization that their reading skills and their writing skills are not at the (college) level. That it's absolutely important for them to make that effort, to adapt to the reading and writing demands of the traditional college level classroom. One of the biggest difficulties that I can think of as of now is trying to have them think deeper in more meaningful ways. They think at time way too literal (Faculty #1).

> I expect that they take notes. They are ready to learn, that they see it (developmental course) as a serious class that they have to take. That they come to class prepared and they see that education, learning is a journey that they need to take and that they're not going to get successful without it. That it's their responsibility (and need) commitment to your work (Faculty #2).

Students, however, had different expectations. Their habitus, which included strong individual volition and will (Winkle-Wagner, 2010) led them to make choices that hindered their academic success. They pushed instructors to adjust the structure and make

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the courses easier by decreasing the academic rigor of the assignments and other course requirements. In one course the instructor surveyed the students asking for feedback on the course. Students responded that they wanted the instructor to tell them the questions that were going to be on the test and not give as much homework. This is an example of "relational issues and priorities that are deeply embedded and subconsciously inform practice" (Thomas, 2002, p. 432). Students did not recognize that they needed to work hard in order to attain the skills to succeed in college, which hindered faculty's ability to transform the students' behavior and mind-sets so they passed their developmental courses.

Interaction between faculty and students could also be difficult when students were confrontational and used inappropriate language, making transformation of these students an additional challenge. At some point administrators needed to enter the interaction in order to address the students' misperceptions on how they should behave in an academic setting. One upper-level administrator stated:

> I get to see them if they've been doing terrible in the class, very disrespectful of the teacher, doing awful things, bad attitude. I call the student in and it was as though the student just didn't know how to behave differently (Administrator #2).

This interaction showed how this student's cultural capital, manifested through her habitus, could not help her understand what the institution determined is appropriate behavior in an academic setting.

Observations showed that instructors had to constantly remind students that college was different than high school and that the high school behavior and mindset that they were exhibiting might not lead to successful completion of college. By not knowing the higher educational system, students "do not fully understand the rules of the game

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although they understand the ultimate purpose of the game" (Lehmann, 2012, p. 530) is to obtain a college degree. Since students graduated from high school, they may think that the high school rules, such as less academic rigor, would be the same in college. "If marginalized students do not know the rules of the game of schooling, how can they understand the moves that permit them to win" (Mills, 2008, p. 87). Faculty and administrators at this institution needed to be constantly mindful of the students' view of education and continually explain to the students what they needed to do to be successful when interacting with them.

Shaping Practice Through Freedom to Change

In order to transform the students enrolled in developmental education courses in the community college depicted in this study, faculty and administration had freedom to institute changes to structure and pedagogy that they deemed necessary for student success. They shaped the way that developmental education courses and instruction were offered based on the needs of the students. The importance of being able to do this was stated by an administrator who said "results will not change if you continue to do business as usual" (Administrator #1). This can be viewed through Bourdieu's "operation of practice occurring in higher education by the use of the concept of strategy, a specific orientation to practice, depending on habitus" (Naidoo 2004, p. 458). College leadership recognized that they needed to institute different strategies when offering developmental education to help students pass these courses. They combined separate reading and writing courses into one developmental course and created a separate developmental education department that consisted of faculty dedicated to, and skilled in, teaching developmental education. Developmental courses were restructured combining separate

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reading and writing developmental courses into one course but at two levels. The first level of reading and writing emphasized basic grammar and reading skills while the second level focused on English composition and research skills. Combining the courses was based on best practices, which suggest that changes such as these will help students move quicker through the developmental course sequence so they could begin college credited course in a timelier manner (Bailey, 2009). Faculty agreed with this restructure. "We can't teach reading and writing in isolation, can't teach them to write if I can't teach them to read" (Faculty #4). This change, however, led to very long classes in which faculty were continually challenged to keep the students engaged.

In order to address the length of the course, faculty members were allowed to use innovative teaching methods and different materials in their classrooms to meet the needs of the specific student population in their classes taking into consideration the students cultural backgrounds (Lehmann, 2012). Faculty "broadened the type of cultural capital valued in the classroom" by using examples of readings and music from the students' backgrounds thereby "relating curriculum to students' worlds making the classroom more inclusive by legitimizing locally produced knowledge" (Mills, 2008, p. 84). The students in the level two developmental reading and writing course analyzed the themes of race and identity in The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother, by James McBride. In the level one developmental reading and writing course, students analyzed a poem by Peter Meinke, Advice to my Son, and then wrote an essay on their own experiences and observations regarding the importance of family heritage today. These assignments valued the students own cultural capital.

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Numerous strategies to transform the students were used by faculty with one faculty emphasizing self-efficacy.

> I remind them that they are capable and that their shortcomings are not solely
> theirs. By virtue of being born in this area or their zip code they will be behind
> academically but it's about teaching and ownership. This isn't high school
> anymore. I'm not going to chase you down for late work, (students must take)
> ownerships for their own learning (Faculty #4).

Faculty recognized that they needed to use different pedagogy when trying to engage the students in learning the material presented.

> I also use YouTube videos and music, it breaks up the monotony. We have two
> and a half hours to entertain these students. It's not just about interest it's about
> relevance. (I) make that connection for them (that) everything you do has value
> (Faculty #4).

Faculty recognized that with such a long class it was necessary to not only use various strategies to present the material but also to show students that their cultural capital and habitus is valued and can be applied to the academic concepts presented in class.

> If students, however, were disruptive in class, faculty referred them to administrators who worked with the students to give them an opportunity to change.

> Instead of saying the student is a bad apple and I want her out of my class, the
> instructor said can we just talk to her. I don't know how to reach her and we did
> and she turned around and that's the difference between expecting little and
> expecting them to be more than they know they can be (Administrator #2).

Believing that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have the ability to succeed is crucial in transformation of the students.

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Faculty were also allowed to alter how course requirements were presented with one instructor substituting the required mid-term exam with a series of smaller exams so students met short-term goals throughout the semester and experienced success.

> Giving them attainable short-term goals is really important because they need to
>
> see that they can be successful to believe it. I eliminated the mid-term, students
>
> not ready. I revamped the research projects, grateful to be in a department where
>
> I had that latitude (Faculty #4).

The changes that faculty members were allowed to do were an example of Bourdieu's (1990) concept of "rules to strategies," which manifested in the institutional habitus of the college and an example of a moment of inclusion (Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Faculty members offered the students' opportunities to activate the skills from the cultural capital they possessed in a way that could help them successfully complete the developmental courses.

In order to transform the students, faculty and administrators were able to modify the rules of the game within the field (Horvat, 2001; Winkle-Wagner, 2010) and adjust the structure of the courses by using different strategies to help students improve rather than applying the highly structured rules of the developmental course syllabi. This "strategy-generating principle" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72) assisted students and faculty in positioning the students' educational outcomes by meeting the needs of the students in this study.

To ensure that the changes instituted were meeting the needs of the students, the college administration constantly assessed student outcomes to determine if students were passing the classes and moving on to credit courses. This is an example of whether or not the students have acquired the necessary academic capital that the institution determines

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is needed for success in the courses. Bourdieu's (1990) reflexive analysis in which the system can structure pathways (Horvat, 2001) can also be used to show how the interaction between student agency and social structure can shape each other since administrators described how changes were constantly made to programs based on the assessments.

> Someone is looking at this program (developmental education) all the time so we are having courses that are challenging, academically, intellectually, (and) rigorous. We have a lot of research at this college. We're not just assuming that what we're doing is working. We're looking (doing) assessment. We're making changes, doing training based on that. (If) it's not working we make changes and we have (Administrator #2).

In this study, freedom to institute change gave the college constituencies the ability to shape the structures of the institution, including developmental course framework and instructional methods, in response to the behaviors and misperceptions that the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds initially had when they entered college. This then shaped the agency of the students so they began to obtain the skills and behaviors of successful college students. This interaction showed how students and the college can shape each other and can be seen as an example of how the social conditions that generated the students' habitus interacted with the social conditions of the institution in which they were enrolled to transform students' behavior and mindsets (Bourdieu, 1990). Changes in the students behavior and mindsets and the college structure resulting from the interaction, influenced practice (Bourdieu, 1977), and positively positioned the students' educational outcomes.

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All students interviewed passed their respective developmental courses. Passing rates in the developmental courses at the community college in this study were higher than the average passing rates at community colleges around the country (Bailey, 2009).

Conclusion

This study has shown that the transformational properties in the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (Lehmann, 2012; Mills, 2008) can be used to understand how the interaction between the agency of the underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enrolled in the community college and the structures within the institutional habitus of the college can position the students enrolled in developmental courses so they become successful college students. Changes that the college constituencies made within the field, in response to the behavior of the students, altered the students' agency so they began to obtain the behaviors and mindsets needed for success in college. How the faculty and administration interacted with the students positioned these students for success in their developmental courses.

Positioning these students was difficult, however, since students from low socioeconomic backgrounds initially had very different expectations than the faculty and administration as to what they needed to do to become successful college students, based on their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). These students entered college expecting it to be as easy as high school. They had difficulty making changes to their habitus in order to obtain the behaviors and mindsets of successful college students because they needed help understanding how to do so. They did not have college educated parents or guardians who could help them maneuver through the bureaucracy of college testing and understanding of non-credited developmental courses (Lareau, 2011). These students had

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little knowledge of the "rules of the game" (Horvat, 2001; Lehmann, 2012; Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

The urban community college in this study reacted to the students' dilemma by focusing the interaction between students and faculty and administrators on the specific needs of the students. It instituted changes to the structure within its habitus by combining separate developmental reading and writing courses into one course so students could more quickly move through the developmental course sequence. Faculty members were given the freedom to adapt classroom practices and procedures to better meet the needs of this specific population. In this urban community college faculty focused on short-term goals, used technology, active learning strategies, and examples from the students' culture to engage the students in the learning process. This urban community college made changes to its structure in response to the needs and behavior of the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enrolled in the developmental courses. Therefore, both the college and the students shaped each other (Bourdieu, 1990), which fostered positive educational outcomes for the students enrolled in these developmental courses.

The urban community college also instituted summer boot camps in math and English to help students who need short-term intensive assistance be prepared for college level courses. A new initiative has been established in the United States, however, that continues restructuring of institutional habitus to better meet the needs of its students so they pass all their college courses. The American Association of Community Colleges has launched The Pathways Project (2015). This project simplifies academic program choices and establishes intensive advising and constant monitoring of the students so they

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stay on track and graduate, which can be an example of a moment of inclusion (Lareau & Horvat, 1999), in that the institution will guide the students to use the cultural capital that they possess and offer assistance if the students are having difficulty passing their courses. While the discrete changes to institutional habitus, such as those instituted by the urban community college in this study, have been shown to increase student success, a more systemic change seems to be necessary in order for students to complete all their courses and graduate, such as the Pathways Project (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015).

Chapter 6

Navigating a Collision of Cultures: A Critical Case Study of an Urban Community College

Abstract

This article draws on a qualitative case study that used the concepts of Community Cultural Wealth (Yosso, 2005) and institutional validation (Rendon, 1994) as a framework for understanding how students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, enrolled in developmental courses in an urban community college, navigated through a collision of cultures when the students' personal culture clashed with the culture of the academy. Students used aspirational, social, and navigational capital to help them persevere. The institution validated the students' backgrounds through inclusion of the students' personal culture in pedagogy and curriculum along with offering students positive and supportive feedback, which modified the collision so students were better able to pass their developmental courses.

Key Words

Collision of cultures; community cultural wealth; validation; personal culture; academic culture

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A collision of cultures can occur if students use behavior and language that is valued in their own culture, but not valued in the academic culture (Carter, 2003), when interacting with college faculty and administration. Consequently, this collision can inform the students' adaptation to the behavior, knowledge, and skills needed to pass their academic courses and thrive within the academic environment. The collision, however, can be modified if students use capital that they possess to help them persevere as they pursue their degree (Yosso, 2005), and the institution makes changes to its policies, procedures, and practices that focus on the students own culture (Rendon, 1994).

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can experience a "divide between home and school worlds coupled with a sense of marginalization in the curriculum (that can) perpetuate the isolation that first-generation, low-income students, many of whom are also students of color and immigrants feel on campus" (Jehangir, 2009, p. 34). The students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may decide that college is not for them and drop out before completing their degrees (Jenkins, 1992), which greatly diminishes their chances for increased income and upward social mobility (Dell, 2011). These students, however, don't

> reject academic achievement, but rather resist the cultural default – that is
> regarded as normal or regular – namely, white, middle class standards of speech,
> dress, musical taste, and interactional styles, and convert own cultural resources
> into capital to maintain valued status positions within their communities (Carter,
> 2003, p. 137).

If students use these resources in the academic culture, collisions between the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and college faculty and administration can occur unless institutions recognize the value that the students'

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own culture brings to the interaction and adjusts its policies, procedures, and practices to include the culture of these students (Rendon, 1994).

This article draws on a qualitative case study of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enrolled in developmental courses in an urban community college in the northern United States. It shows the difficulties that this student population experienced in interacting with faculty and administration and how students learned to deal with these difficulties through the use of their community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). How the institution assisted students through the use of validation theory, which includes interactions that affirm students' abilities and pedagogy and curriculum from the students' own culture (Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011), also informed the students' success in their developmental education courses.

Navigating the Collision

Research and literature has shown that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can use their backgrounds to navigate through the collision that they may experience when interacting with an academic culture that may favor students from higher economic backgrounds (Cammarota, 2011; Campa, 2010; Carter, 2003; Cerna, Perez, & Saenz, 2009; Cuadraz, 2015; Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Hattam & Smyth, 2014; Nora, 2004; Perna & Titus, 2005; Ramirez, 2012; Smit, 2012). In a study of African-American students, the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were able to negotiate strategically between their community, family, peers, and the college culture (Carter, 2003) by changing language and speech patterns to be accepted in each culture. Altering behavior and language, however, can be very stressful for students.

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A study of Latino college students dealing with altering their behavior and language when navigating between their own culture and the academic culture, showed the challenges that these students can experience since the "stress of not being accepted by one's own culture may compound the normal stress of adjusting to college, inhibiting students' ability to focus on the demands of college" (Llamas & Consoli, 2012, p. 400). This can inform the students' ability to pass their courses. Another study also showed that if students from low socioeconomic backgrounds tried to alter their behavior and language when enrolled in a college course, they experienced cultural conflicts in that the students "native way of speaking clashed with the discourse common to that used in classroom discussions" (White, 2011, p. 256), and affected their grades in the course. Students experiencing the challenges associated with navigating between two cultures had to practice code-switching, which is the ability to recognize the different strategies needed to succeed in their own culture and in the academic culture in order to be accepted in both cultures (Day-Vines & Day-Hariston, 2005; White, 2011), so they passed their courses. Students, however, can persevere through these stressful situations through the use of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Using Community Cultural Wealth

Based in Critical Race Theory, Yosso (2005) focuses on the capital that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds possess that can assist them in college. This capital includes aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital that students can use when faced with challenges they may encounter as they interact within the academic culture. The use of aspirational capital was exhibited by successful Latino students enrolled in a community college when they "displayed a fierce passion and

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perseverance toward achieving their goals" (Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Klingsmith, 2014, p. 532). Aspirational capital is the "ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" and offers a "culture of possibilities" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). This form of capital can keep students motivated when faced with challenges as they learn the academic skills, knowledge, and language to succeed in college.

In another study, students "relied on respective cultural affiliations, expressed a high level of family support, and kept relationships with family members and high school friends" (Barbatis, 2010, p. 17-18) to succeed in college. The use of this familial capital was also shown when "parents and other extended family members with no formal education provided moral support even though they couldn't help academically" (Matos, 2015, p. 443).

Oropeza, Varghese, and Kanno (2010) described how successful students from low socioeconomic backgrounds used their social capital by seeking out members of their community to help them enter and then succeed in college (Coleman, 1988). These studies and others show that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can use capital from their own culture (Barbatis, 2010; Crisp & Nora, 2010; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009; Luna & Martinez, 2013; Matos, 2015; Oropeza, Varghese, & Kanno, 2010; Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Klingsmith, 2014; Yosso, 2005) to help them succeed in college.

Another factor in the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds success in college can be attributed to institutional validation of the students own culture through a modification of the curriculum, and by positive feedback from faculty and administration.

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Since these students may be subjected to semesters of developmental reading, writing, and mathematics courses upon entering the college, which many do not complete (Bailey, 2009), they need recognition that their backgrounds have value, along with strong support from faculty and administration, so they can accomplish their goals.

Validating Students' Culture

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can enter the community college overwhelmed by the amount of academic knowledge and skills that they need to obtain in order to succeed in college. Rendon (1994) describes the difficulties that these students can experience.

> They are faced with unlearning past attitudes and behaviors and are faced with learning new attitudes, beliefs, and values that are quite removed from those of their culture…forced to adapt to a new culture. Cultures of the academy must change to better meet the needs of today's rich, diverse student population. Institutions (must) develop a new model of student learning and development that is more appropriate for student entry (Rendon, 1994, p. 34).

Research has shown that through changes to its policies, procedures, and practices the college can inform the students' interest and ability in obtaining the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to be successful college students (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015; Barnett, 2011; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009; Rendon, 1994; Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011; Wood & Turner, 2011). If the institution enacts changes to the curriculum that reflect students' culture and offers positive feedback to the students from faculty and administration, these forms of validation can assist students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to "acquire a confident, motivating, I can do

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attitude and believe in their inherent capacity to learn" (Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011, p. 15).

Beginning with a study of nontraditional students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, researchers discovered how to help these students succeed. Students in this study "came to college expecting to fail, (but) suddenly began to believe in their innate capacity to learn and to become successful college students" (Rendon, 1994, p. 36) when faculty were personally approachable, offered structured learning experiences, and provided positive feedback to students, all part of a validation process. Use of this validation model was also evident in a study of Latino students enrolled in a community college's developmental English and math courses. Students were successful when the "institution maintained high expectations of students, emphasized the importance of academic skill sets, and used caring pedagogy and critical course curriculum that related to students identities" (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015, p.110).

A study of African-American males enrolled in a community college described how the institution assisted these students by establishing positive student-to-faculty interactions including monitoring student progress, listening to students, and encouraging them to succeed (Wood & Turner, 2011). All of these studies have shown that specific interaction between students and faculty can validate students' ability to succeed, but for students to be successful the institution must support validation. How the college fosters changes to its policies, procedures, and practices can make a difference in the success of the students. By using examples from the students own culture within the curriculum and offering students positive feedback and encouragement, the institution can begin to

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validate the students' ability to succeed and can motivate students toward successful completion of their courses.

Context of the Study

Developmental education in the United States is currently in crisis since students required to enroll in these courses are not completing them (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Not completing developmental courses, which focus on lower level high school English and mathematics, hinders students' ability to take college credited courses and complete their degree. Students must pass these developmental courses in order to enter college credited courses. In the United States, community colleges have open enrollment, which requires the college to accept all students who apply no matter how prepared they are for college. There are numerous studies that show high schools are graduating students not prepared for college (Berry, 2003; Conley, 2010; Illowshy, 2008; Long, Iatarola, & Conger, 2009; Williamson, 2008). The magnitude of this dilemma can be shown by national data from the Achieving the Dream Initiative, which tracked 250,000 students in 33 community colleges in 15 states for three years. The data showed that 59% of the students were required to enroll in a least one developmental course, with a much higher percentage of students in urban community colleges required to take these non-college credited courses (Bailey, 2009). Since students are having difficulty completing a degree if they are enrolled in developmental courses, policies, programs, and practices that specifically address the students' perceptions and expectations on education, along with their academic backgrounds, and take into consideration the students' personal culture, need to be instituted by the community college. This is crucial since student failure does

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not fulfill the mission of the community college, which includes a commitment to student progress and program completion (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

There were 71.6% of full-time/first-time students enrolled the fall 2013 semester in the urban community college in this study who were required to take one or more developmental courses, with 42% of these students required to take a developmental reading and writing course, a higher percentage than average. In fall 2012, 51% of the students enrolled were Hispanic. Since data has shown that Hispanic students have lower graduation rates than other students (Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Klingsmith. 2014), this college was an appropriate setting for a study of how the interaction between underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and the institution can position the students' educational outcomes.

Lack of completion can also have fiscal implications for the community college. Performance based funding is now being instituted or considered in a number of states in the United States, based on President Obama's college Completion Agenda (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). If students do not complete their degree or certificate, community colleges can lose state funding when funding is tied to outcomes rather than enrollments, which is the model used in most states to fund community colleges.

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Research Design Methods

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In order to understand how the interaction between low socioeconomic, underprepared students, who were enrolled in an urban community college in the United States, and the institution in which they were enrolled, positioned students' educational outcomes, this study answered the following research questions:

1. How does the interaction between the community college and the student who is underprepared position the student's developmental educational outcomes?

2. How does the socioeconomic status of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with the college?

3. How do community college faculty, administrators, and counselor/advisors perceptions and expectations of students who are underprepared inform their interaction with these students?

4. How do the perceptions and expectations that students who are underprepared have of the institution inform their interaction with college constituencies?

Participants

In order to understand students enrolled in developmental courses in this urban community college, who were the participants in this study, research was conducted onsite at an urban community college located in the northern United States (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). We included observations of faculty and students in developmental reading/writing courses, and individual interviews with students enrolled in these courses, and with faculty teaching these courses. Individual interviews with administrators who interacted with developmental education students were also included in order to obtain rich and thick descriptions (Merriam, 2009) for this qualitative study.

Requests to observe developmental reading and writing courses at this urban community college were sent to all faculty members teaching these courses. Four developmental education faculty members were interviewed and included three full-time and one adjunct faculty member. Three of the faculty interviewed taught courses that were also observed. Forty-nine students enrolled in two levels of developmental reading

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and writing courses in the community college were observed in class, for two weeks, for a total of 37.5 hours, in April 2014. Students observed were surveyed in the classroom to solicit participants for individual interviews. Students completing the survey, who were interested in participating in the study and met the criteria for low socioeconomic status based on financial need and parent/guardian educational and occupational backgrounds, were targeted. Seventeen students enrolled in the classes, who agreed to be interviewed, and met the criteria for low socioeconomic status based on financial need and parent or guardian education and occupation, were contacted by email, phone call, and/or text messaging. Six students attended the interview sessions, with five students female and one student male. Three students were Hispanic and three students African-American. Of the four faculty members teaching the developmental courses who participated in the study, three were female and one male. Two faculty members were Hispanic, one African-American, and one Caucasian. Four administrators, who interacted with underprepared developmental students and had positions in the college in which they could influence institutional policies, procedures, and practices that could inform educational outcomes of developmental students, were invited to be interviewed. The administrators interviewed included one Senior Academic Dean, one Associate Academic Dean, and two department directors. Two administrators were male and two were female, with one administrator Hispanic, two African-American, and one Caucasian. In total 63 individuals participated in the research process.

Data Collection

Interview transcripts, field notes of classroom observations, artifacts, and student outcome information served as data collection methods for this qualitative case study.

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Faculty, administrators, and underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who were involved with developmental education at the urban community college, were interviewed using similar semi-structured, open-ended question protocols (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) to solicit information on their experiences with developmental education at the college and to triangulate the data. Data obtained from interviews included perceptions and expectations on students' educational experiences and outcomes, challenges that faculty and administrators faced in working with underprepared students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and the difficulties that these students faced when their personal culture collided with the culture of the academic institution.

Observations of students and faculty in developmental courses was used to understand the context of the study and the "multiple and complex actions within the context" (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 193). The role of participant observer (Merriam, 2009) in the courses was used to develop a rapport with students so they would feel comfortable meeting for an interview. Observations focused on student-to-student and student-to-faculty interactions that showed how students were mastering or not mastering the concepts presented, how faculty presented the concepts, and the students' responses to the presentation, to determine if students seemed to be learning the concepts.

In order to provide additional data, and to corroborate interviews and observations (Yin, 2009), artifacts on the college and developmental courses were collected. Course syllabi, student assignments, mid-term examinations, and other data used in the course were collected to understand the requirements of the developmental courses. Student outcome data in the form of passing rates of students enrolled in the developmental

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reading and writing courses, and the final grades of the students interviewed were also collected and used to determine student educational outcomes.

Data Analysis

Interviews, which were transcribed from audio recordings, field notes reflecting student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction, and documents and artifacts obtained on college policies, procedures, and practices, were analyzed through a coding process (Saldana, 2009). In a cyclical nature, we coded and then recoded the data initially using in vivo coding as a first cycle coding process (Saldana, 2009) to capture the voice of the students and the college constituencies, because the subjective meaning of the participants was sought. Since this study was a critical test of significant theory (Yin, 2009), we also used hypothesis coding (Saldana, 2009). For second cycle coding, we used pattern coding (Saldana, 2009), which included "explanative or inferential codes that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 69) to analyze the data.

Positionality

We acknowledge that our positions as administrators and academics may have influenced the nature of this study. One of us has extensive experience assisting developmental students in a community college as they struggle to obtain the skills and behaviors needed to succeed in college. While neither of us were directly affiliated with the urban community college depicted in this study, having experience with this student population could inform the data we gathered and the analysis of the data. We used reflexive bracketing (Ahern, 1999), which is constant reflection on how our backgrounds and experiences might affect the information we collected and used to analyze the data,

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in order to minimize the bias our assumptions may have on the research process and our findings.

Findings

Based on findings from a qualitative critical case study of an urban community college in the northern United States, we will show the challenges that faculty and administrators experienced when interacting with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds enrolled in developmental courses in this college, and how students managed a collision of cultures by using their own cultural background to inform their experiences as they adapted to the academic culture of the community college. We will also show the way the institution adjusted curriculum to validate students' culture, and how faculty interacted with students in a positive, supportive manner to assist in student success.

Challenges to Faculty Pedagogy

In the academic culture, faculty and administrators expected students to be respectful and not challenge them in the classroom. Observations showed that this was not occurring in certain classes and conflicts ensued. One faculty member described her beliefs about the conflict this could create in the classroom.

> I don't think that students know that they have to respect the classroom, the authority of the classroom and it's very challenging. Sometimes students will challenge you. Instructor has to set the tone for the classroom in terms of what they expect, what behaviors are correct and what isn't (Faculty #2).

Since students may not be aware of academic protocol, faculty felt that they needed to inform the students as to what is expected in order to help them succeed in an academic culture. If students recognize that challenging authority, which may be valued in other

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contexts, may not be appropriate in the academic culture (Carter, 2003), they can begin to understand that they may have to modify their behavior in order to succeed in college. In a study of Mexican-American students enrolled in a community college, students learned to "play the game" by networking and increasing their social capital through building connections with their professors (Campa, 2010).

Observations of one of the upper-level developmental courses also showed that some students did not exhibit what faculty and administrators might consider appropriate classroom behavior. In this class students constantly questioned the instructor regarding why they needed to learn the concepts presented, did not do the required homework, and consistently brought food into the classroom even though they were told this was not allowed. The faculty member had to continually remind students that this behavior was not acceptable in the academic culture. This challenged how the faculty member taught the course since she constantly had to repeat concepts and ask students to please listen.

Collision of cultures. Some students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in this college struggled to adapt to their new academic culture, which can inform their success in college (Ayalon & Young, 2005: Carter, 2003; Llamas & Consoli, 2012; Strayhorn, 2011; White, 2011). A faculty member described the dilemma that students may experience when faced with being a part of two cultures.

> The culture that a student is raised in very often conflicts with that of academia where superior reading and writing skills are the norm, whereas (in) one's ethnic/personal culture reading and writing skills are not as prioritized as other things such as having a job, working hard at the job so you can earn income that would help pay the bills and feed them (Faculty #1).

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According to this faculty member, if students need to spend additional time learning academic skills, this could cause conflicts with their family. Students interviewed stated that they were expected to work and assist in taking care of family, especially if they had younger brothers or sisters.

The conflict also extended out of the classroom to interactions with administrators. An administrator interviewed described the difficulty that he was having trying to convince a student not to drop out of school. "Father owns a pizzeria and he did not want to hire workers. He wanted his son who was pursuing a degree to work there" (Administrator #1). This student had familial expectations that are valued in his culture, which can collide with the academic culture that fosters completion of college as the more important goal.

The behavior and language that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may use to survive in an urban environment can collide with what faculty and administration expect them to exhibit as college students (Carter, 2003; White, 2011). An administrator who works closely with new students described the dilemma that these students may experience when enrolling in college.

> Pretty much the behaviors that have helped them survive outside in the urban environment that they've been raised in are behaviors that are maladaptive to college life. (It is) essentially like asking someone to stop doing what has helped you survive up until this point. Behaviors we promote here could possibly get someone harmed in their environment (Administrator #3).

Confrontational behaviors and language that students may use in order to be accepted by peers in their own culture (Carter, 2003) can cause conflicts between students and

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faculty, especially if faculty members do not recognize the dilemma that students could be experiencing trying to navigate between two cultures.

Strict adherence to college protocol can also add to the conflict between student behavior and faculty expectations.

> I have a blurb about class environment on my syllabus and if any student violates that they get a warning via email. (I) regularly email students on a regular basis because they need to understand this was not correct behavior for class; that was not the comment you give to an instructor. It's not proper. If that doesn't work we have an early alert protocol where we can submit a form online and a counselor from the school will reach out to them (Faculty #2).

This strict, non-personal adherence to college protocol could add to students' feelings of alienation. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds may feel that the faculty member is not interested in discovering the challenges that they are experiencing as they try to navigate between their personal culture and the culture of the academy.

Faculty and administrators in this study continually stated how students' home culture informed their college experience.

> We talk about expectations, classroom management, different challenges that they face. I think that in each one of those your culture has a huge impact. How much support are you getting, (what) motivation. I had one student that dropped out. He said it's just me and my mom and there was a lot of struggle he had to contend with. Another student worked in a fast food restaurant and said my husband just lost his job and we have a baby on the way. How do I balance that (Faculty #3).

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Students in this study continued to struggle with decisions they needed to make when responsibilities in their personal culture clashed with the requirements of the academic culture, such as attending class.

Balancing academic expectations. Faculty struggled with academically challenging students.

> Sympathize with students but not overly sympathize to a point where you make the course work itself a cake-walk. Interact with the students in ways that does not discourage them in pursuing their academic aspirations, particularly difficult with students who have troubled personal lives and especially for students whose skills are so low. You want to give them encouragement but you're struggling immensely and actually doubting their overall success (Faculty #1).

How faculty interacted with the students can inform students' belief in their ability to succeed in the academic culture since "teachers' personal beliefs and values act as a filter through which they make decisions about their classroom practices" (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, p. 157). If students feel that they may not be able to complete their courses they may drop out thinking that college is not for them (Jenkins, 1992).

Faculty needed to balance student expectations and what the institution believes is necessary for success in college, which could be difficult. Research has shown, however, that by emphasizing high expectations students from low socioeconomic backgrounds do succeed (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015). This seemed to validate faculty and administrators' belief that students in developmental courses needed to be challenged.

> You have to have high expectations for them. If you believe that challenge for them they will rise to the occasion. If they think they can do little they will do little and that is what

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they've been trained to believe about their abilities particularly in reading and writing and in math (Administrator #2).

A collision of cultures could continue, however, if students from low socioeconomic backgrounds believe that they do not have the ability to do what the academic culture deems necessary for success, and the institution does not show the students that they can succeed.

In this study, policies, procedures, and practices within the institution, such as placement testing, increased the conflict between students and faculty since faculty felt that some students were not accurately placed in their developmental courses. Placement is based on the students' score on a placement test that incoming students are required to take. If students with limited English skills are given an academic reading and writing test instead of the English as a Second Language test they would be assigned to the lowest level of developmental reading and writing instead of an ESL course. Faculty members were frustrated since they felt that some students enrolled in their courses would better benefit from an ESL course. "I have students who have been speaking English for less than four years and they simply don't have the language skills. Speak pretty well but don't have a command of the written language" (Faculty #4). Inaccurate placement of students can increase the conflict between students and faculty and inform students' feelings that they may not be able to obtain the academic skills needed to succeed in college.

Faculty experienced additional challenges when students' personal culture collided with what they felt students should focus on to obtain the academic skills needed to pass the courses.

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(Need) to have them stay focused (on concepts you're teaching) rather than diverting to

different modes of thought, personal or cultural, that have little or nothing to do with

material on hand. (Students) interpret the material based on their own personal

experiences, their own personal opinions, their own cultural beliefs, need to have students

learn to assimilate academic knowledge needed to pass courses (Faculty #1).

Helping students find the balance between focusing on their own culture and the

academic culture would be needed in order to modify the collision.

Managing the Collision

The students in this study used aspirational, familial, and social capital (Yosso,

2005) from their own culture when dealing with learning the academic reading and

writing skills needed to succeed in college These forms of capital "begin with the

perspective that Communities of Color are places with multiple strengths, cultural assets,

and cultural wealth" (Luna & Martinez, 2013, p. 3). If students from low socioeconomic

backgrounds use these forms of capital from their personal culture when faced with the

challenges of becoming successful college students, they could better navigate the

collision they may experience when interacting with the academic culture.

Aspirational capital. When discussing why they decided to go to college, the

students interviewed in this study used aspirational capital that Yosso (2005) refers to as

the "ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of real or

perceived barriers" (p. 78). Students agreed that going to college was important. "You

need education to get somewhere. You're not going to go far if you don't get education"

(Student #2). "Basic goal in life is to put yourself in education" (Student #6). Students

used this form of capital to remind themselves of the importance of completing their

degree. A student who had very weak academic skills stated, "I want to be a lawyer. I

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want to do advocacy for children. That's what I want to do, juvenile abuse, and later maybe I'll be a judge or something. Nothing's going to stop me (from completing degree)" (Student #4). The student's ability to "dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances often without objective means to attain their goals" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78) could help the student persevere.

Familial and social capital. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds entering college "may receive the message that their home culture is deficient" (Sommerfeld, 2013) due to family and peers who do not have any college education. Students in this study, however, indicated that even though their parents did not have a college education in the United States, they could still help them deal with conflicts through continual availability and encouragement. When asked who influenced you, a student stated "I think just everybody, my brother and my aunt" (Student #3). Most students interviewed stated that their family wanted them to go to college, even if their family members did not have any college experience in the United States. The encouragement offered informed the students' drive to pursue a college education.

Another student interviewed, who had been in the foster care system for most of her life, spoke about the support from the families with whom she stayed, and from others that she met, which informed the student's pursuit of a degree.

> In foster care (the) last family that I was with, she talked about college and really wanted to help kids. (Now) I have people (in the community) who are there for me. They're not in my house everyday but if I need to talk to somebody I can call (Student #2).

This student used familial and social capital (Yosso, 2005) from their own culture to help them succeed in college.

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How faculty, administrators, and the college responded to the students also made a difference in the students' ability to deal with the challenges of becoming successful college students. Through changes in the organization, assignments and curriculum that reflected the students' own culture were instituted, and faculty and administrators offered students encouragement and positive feedback (Rendon, 1994).

Instituting Validation

Faculty in this study recognized that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can experience a collision of cultures when entering college. To mitigate the collision they included validation of the students' personal culture through the use of assignments and curriculum material from the students' backgrounds. Research studies have shown how the use of this type of material and how faculty and administration interact with students can inform the students' success in college (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015; Barnett, 2011; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009; Rendon, 1994; Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011).

Faculty and administrators in this study understood that they were also responsible for assisting students in managing this collision of cultures. A faculty member interviewed stated, "These cultures are going to collide and you as an educator have to find ways to make such a collision end up in constructive ways rather than destructive ways" (Faculty #1). One way to assist students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in navigating the collision is through specific validation of the students own culture. Validation theory offers interaction guidelines that can inform students' success, such as establishing high quality relationships with students, offering structured learning

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experiences, and adjusting curriculum so that it reflects the students' own culture (Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011).

High quality relationships. Faculty in this study were passionate about their students and validated the students by creating high-quality relationships with them (Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009).

> They know I'm on their side that I'm on their team. I love teaching and I love them. Students have to transcend negative stereotypes and it's such a shame because they're such gems of people. They're great. They're grateful and they're polite and hardworking and they want better for themselves, for their children in many cases. I've been told by numerous students I would have dropped if it hadn't been for you; so much of what I do is to support them as human beings, not even just as students but as human beings (Faculty #4).

Being passionate and caring about the students is one part of the validation process.

Faculty also encouraged students to reach out to them. "When students feel that they can come and ask you questions and that you're available to them you get a better response from students" (Faculty #2). Establishing relationships with students can help to modify students' feelings of not belonging in college (Jenkins, 1992). The ability to use faculty as a resource also informed the students' success since faculty could then be added to the students' networks (Coleman, 1988).

One administrator also recognized how important it was to establish relationships with the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in order to increase the students' investment in their learning.

> Sometimes it means that you actually have to create that investment for them by talking about it and why it's important and actually meeting them where they are as students. They need to know that you care in some capacity (Administrator #2).

Establishing high quality relationships between administrators and students is also important so students feel that all college constituencies are supportive and care about their success.

While faculty agreed that students should be challenged (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015), they believed that the students could be successful and reiterated that to the students.

> I have very high expectations. I make it very clear that they're capable of more than they think possible. In setting my expectations, I remind them that other students have done it, that it's reachable, it's doable. I'm not just raising the bar for the sake of raising the bar. I'm raising the bar because I know you're capable of reaching it (Faculty #4).

By validating students' ability to succeed, faculty helped students recognize that college was attainable.

Structured learning experiences. In order to help students learn reading and writing material in their developmental classes, faculty offered different forms of pedagogy, such as "structured learning experiences that allowed students to experience themselves as capable of learning" (Rendon, 1994, p. 40).

> Giving them attainable short-term goals is really important because they need to see that they can be successful, to believe it. I can tell them that they can do this until I'm blue in the face but until I back it up with something that they can do and do well they're not going to believe it and then they're going to that defeatist attitude, which is one of the greatest things that is working against them (Faculty #4) .

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When students experience success throughout the semester, they gain confidence in their ability to obtain the skills and knowledge needed to pass the developmental course.

Curriculum adjustments. Textbooks and assignments in the developmental education curriculum reflected students' ethnic/racial backgrounds and were used throughout the courses, which validated the importance of the students' backgrounds (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015; Barnett, 2011; Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009; Rendon, 1994; Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011). Faculty stated why using material from the students own culture was important. "In the text, the assignments, the stories and the real life connections that they make, these are the same things that you are discussing in interacting with your peers" (Faculty #3). Students used The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to his White Mother, by James McBride, as one of their main textbooks. Material from their own culture showed students from low socioeconomic backgrounds that there can be connections between their own culture and the culture of the academy, which can help to modify the collision that occurs when students try to navigate between the two cultures.

Faculty background. Faculty also felt that their immigrant backgrounds, which were very similar to the students' backgrounds, could serve as role models and assist students in understanding that they could succeed in college (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso, & Solórzano, 2015). "A lot of developmental students come from backgrounds similar to mine, immigrant working class backgrounds. I tried to share my background whenever appropriate in the semester" (Faculty #1). Being able to relate to faculty who have similar backgrounds could assist the students in persevering to complete their courses.

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In this study, high quality relationships between students and faculty and administration, along with adjustments to the curriculum, informed students' ability to succeed in their developmental courses. All students interviewed passed their developmental reading and writing courses. The passing rates for developmental education at this institution were higher than the national average (Bailey, 2009).

Conclusion

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds can be caught in a collision of cultures if their personal culture collides with the academic culture because the institution does not recognize the value that the students' culture brings to the interaction. Students can persevere through this collision by using community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that focuses on their aspirations and social networks within their culture. The collision can also be modified if the institution values the culture of the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds by incorporating their culture into the curriculum in the form of textbook material and assignments so that students will relate to the information, and interacts with the students in a positive supportive manner. This validation can inform the students' ability to learn what is needed to succeed in college (Rendon, 1994; Rendon-Linares & Munoz, 2011). While the urban community college in this study initially made changes to the structure of the developmental education program by combining separate developmental reading and writing courses into one development course, they also included the students' own culture throughout the curriculum. This informed the students' success since "school reform efforts are destined to fail if culture is de-emphasized in favor of solely reforming structure" (Liou, Antrop-Gonzalez, & Cooper, 2009, p. 537). By faculty and administrators validating (Rendon, 1994) students through

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assignments that showed the students that they could do academic work, and by offering consistent positive feedback, students learned the reading and writing skills needed to complete their developmental courses.

This urban community college also instituted summer boot camps consisting of short-term, intensive interventions in math and English that increased the students' academic skills so they could enroll directly into college credited courses. Students completing the boot camps could by-pass developmental courses. While these discrete innovations helped students pass their developmental courses, research has shown that a more systemic change in the way the institution interacts with its students is needed so students not only pass their developmental courses but also pass their college courses and graduate with a degree or certificate (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). College credentials can improve students' income and assist in their upward social mobility (Dell, 2011).

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has launched The Pathways Project (2015), which focuses on structuring academic and career pathways for students who enroll in the community college. It simplifies students' choices of academic programs and offers them a clear pathway to achieving their educational goals. It also includes intensive advising and constant monitoring of student progress, which could help students from low socioeconomic backgrounds better maneuver through the academic culture.

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Appendix A

Email to Faculty Teaching Developmental Courses

I am a community college administrator enrolled in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership at Rowan University and currently in the dissertation phase of the degree. I hope you will help me further my research by allowing me to observe the developmental course you are teaching this semester. My dissertation involves understanding how the interaction between underprepared students and the college environment positions the students' educational outcomes. Literature shows that underprepared students, especially those with low socioeconomic status, have difficulty completing their developmental courses. I feel that seeing firsthand how underprepared students are interacting in their developmental course will help me to understand the factors involved in students being able to complete or not complete their course. I have chosen to do my research at Passaic because the college has recently instituted an integrated reading and writing developmental course, that you teach, which has been shown in the research to help students complete their developmental courses.

If you are interested in being a part of my dissertation research, and I hope you are, please respond to this email to let me know if I can observe your course. All information obtained from observing your course will be anonymous. Any analysis will in no way reference you or your specific course. If you have any questions, or would like additional information, do not hesitate to email me or contact me at 973-300-2176.

Thank you,

Alberta Jaeger

Doctoral Student

Rowan University

Appendix B

Student In-Class Survey

Dear Student,

I am currently conducting research on the experiences that students enrolled in developmental courses are having in college. Observing your developmental course has given me some information on what students experience but in order to more fully understand student experience I would like to interview you.

Some questions would include your high school experience, why you decided to go to college, did anyone influence to do so, and if your experience at PCCC so far is meeting your expectations and needs. The interview should take about 30-40 minutes and will be anonymous. Your name will not be used in any analysis.

Please fill out the survey below letting me know if you are interested in being interviewed.

I would like to be interviewed: (please circle one)   Yes   *or*   No
If you circled yes please fill out the following information:
Name

_____

High School attended _____ Graduation Date _____
Age _____
Did you receive a Pell Grant for financial aid: (please circle one) Yes or   No
Parent/Guardian education:
 Mother/Female (please circle one)   some high school   high school diploma   some college   college degree
 Father/Male (please circle one)   some high school   high school diploma   some college   college degree
Parent/Guardian Occupation _____ (Male) _____(Female)
Best way to contact you: Email _____
                                        Phone/Text _____

Signature _____

I will contact you to schedule the interview at your convenience.

Thank you,
Alberta Jaeger

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Appendix C

Student Interview Protocol

1. Demographic information
    a. First semester at PCCC?
    b. Current academic schedule?
    c. Currently working while going to college?
    d. Receiving any financial aid? Type of aid?

2. What was school like?
    a. Elementary
    b. Middle
    c. High School

3. Were you involved in any outside activities (sports/work) while in high school?

4. Did your parents go to college? What do they do (occupation)?

5. Who influenced you regarding going to college and how did he/she influence you?
    a. Adults?

    b. Peers?

6. What do you expect to get out of your college education? Why are you going to college?

7. How would you describe your experience so far at PCCC?

    a. In class?

    b. Outside of Class?

    c. Any difficulty registering, obtaining financial aid, getting help when you need it?

    d. Feel are supported by the institution?

    e. What do you perceive to be "road blocks" to completing your degree?

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Appendix D

Faculty and Administrator Interview Protocol

1. What do you think contributes to the success of underprepared community college students?

2. What challenges do you feel underprepared students have to deal with

   a. at PCCC?

   b. outside of PCCC?

3. What expectations do you have of the underprepared students that you teach/interact with?

4. What difficulties are you experiencing interacting with underprepared students?

5. What policies, procedures, and practices at PCCC do you feel are impacting the most on the success of underprepared students?

6. Additional comments on underprepared students.

Appendix E

Upper-level Administration Interview Protocol

1. What do you think contributes to the success of underprepared community college students?

2. What challenges do you feel underprepared students experience in college?

3. What policies, procedures, and practices at PCCC do you feel impact the most on the success of underprepared students?

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Appendix F

Consent Form

I agree to participate in a research project that focuses on how students enrolled in developmental courses interact with the college environment at Passaic County Community College. This research is being conducted by Alberta Jaeger, a doctoral student at Rowan University.

During this project you will be interviewed by Alberta Jaeger to discover your experiences, perceptions, and interactions with the college environment as a _____ (student)/ (faculty member)/ (college administrator) at Passaic County Community College. The interview will be audiotaped for data analysis purposes only and should last about 30-40 minutes.

Risks: Your data will be kept secure and confidential. You can withdraw from this study at any time. There are minimal risks involved with your participation. No identifiable information will be used when describing the results of the study in order to alleviate risks.

Benefits: The information you provide will contribute to the understanding of how the interaction between underprepared community college students and the college environment positions the students' educational outcomes.

Extent of Confidentiality: All of your responses, writings, or other materials will be kept confidential, meaning that no one will be made aware of your participation. Your name or any other identifying information, such as your role at the college, will not be disclosed in any discussion or written documents about the research.

Permission to withdraw: Participation is completely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Your signature below gives permission to use the data collected from your interview for the research project. (You will also receive a copy of this form for your record).

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Associate Provost for Research at: Rowan University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Office of Research, 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, NJ 08028, 856-256-5150.

Participant Name _____ Date _____

Researcher Name _____ Date _____

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