“I DO NOT KNOW…I HAVE NEVER BEEN A COLLEGE STUDENT”

DUAL ENROLLMENT: THE EXPERIENCE, THE BENEFITS, AND THE HURDLES

A thesis presented

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to determine why disproportionate amounts of *at promise* students are participating in the dual enrollment (DE) program and to examine its relationship to cultural capital. The study applied interpretative phenomenological analysis as a qualitative research method to understand the experiences of the DE students. Nine DE seniors participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews to yield an understanding of what led them to and concerned them about participating in the DE program. The theoretical framework chosen was Cultural Capital Theory, which dissected how parents conveyed cultural capital by enlightening their children about the worth of securing postsecondary education. The study intends to fill the gap in the current academic literature on why there are few minorities participating in this program. The findings indicated there were two themes and six sub themes; 1) changed behavior, 1a) post-secondary awareness, 1b) high school vs. college, and 1c) reflection; 2) academic preparation, 2a) college/career preparatory programs, 2b) postsecondary plans, and 2c) determination. Future studies should closely examine the value of a holistic case study and an entrance/exit survey for potential and current DE students. A potential theory that could be further investigated is the cultural proficiency framework.

*Keywords:* at promise—minority, underserved, under-represented, and first-generation college students dual enrollment—a free program that allows high school students to take college courses
DEDICATIONS

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Public school dual enrollment (DE) programs support a national priority to provide college access for all high school students. DE programs serve as a bridge between high school and colleges (Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2004). The program is a division of the national Credit-Based Transition Programs (CBTPs) centered around early college access and it has grown dramatically in the last decade (Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2005).

As a College & Career Readiness Coordinator within the Career and Technical Education (CTE) department my primary responsibility is to facilitate the DE program. I primarily work with minority, under-served, under-represented, and first generation college students (later referred to as at promise students). The program permits 11th- and 12th-grade high school students to participate in credit-based postsecondary college coursework. The credit is applied toward fulfilling their high school diploma elective requirements while allowing them to earn college credit prior to full-time enrollment status. A key component of the DE program is that it increases the course offerings for high-flying students that either “max out” of their high school course options or for schools with limited elective course offerings (Karp et al., 2004).

The Association for Career Technical Education (ACTE) website states that programs engage students in active participation, offer hands-on learning, provide opportunity for personalized learning, no longer focus on high school alone, and prepare students to be college and/or career ready (ACTE, n.d). In the researcher’s experience and research into the program, nationally there are many postsecondary partnerships, which allow students to progress in various pathways including employment, a two-year college, and a four-year university track. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education there are 12 million students participating in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs. The
Association for Career and Technical Education website states that secondary CTE programs are no longer a “separate track” for students because they are now fully integrated with academics in a rigorous and relevant curriculum (ACTE, n.d). In sum, CTE is a growing program that provides students with many benefits including skills sets that are immediately relevant in a postsecondary setting.

In the present context are two pathways, the Core Pathway (CP) and the Elective Pathway (EP). The CP pathway is considered the four-year college transfer track and it offers liberal arts classes. The CP pathway requires the students to certify as “college ready” through several benchmarks. The benchmarks are the ACCUPLACER (placement exam), SAT, ACT, PLAN scores, or 3.5+ GPA with two years of English and Math with a B or higher. The EP pathway is a two-year community college transfer track and the courses are elective classes. There is a 2.6 GPA minimum for the EP pathway that is determined by principal discretion; therefore, this limit will vary by schools.

There are 16 career clusters and 79 pathways within CTE offered in a southeastern state that prepare students with 21st century skills. The skill sets students obtain are portable and prepare them to be productive citizens immediately (ACTE, n.d). Upon graduation from high school some students have industry-recognized certifications, providing them the opportunity to obtain jobs in high technology fields earning more money than most educators with advanced degrees.

According to Karp et al. (2004) there are several myths that are associated with CTE coursework and programs. Some of the common misbeliefs are: It is for students that are not going to a four-year university, CTE coursework and programs are a waste of time for intelligent students, and college admissions staff would frown upon community college coursework in high
school. In a study done by Jacobson and Mokher, “Postsecondary CTE concentrators achieve significantly higher earnings than those who majored in academic fields, particularly those employed in an industry related to their program of study” (ACTE, n.d). In other words, the thought process was that a high-flying student should enroll in AP courses instead of DE courses. It is a very well-known fact that every student does not test well. AP college credit would only be awarded if the student obtained a certain score, generally a 4 or 5. When students finish a DE course they are immediately awarded the college credit for any grade higher than a C.

**Statement of the Problem**

Given the value of DE programs for student development, it is important to ensure all students who can benefit are able to enroll. Currently there are disproportionate amounts of at promise students participating in the DE program (Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2004). As Karp et al. (2004) claimed, “Traditionally dual enrollment has been targeted toward the most academically proficient high school students” (p. 10). As such, many students who might benefit from the program are not enrolling and/or do not qualify based on the benchmarks.

The DE program comes with many enrollment challenges. First, all potential core pathway students are required to meet all the necessary benchmarks, i.e. GPA, standardized test scores, attendance, and behavior guidelines. This is a challenge because numerous students of color do not have adequate GPA and test scores, as a result of the inadequacies of many urban schools. It was widely reported, “Minority students attend worse schools than non-Hispanic whites” (Logan, Minca, and Adar, 2012, p. 288). As a Title 1 school we have the same concerns of most other urban schools. Moreover, standardized testing is also known to impose barriers for minority students (Mensh, 1991), ultimately preventing the researcher from allowing certain students to participate in the program because they did not meet the above stated requirements.
Another challenge as the coordinator of the DE program was my upper middle-class biases that led me to assume the parents already conveyed widely-accepted cultural capital practices to their children by enlightening them about the worth of securing an education. In other words, I come from a family that values education. As I became better acquainted with my students, I recognized they possessed a cultural capital that some would frown upon. In contrast with the stereotype that people from lower-incomes devalue education, in many cases it has been shown that lower-income people value the potential of education and see it as a way out of poverty (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). However, in my specific school setting I observed that some parents would rather their child work, help with younger siblings, or play sports instead of taking college coursework. Sullivan (2001) said that the possession of “cultural capital varies with social class, yet the education system assumes the possession of cultural capital. This makes it very difficult for lower-class pupils to succeed in the education system” (p.893). On the other hand, it was important to note that all students bring cultural capital into the classroom (Yosso, 2005). The capital they bring, however, is not recognized or valued within the school setting (Yosso, 2005).

In general, my students come from a rich cultural background that differs from the culture valued within the school structure. My argument was similar to Lisa Delpit (1988); students need access to the “culture of power” in order to access postsecondary training and careers to enhance their lives in the current society. Therefore, as an educator, I must value what students convey from their culture while simultaneously teaching them about the dominant culture and the attached power structure. Given these differences between cultures, there was a need to help the parents and students understand the value of a free college education. Therefore, the goal was for the DE students to unlock the puzzle that privilege has linked to
academic success (Kingston, 2001).

The DE program helps students have more direction and understanding of the college process; it is hoped the program will lead them towards being college and career ready. As such, it gives them access to the culture of power (Delpit, 1988). According to the Silent Epidemic (2006), DE programs also can help decrease dropout rates. Although there are numerous benefits of the DE program, there is a lack of understanding of how it relates to individual students’ experiences while they are enrolled in the program, which leads to the aforementioned outcomes. Another noted gap relates to an understanding of the cultural capital students obtain from the program and what they need in order to reach outcomes related to college and career preparedness.

The purpose of the study was to determine why disproportionate amounts of at promise students participate in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004), and to examine its relationship to cultural capital. Therefore, there was a need to understand the experiences of students in the DE program. The study was intended to fill the gap in the literature by exploring the DE students’ perceptions while they were participating in the program. The audience for the study included parents, students, high school faculty, administrators, community college faculty, staff, and policymakers.

**Significance of Research Problem**

The significance of the problem existed on several levels. At the local level, the demographic breakdown of students served includes minorities who are under-served, under-represented and first generation college students (at promise students), therefore early college access is essential. DE programs are a proven means for increasing high school completion rates among students (Boston Higher Education, Partnership, 2007), especially since the DE program
offers students the ability to graduate high school with a diploma and possibly an associate degree simultaneously.

On the state level (North Carolina), there is an articulation agreement that all public state universities will accept all DE credits (http://www.ctpnc.org/articulation/). However, private universities across the nation are not required to accept any of the DE credits. There are instances where private universities/colleges accepted liberal arts credits and some elective credit as long as they are not in the student’s intended major. That is why Museus, Lutovsky, & Colbeck (2007) insisted on the need to have clear and consistent articulation agreements in place that are applicable throughout the United States.

On the national level the CTE coursework in the ninth and tenth grades is an academic progression into the DE program. Many researchers have now recognized on a national level that CTE and its programs are helpful for many students (Karp et al., 2004). Another example of national recognition comes from Arne Duncan, former Chicago Public Schools CEO and former U.S. Secretary of Education. He stated, “CTE represents a critical investment in our future as well as to the success of our nation's economic system and global competitiveness. CTE is at the forefront of preparing students to be college and career ready. It offers students opportunities for career awareness and preparation by providing them with the academic and technical knowledge and work-related skills necessary to be successful in postsecondary education, training, and employment” (ACTE, n.d.). In other words, if they so choose, most CTE students can go directly into the workplace with entry level skills sets or continue their high school CTE pathway in a college setting. Additionally, CTE helps students re-engage in school and has the potential to reduce dropouts (Hoffman, 2012). Currently, there is a national discussion related to the importance of postsecondary training leading to careers (ACTE, n.d.). Therefore, this type of
programming is important on the policy level (ACTE, n.d.). By extension, it contributes to the economic growth and development in communities while unleashing the students’ true potential in life.

**My Positionality**

**My role and my co-participants.** My role is a College and Career Readiness Counselor within the CTE department. The demographical breakdown of my Title 1 High School consisted of minority, under-served, under-represented, and first-generation college students (*at promise*). My primary responsibility is to facilitate the DE program for 11th- and 12th-grade students. Therefore, as a transition counselor my passion is to see these students succeed and transition to the next stage in their lives.

I am a first-generation college graduate and multiracial female (African American and European descent) that self identifies with being African American. As a native New Yorker, living in the South, I did not attend a historically black college/university (HBCU), and I am not a member of a black sorority. Therefore, many times I am often viewed as an outsider among African American southern females.

I grew up in a two-parent household, lived in the city and suburbs of New York, attended private school for most of my life, and lived in predominately-Caucasian upper-middle class neighborhoods. These microsystems had a profound impact on my life long term. Although I never lived in a poverty-stricken neighborhood, I had family members who resided in public housing projects. Visiting these neighborhoods as a child generated my fondest memories. Kids in both neighborhoods always pointed out what was *different* about me. That created a macrosystem of my wanting to belong to their culture, but it was always made very clear to me I was not the norm in either environment.
Many microsystems in my life merged my experiences as a person of color, and my social and work environments thereby created a mesosystem. These pieces of my life overlapped and created a bridge of power and/or powerless in both the White and Black communities. Climatically, these all led to the start of code switching. In the Black community, I was not *black enough* and in the White community, I was the *different black girl*, neither feeling much like a compliment. As I began to comprehend the benefits of both worlds, I utilized my power as being labeled the *different black girl* in the White community. This power allowed me to obtain employment with predominately-White Fortune corporations such as IBM, PepsiCo, and MasterCard International, to name a few. Although at times I felt I did not belong to either community, I learned to appreciate the best of both worlds.

As such, my lived experiences differ from the students I work with in the DE program. I was able to reap the benefits of growing up in a two-parent household in an upper-middle class neighborhood. Fortunately, I came into the school setting “already equipped with accouterments of the culture of power already in place” (Delpit, 1988, p. 285). In spite of these differences, it was my aim to value my students while giving them access to the culture of power (Delpit, 1988). I perceive the DE program as a way to help give student this access.

I strongly believe the predominately minority population of my student body is at a greater disadvantage than middle and upper-class students. Unfortunately, the research indicates that in the 21st century there still appears to be a blue-collar stigma associated with Career and Technical Education coursework and programs. As an advocate of the DE program my theory is that early college access provides an equal playing field for my impoverished students and provides them with a cultural capital that can be obtained through the program. Additionally, the program provides my students with portable skills that can lead to sustainable employment.
Research Questions

The research sought to address the following questions:

1) What experiences led to students’ enrollment in the dual enrollment program?
2) What are the 12th-grade students- experiences in the dual enrollment program?
3) How does the dual enrollment program support cultural capital needed to prepare students for college?

Theoretical Framework

Cultural capital. Capital is a form of wealth and not necessarily tangible in nature; it can be actual money, property, or knowledge (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). It comes with the ability to exercise power (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). Four categories of capital are social, economic, cultural and symbolic. Although this paper primarily focused on cultural capital, social capital plays an important role in the DE program as well. A relationship exists between social capital connections, social responsibilities, and networks. The DE program allows students to make these very important connections that could potentially help them later in life. Consequently, a family’s capital can determine parents’ ability to transmit the social class of the highbrow culture (HBC) to their children (Sullivan, 2001). Early transmission of the HBC could help provide a smoother transition in school, work, and one’s personal life (Lamont and Lareau, 1988).

Gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are those holding the power to allow access to key places, things, and experiences in life, thereby making cultural capital important because of its relationship to economic and social classes (Kingston, 2001). Cultural capital exists “like money in that in can be saved, invested, and used to obtain other resources (such as access to economic positions)” (Kingston, 2001, p. 89). For instance, having an academic credential can help validate worthiness for job candidacy. Economic capital signifies the ability to purchase items;
cultural capital empowers parents to equip their children with the skills necessary to be successful in education (Lee and Bowen, 2006). Lamont and Lareau (1988) define cultural capital as “an explanation of the connection between social privilege and academic success” (p. 88). In other words, it provides a passcode to access economic and social capital—unfortunately only a few know the code. Interestingly, having cultural capital makes it easier to obtain more capital (Lee and Bowen, 2006). In contrast, when one does not have the cultural capital of the majority access remains limited.

Pierre Bourdieu (2011) is a French sociologist and seminal author of the cultural capital theory. This theory was chosen to frame the research question. Bourdieu (2011) theorized that parents convey cultural capital by enlightening their children about the worth of securing an education. Cultural capital can be “acquired over time, mainly through the socialization process at home and through parental investment in the “right” kinds of cultural training” (as cited by Dumais 2010, p.247). This can be conveyed in three forms: embodied, institutionalized, and objectified (Bourdieu, 2011).

**Types of cultural capital.** Embodied capital is the “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” (Lareau, 1987, p.82). Long-lasting dispositions can be thought of as ways of thinking and living that are integrated within a person. For example, they can consist of informal knowledge of school, linguistic competence, and certain attitudes which have become integrated into an individual’s way of life (Lareau, 1987). When students are aware of the behaviors/customs that are valued within schools, it can be used as cultural capital thus enabling them to acclimate to diverse socio-economic environments.

Institutionalized capital is a form of capital that refers to academic qualifications or credentials (Dumais, 2010). For instance, academic degrees are a form of institutionalized
capital. Degrees or certifications can be used to gain economic capital. For example, CTE students and DE students who complete credentials and/or certifications through the DE program will now be in a position to gain access to jobs, which ultimately leads to economic capital.

Objectified capital refers to more tangible items that include “cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, et cetera)” (Lareau, 1987, p.82). In the instance of students in CTE programs/attending community college, objectified capital might include things such as exposure to several types of engineering programs (mechanical and electrical), cosmetology, and nursing programs with functioning mannequins. Another example could be a level of appreciation of the arts. Colleges would likely offer more access to art paraphernalia and resources than a public high school. The key is the idea of cultural goods such as objects that represent capital for different cultures. For instance, in some cultures wearing a certain brand of clothing can be considered valuable, whereas in other cultures, the brand is inconsequential. Therefore, what is considered capital and how it is transferable varies based on culture (Yosso, 2005).

**Dominant culture.** The dominant culture consists of a group that is influential, powerful, and exercises hegemony over other groups (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Students who are outside of the dominant culture tend to be marginalized (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Thus, utilizing cultural capital can “mark cultural distance and proximity, and monopolize privileges and exclude and recruit new occupants of high status positions,” in other words, controlling access to social institutions, educational institutions, businesses, and politics (Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p. 158). This often leaves the “outsiders” feeling they cannot achieve the “natural familiarity” of individuals born into the “valued” cultural capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

For the at promise students in the DE program being outside of the dominant culture
could potentially limit their access to high quality secondary and postsecondary education.

There are norms and expectations from the dominant culture of which students may not be aware (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Lamont and Lareau (1988) referred to this as the “dominant class exercising symbolic violence i.e. power to impose meanings” (p. 159). This may not be intentional, but it may be perceived by at promise students as a form of isolation resulting in a sense of not belonging or their cultural norms being misunderstood. Dominant culture is historically translated into a form of power that often excludes lower-income families (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Cultural capital can be utilized in a purposeful way by the dominant culture to privilege them and exclude others (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). When cultural capital differs from the dominant culture it can be viewed in several ways. For example, parents that are visible at the school appear to the school faculty as more concerned about their child’s education, and the other parents not as concerned (Lee & Bowen, 2006). However, that assumption would be absurd because it ignores the reasons behind school visibility (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Therefore, that should not be an indication of whether or not they value education. This sometimes results in failure to truly appreciate the cultural capital lower-income families possess. According to Delpit (1988), this form of disempowerment does not acknowledge and value all types of cultural capital. The dominant culture often expects lower-income families to know the rules of power but they were never taught them, hence the need to understand the rules of the culture of power as early as possible (Delpit, 1988). Consequently, it is imperative that we acknowledge the role schools play in the cultural capital realm.

**Schools’ connection to cultural capital.** Schools traditionally mimic the dominant culture, have a significant connection to cultural capital, and intimately relate to power (Delpit,
1988). The schools in the United States have a deficit thinking in assuming minority families are to blame for the achievement gap (Yosso, 2005). Bourdieu contends there are various levels of parental participation in schooling, which hinders the students’ and/or parents' negotiation in the process of schooling. According to Lareau (1987), “Schools are not neutral; their request for parental involvement may be laden with the social and cultural experiences of intellectual and economic elites” (p. 74). Bourdieu’s view was that “Cultural capital is inculcated in the higher-class home, and enables the higher-class student to gain higher educational credentials than the lower-class student” (as cited by Sullivan, 2001, p.894). The at promise students in this study have lived most of their lives impoverished never really having enjoyed the benefits that economic capital and dominant cultural capital brings. Cultural capital is exclusionary and a valuable commodity that many want and need to acquire in order to move forward within the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988).

People in the dominant culture have the ability to determine what counts as cultural capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). If people are not born into the highbrow culture they could potentially obtain dominant cultural capital through schooling (Yosso, 2005). However, according to Bourdieu and Passeron, “Schools draw unevenly on the social and cultural resources of members of the society” (as cited by Lareau, 1987, p.74). In other words, schools do not value the culture that diverse students bring. This is implicit in the methods schools utilize including certain authority structures, linguistic edifices, and the type of curriculum they offer the students (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). In this way schools further marginalize students who are not part of the dominant culture.

Considering these methods, it would suggest children from higher social classes benefit the most because they often enter schools possessing valued characteristics (Delpit, 1988).
Sullivan (2001) suggested the dominant culture in a society understands and possesses the ability to use educated language. It would be optimal if schools valued the culture of people of color (Yosso, 2005). However, in most cases they do not (Yosso, 2005). Because schools are based on the dominant culture, students need to be explicitly educated within the culture of power while at the same time affirming their own culture (Delplit, 1988). Helping students understand the culture of power creates a level of comfort broadly, when interacting with the gatekeepers, curriculum, and other experiences within schools, and specifically, the DE program.

**Community College**

Community colleges should take advantage of the type of cultural capital *at promise* students bring to their environment. Conflicts arise between community colleges and their students when the environment’s accepted practices are unfamiliar to new generations of nontraditional students (Valadez, 1993). These nontraditional students enter school with limited knowledge of higher education (Valadez, 1993). Bourdieu (1986) discovered the educational inequality in schools reinforced certain practices that are more associated with middle-class whites (as cited in Valadez, 1993). Also, the colleges’ teaching styles and methods of assessment may have more relevance to middle-class white students (Valadez, 1993). Some middle-class white students may have experience with the community college practices; unfortunately, these practices may be incongruous to nontraditional students (Valadez, 1993).

It is fair to say community college is a principal gateway to college for many minority students (Valadez, 1993). Some of the students entering have been ill-served in all previous levels of education (Valadez, 1993). One of the challenges for the DE students is the ability to assimilate into a college setting. According to Bourdieu (2011) and Bourdieu and Passeron (as cited in Valadez, 1993) students have to adjust to college life therefore it was vital they acquire
the skill sets to maneuver through the postsecondary system early. This difficult process requires parents and counselors to assist with the progression through the college process. The DE program gives these students the ability to change the trajectory of their lives and future generations while teaching them the more valued cultural capital. Their experiences and/or exposure to postsecondary education could accumulate into a more valued form of cultural capital (Valadez, 1993).

Community colleges may tend to overlook their role in cultural capital. Lamont and Lareau (1988) proposed, “Schools are not socially neutral institutions but reflect the experiences of the dominant class” (p.155). Therefore, through embodied and institutionalized cultural capital, at promise students are able to acquire the social, linguistic, and cultural proficiencies generally associated with upper and middle classes (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Ultimately, it was easier for at promise students in Lamont and Lareau’s study to achieve the natural familiarity similar to those born into a particular cultural capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Conclusion

Application to study (education). Given that schools are based on the White, middle-class culture (Lareau & Hovart, 1999), being White becomes a type of cultural capital to which at promise students of color, may not have access. As a result, minority groups do not have the preferred cultural resources available to them because the rules of the game are built on race-specific interactions (Lareau & Hovart, 1999). Some teachers tend to show prejudice towards students who share their own cultural capital and give them higher grades (Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shuan, 1990). Given the historical legacy of racial discrimination in schools many minority parents cannot presume or trust their children will be treated fairly in school (Lareau & Hovart, 1999). As such, the current study examined student’s experiences through a cultural
capital lens.

The interaction between teachers and students in the DE program is central. In order to learn, students need relationships with their teachers. Teachers in the DE program are responsible for helping students bridge their high school coursework with knowledge and skills that will help them in their adult lives. Yet there is little discussion about how teachers actually evaluate students and more particularly, the significance of teachers’ own cultural capital. That is why DE continues to be an important component that could potentially convey the cultural capital of the schools and the dominant culture.

**Leads to the methodology.** There was a disproportionate number of *at promise* students in the DE program. Given there are so many students who are not part of the dominant culture in the program, it was necessary to understand how cultural capital was used and valued. The purpose of the study was to understand what led students to participate in the DE program and what their experiences entailed.

The hope was the chosen methodology, phenomenology, would allow the researcher to identify the essence of students’ experiences in the DE program. The study would also explicitly examine the role of cultural capital in the DE experience. Given that cultural capital was embedded in the DE program and that cultural assumptions helps to steer students, it was important to examine what capital students brought. In addition, it was critical to analyze how capital was intertwined in the DE program and how students’ experiences in the DE program provided cultural capital that aided students to succeed in college and/or careers.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of the study was to determine why disproportionate numbers of at promise students participate in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004), and to examine its relationship to cultural capital. As Karp et al. (2004) stated, the DE program could benefit an array of students with varying levels of learning abilities. With the DE program traditionally targeted toward the most academically proficient high school students (Karp et al., 2004), there was a need for a clearer understanding of its various facets. In addition, there was a need to investigate how CTE has changed throughout the years and how other Credit-Based Transition programs (CBTPs) operate. Other goals of the study were to reveal the myths and inconsistencies, determine the equitability of the programs, acknowledge the criticisms, and lastly identify how the program brought value to the high school experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1) What experiences led to students’ enrollment in the dual enrollment program?

2) What are the 12th-grade students’ experiences in the dual enrollment program?

3) How does the dual enrollment program support cultural capital needed to prepare students for college?

The literature review is organized according to the following themes that emerged; Career and Technical Education, Credit-Based Transition Programs (CBTPs), Dual Enrollment, Criticisms, Student Dual Enrollment Experiences Takeaways, and Value Added. The hope was the above themes would shed some light on the importance of the program, the advantages of the program over other CBTPs, and uncover some of the inconsistencies and myths associated with the program.
Career and Technical Education

**CTE then.** Conley and McGaughy (2012) reported in the 1920s that some high schools engaged in practices that separated students by careers versus college bound. Along the same lines, large school districts had “separate high schools for vocationally oriented students and those going on to college” (Conley & McGaughy, 2012, p. 28). In other words, there were distinct differences between core classes and vocational classes. For instance, the thought process was if students wanted to use their hands they were meant for CTE courses and students who desired to use their minds were better suited for core classes (Conley & McGaughy, 2012). This fostered the belief that vocational education was only for specific students. Newlon (1933) expressed there was “once a rigid prescription and wide freedom of choice…[that gave] lip service to the new psychology of learning and the new methods but [clung] firmly to the old…familiar academics” (p. 396). In sum, students had more choices on the secondary level but the mindset for some, was that core classes, such as English, Math, and Science, are still more highly valued. This was misleading, because some never realized that CTE extended beyond high school (ACTE, n.d.). In other words, students can continue their career-oriented coursework within the college setting.

In terms of program relevance, educators were heavily embedded in the paradigm that vocational education was solely on the high school level and therefore trained students for a particular occupation (ACTE, n.d.). Essentially, students were trained on specific skills that they could use for a specific job. Coleman’s (1981) research on public and private schools unearthed that public schools had a wider array of elective courses when compared to private schools, such as mechanics, wood/machine shop, and driver education (Coleman, 1981). This was to demonstrate the vast differences in what CTE offered.
CTE now. What some may consider elective courses in the early 20th century has transformed dramatically (ACTE, n.d.). One of the modifications was the name change from vocational education to Career & Technical Education (CTE). Another change was that job training is now referred to as career readiness preparation (Conley & McGaughy, 2012). Additionally, misrepresentation of vocational education had occurred when students were obligated to choose between core and CTE (Lekes, Bragg, Loeb, Oleksiw, Marszalek, Brooks-LaRaviere, & Hood, 2007). Currently CTE is available to all students regardless of postsecondary plans, learning disabilities, and/or academic ability (http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/cte/, n.d.).

Students within CTE are now expected to create a well-rounded, comprehensive plan for their coursework (Lekes et al., 2007). These plans include a mixture of core classes and CTE classes such as criminal justice, medical assisting, or mechatronics engineering. Because of this comprehensive approach, CTE prepares both youths and adults for a wide range of careers while furthering their educational opportunities (ACTE, n.d.). In contrast, traditional high school programs minimized the importance of CTE courses. Newlon (1933) insisted that “high schools continue to emphasize the importance of the older subjects while adding to its curriculum many newer subjects of practical value” (p. 397). For example, Coleman’s (1981) research listed vocational courses mechanics, machine shop, and drivers ed. Today, CTE courses offerings have been expanded to include engineering, game development, and biomedical, to name a few (ACTE, n.d.), often culminating in various certifications (e.g., Microsoft, Adobe, ServeSafe). Interestingly, most educators are preparing students for jobs that do not exist yet (www.edudemic.com/students-of-the-future/, n.d.). Therefore, it is critical that education remains abreast of the current job trends.
Many new jobs have evolved that required particular skill sets which are obtainable through CTE programs (Conley, 2012). Conley (2012) noted, “The skills to be successful in this new economy are fundamentally different from those that the old economy required” (Conley, 2012, p.28). CTE has responded to the needs of the new economy by adding training options and certifications according to the ACTE website. CTE presently boasts on their website their programs encompasses 16 Career Clusters and 79 pathways (ACTE, n.d.). Research has demonstrated CTE is no longer a “separate track” for students; it is now fully integrated with academics in a rigorous and relevant curriculum (Conley, 2012). Newlon (1933) confirmed, as far back as 1933, there was a need to make general education more vital and effective. The change in economy coupled with historical knowledge and experience supported the idea of working across curriculums that allowed the students to experience real-world connections and obtained skills sets that were adaptable in the workplace (Lekes et al., 2007).

CTE incorporates varying levels of education, including industry-recognized credentials, postsecondary certificates, and two- and four-year degrees that permitted a smooth transition from high school CTE programs (Lekes et al., 2007). The U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics reported about 60% of college students are involved in CTE programs and more than 25% of the adult U.S. population participates in work-related training. There are a variety of approaches within CTE that aid students with obtaining credentials. Other programs supporting students’ early college access are Credit Based Transition Programs which include the DE program, International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP) courses, virtual-based college credit, concurrent enrollment, early college, and middle college programs. According to Lekes et al. (2007), more than 50% of high school students enrolled in core classes are also taking CTE courses.
Credit-Based Transition Programs (CBTPs)

Students considering early college/career access have many options nationally on how to access programming that would help meet their goals. Given the variety of programs, students and their families can make a decision about which program is the best fit for their needs. Hoffman (2003) stated,

Educational terrain belonged almost exclusively to a small privileged group of young people: those whose families could afford high-quality private high schools and those in well-funded public school districts that offered AP and similar options to their highest achieving students. (p. 44)

In other words, there was a connection between cultural capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988) and program enrollment choices. In order to examine how students made choices regarding the DE program, it was important to describe the different options students were presented. Also, it was critical to examine student choices related to DE. Given that Title 1 high schools generally do not have equal preparation similar to non-Title 1 schools, CBTPs can be a great tool for students (Mensh, 1991).

Advanced Placement courses. There are several ways states handle their CBTPs. The first program was the examination-based college credit program, which comprises AP and IB programs. These programs require students to take an examination at the culmination of the course in order to obtain the college credit (Herbert, 2001). Some states offer both DE and AP while viewing them as competing programs (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012). However, the AP program served a certain population with specific goals in mind (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012). AP was initially designed for advanced students who have “maxed out” all of their high school course offerings (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012). This offered those students an opportunity to
take college level coursework. However, on the other hand, Hoffman’s (2005) study confirmed DE was more valuable because it allows college learning to measure multiple ways, not merely on a “single, all-or-nothing test” like AP, since most institutions require a score of a 4-5 on the AP exam in order to receive the college credit (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012).

**Concurrent enrollment.** Concurrent enrollment occurs when students take college course work on the high school campus (Hoffman, 2012). The high school teachers are certified as adjunct professors through a local college/university (Hoffman, 2012). This makes the teacher eligible to teach a college level course. (Do not confuse this with AP courses.) It is similar to DE, however, the major difference is the students participate in college courses on the high school campus not on the college campus (Hoffman, 2012).

Criticism was common for high school teachers who taught college level courses on a high school campus with concurrent enrollment programs (Farrell & Seifert, 2007). Some high school instructors did not meet the college’s employment requirements (Farrell & Seifert, 2007). Therefore, the insinuation was the students were not receiving college-level instruction. Even though these trained instructors were certified, and taught on the university level, it is still a controversial issue (Herbert, 2001).

The effectiveness of the concurrent enrollment program has come under scrutiny (Burns & Lewis, 2000). The study performed by Burns and Lewis (2000) discovered that participation in college coursework on the high school campus decreased satisfaction for the high school students. One of the study’s participants compared it to having “another high school class” (Burns & Lewis, 2000) as opposed to the DE program’s being located on the college campus, as such functioning as a true college environment. Some felt permitting students to take college courses on the high school campus was a disservice because the students were not experiencing
the rigors of college work and the social aspect of the college campus (Herbert, 2001). Herbert’s (2001) study referred to the concurrent enrollment as “gypsy courses.” His study determined some colleges did not accept the credit unless a college professor on a college campus taught the course and the class included other college students (Herbert, 2001). On the other hand, some argued allowing students to take their first college course on the high school campus created a safety net (Farrell & Seifert, 2007), since research has shown a majority of students fail their first college course through the DE program (Jordan, 2001). Therefore, some may feel it is better for students to participate in the concurrent enrollment program initially as opposed to the DE program.

**Dual enrollment.** The CBTP DE is an early college access program that allows students to take college courses while still enrolled as a high school student. According to Karp et al. (2004), “Dual enrollment courses are actual college courses—rather than college-like or college-level” (p. 11). It serves as a bridge between high school and colleges (Karp et al., 2004) and it offers two different pathways: liberal arts and elective. When DE first started in 1970s, it was utilized as way for gifted students to challenge themselves by participating in college level coursework (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012). The program was intended to provide a smoother transition into college while providing academic momentum (Burns & Lewis, 2000).

**How the DE program operates.** Students participate in courses with college professors, attend classes with other college students, and attend the college campus. DE increases college access but more importantly it decreases the necessity for remedial courses for college freshman (Lekes et. al., 2007). Another method in which students could obtain college credit through the DE program is the virtual-based college credit courses offered at various colleges/universities. Students can participate in classes during or after the actual high school day by logging into their
asynchronous class. However, not all students would be eligible for the program; it depends where they reside (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012).

**Eligibility requirements.** The eligibility requirements for the DE program vary from state to state. For instance, several have a GPA requirement and standardized test score minimum while others require students to fulfill the same college admissions requirements of regular incoming college freshman according to Karp (2012). It is important to note that some DE eligibility requirements are determined by each state (CAA, 2014), while local school districts set other requirements (CAA, 2014). The requirements established by schools and districts could shift depending on local needs and priorities (CAA, 2014).

Karp (2012) suggested when the eligibility requirements are altered either way it can take away from the program. For instance, if you make the eligibility standards too high you would limit the number of students that could truly benefit from the opportunity (Karp, 2012). One could also argue if you make the standards too low you may set some students up for failure, making the DE appear dumb-downed (Bailey, Hughes, Karp, & 2002). If standards were too low students who are struggling with traditional high school level coursework may be admitted into the program but are not truly prepared for college level work. Chances are they would not be successful. It is central to balance the needs of college readiness for students while also offering a wide-range of admissions by setting multi-tiered eligibility benchmarks (Karp, Hughes, & Cormier, 2012).

**Dual enrollment pathways.** The pathway design was developed for greater access to reach more students (Karp et al., 2004). The recent development of offering several pathways to the DE program can not only help academically proficient students but also offer options for the average learners as well (Karp et al., 2004). For example, the southeastern state in this study’s
2014 Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) listed two pathways, the Core Pathway (CP) and the Elective Pathway (EP). The CP pathway is considered the four-year college transfer track and it offers liberal arts classes. This pathway requires the students to certify as “college ready” through several benchmarks. The benchmarks are ACCUPLACER (placement exam), SAT, ACT, PLAN scores, or 3.6+ GPA with two years of English and Math with a B or higher (http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/academic-programs/career-college-promise). The EP pathway is a two-year community college transfer track and the courses are elective classes. There is a 2.6 GPA minimum for the EP pathway that is determined by principal discretion; therefore, this limit will vary by schools. The diversity of the pathway offerings provides benefits for a diverse group of students (Karp et al., 2004).

**Benefits of the DE program.** DE programs are a proven means for increasing high school completion rates among students (Boston Higher Education, Partnership, 2007). Farrell and Seifert (2007) reported students who participate in the DE program have a chance to experience what college life entails. Largely, the framework of the literature agreed the most impactful CBTPs were the ones that took place completely on the college campus (Burns & Lewis, 2000) as opposed to concurrent enrollment where the students took their college courses on the high school campus. In addition, several studies concluded 12th-graders were less likely to experience “senioritis” and require remedial courses in college, and more likely to complete high school and finish college (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morrison, 2006) as a result of these programs. Crouse and Allen (2014) also found the DE students outperformed non-DE students in ACT scores, GPA, and preparedness for college, and a majority of them enrolled in four-year institutions once they graduated from high school.

There is also a money saving component of the DE program. Some of the cost-saving
features that several states implemented were to pay for students' tuition, books, and fees that ultimately permitted students to complete an undergraduate degree sooner (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Another benefit is the DE increased the course offerings for students that “max out” their high school course options and for schools that had limited elective course offerings (Karp et al., 2004). Students can also obtain industry-recognized CTE credentials, certifications, and associate degrees (Lekes et al., 2007). Although the CTE website states that their programs encompass 16 Career Clusters and 79 pathways, unfortunately there still appear to be a stigma and myths associated with CTE and their programs. Therefore, it was important to examine the myths and perceptions of the DE program.

Myths. There are several myths associated with DE programs. Some of the common misconceptions are that the students did not plan to attend a four-year university and the program is a misuse of time for intelligent students (Burns & Lewis, 2000). When in fact, the Southern Regional Education Board (2004) noted, students that participate in cross-curriculum programs (combination of core and CTE courses) have higher reading, math and sciences scores than other students. CTE students are significantly more likely than their non-CTE counterparts to possess the capability to solve problems, complete projects, conduct research, do math, apply for college, and improve work-related communication skills, time management, and critical thinking skills during high school (Lekes et al., 2007).

There was also the argument that students were better off taking AP classes instead of college courses (Klopfenstein & Lively, 2012). However, in order to be successful in an AP class, one must pass the test. According to Hoffman (2005), DE allows students to obtain and prove their knowledge throughout the semester as opposed to a one-day all-or-nothing test like AP exams.
How CTE courses align with the DE program. The most common fallacy is that the DE program and CTE coursework are only applicable to average students interested in blue-collar jobs (Gentry, Hu, & Rizza, 2007). However, Gentry, Hu, and Rizza’s (2007) study confirmed that “CTE programs are a viable placement for talented students as an appropriate environment for the development of student’s talents” (p. 195). In reality, according to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, almost all high school students participate in CTE, and more than half take three or more credits. Then the question raised was “How can all parties involved see the value of CTE coursework as a natural progression into the DE program?” According to Karp (2012), dual enrollment plays a vital function in college preparedness. However, Karp (2012) further stated it is important for state and local levels to implement the programs appropriately. In addition, it is imperative school level personnel especially counselors were versed on the importance and changes of the DE program (Karp, 2012).

Most students have a general idea of their career path, but are often not clear how to accomplish their desired intentions (Kazis, 2005). The DE program and coursework can support students through the various course offerings and ultimately point them in the direction of the DE program in their junior and senior year of high school (ACTE, n.d.). Total engagement is indispensable for students, parents with counselors, and teachers in developing a course of study related to the student’s career interest. This ultimately aids students with recognizing the value in their high school education while visualizing the real-world connection (Karp et al., 2004).

It is important to note there are many versions of the DE program from state to state (Karp et al., 2004). As with most state-run programs, the requirements could differ which could result in significant criticism because of the lack of consistency in the programs. This may
include, for example, entrance requirements, standardized testing, age/grade level, whether the receiving school is a community college or a four-year university, and offering college classes on the high school campus.

**Criticisms**

Researchers and policymakers noted *at promise* students are not always involved in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004). Some states have designed their programs for academically advanced students by requiring standardized test scores, GPA minimums, and teacher recommendations (Museus et al., 2007). Other states “have inadvertently limited a relatively affluent and other traditional student populations, thereby contributing to increases college access and success among already advantaged student populations,” declared Museus et al. (2007, p. 6). In other words, these students already have the whereabouts and the family members who have previously attended college (Museus et al., 2007) as opposed to allowing more access to first-generation college with limited knowledge of postsecondary education (Valadez, 1993). These restrictive policies tend to exclude certain students that need the DE program the most (Museus et al., 2007).

**Equity and access.** Only 40% of high schools in the United States offer college credit courses and generally underrepresented students are not able to participate due to lack of preparation (Hoffman, 2003). More often than not, the framework of the literature agreed student participation in CBTPs while in high school demonstrated positive results. However, there are questions about the type of student who is able to participate in these programs. It is in the student’s best interest to participate in such programs, but there are concerns of both equity and access.

**The gatekeepers.** According to Hoffman (2005), some of the DE programs are only for
proficient students that had academic portfolios which reflected high GPAs and high scoring standardized tests, with most states screening students for the DE program through academic gatekeepers such as SAT, ACT, ACCUPLACER, and COMPASS. This ultimately makes it difficult for some average learners to qualify (Hoffman, 2005).

Nevertheless, Mensh’s (1991) research showed that it is difficult for minority students to succeed on standardized tests. He also argued that standardized tests have been shown to contribute to the continuation of social, economic, and political hurdles for minority students (Mensh, 1991). Moreover, Gregory and Lee’s (1986) study revealed the individuals that designed standardized tests specifically intended them to screen out certain individuals, which resulted in denying some students access to particular educational programs (Gregory & Lee, 1986). Then the question becomes whether the program is truly for anyone, or are the tests being utilized to discriminate? Therefore, it is imperative that further research determine what is in the student’s best interest. Is it a good idea to lessen the academic gatekeeper’s requirements? It is important to note the conundrum involved was how to ensure the program’s accessibility to provide equitability for all students. Museus et al. (2007), stated succinctly:

If the intended goals do not include a provision for equity, those involved in the formation and implementation of the program run the risk of producing unintended consequences that exacerbate already problematic racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in college access. Thus, consideration of access to participation in dual enrollment program is essential. (p. 12)

*Dual enrollment credits not accepted at all colleges.* The researcher learned at a counselor only college fair there are still some colleges that do not consider DE credits in their admissions decision (Herbert, 2001). There needs to be a smoother credit transfer process for
DE students (Herbert, 2001). Boswell (2001) posited there is a need for uniformity in early college access programs. This is an area of contention since there are no specific national data or rules that governed the DE program (Herbert, 2001).

Burns and Lewis (2000) contended that virtually no problem exists concerning an involved high school accepting the dual enrollment hours for credit; however, the transferability of the courses to a different community college or university is sometimes a difficult issue. When a dual credit agreement is reached between high school and a community college, there is seldom an issue of transferability between those two institutions. The problem occurs when the student attempts to transfer the credit hours to a university of college that was not involved in the dual credit agreement.

It was unfortunate that the acceptance of college credit is problematic for some colleges. That is why Museus et al. (2007) argued that articulation agreements should encompass rules regarding the ability to transfer college credits to any two- or four-year college/university. More importantly, the advisors/counselors working with these students must be versed on the articulation agreement in order to provide students with the most current and accurate information (Museus et. al, 2007). Lastly, the discourse surrounding the divide between theory and practice in CBTPs is prevalent. For instance, in theory, college credit programs are preparing students for college level work. Conversely, in practice some selective colleges do not accept the college credit (Museus, et al., 2007).

*Lack of transportation.* The final area of criticism is the lack of transportation provided for the students to travel to/from the college campus (Museus et al., 2007). Generally, the students attend their high school courses first and left to attend their college courses or vice versa. Unfortunately, some less-fortunate students would automatically be ineligible to
participate in the DE program based on their lack of transportation (Burns & Lewis, 2003). Whose responsibility is it to provide transportation for these students to/from the college campus? The department of public instruction in conjunction with colleges should allocate resources to help pay for extras such as fees, books, and transportation (Museus et al., 2007). All stakeholders recognize the value this program brings to many students. When it comes to the topic of equity and access, the hope is most would readily agree in order to make this program viable, the lack of transportation should be addressed.

**Student Dual Enrollment Experience Takeaways**

**Rigor—unlike high school.** Kanny’s (2015) participants reported they liked attaining college credits while in high school and appreciated the rigor of the college classes. For instance, one participant said, “It presented new things we’d never done before. I had my first all-nighter!” (p. 61). Unfortunately, some students felt high school was not as rigorous (Kanny, 2015). Some students also expressed that high school did not allow them to utilize different types of learning and it was only one way—the teacher’s way (Kanny, 2015). Another example of this was noted in the Burns and Lewis (2000) study, when one participant noted that high school was too familiar to her and it managed to make her “zone out” as opposed to the newness of the college environment. She felt she was able to concentrate more and wanted to take more notes (Burns & Lewis, 2000). Additionally, Parke, Nichols, and Brown (2002) reported students lacked motivation because of their schools’ failure or incompetence to have programs directed to their academic desires.

As a result, DE students were able to learn firsthand what was expected of college level coursework. Consequently, the students took their college courses more seriously and felt accountable as opposed to feeling it was the teacher’s responsibility (Burns & Lewis, 2000).
Increased accountability. A student in Karp’s (2012) research initially thought it was better to have classes in a row without a break because he would only have to be in school for a couple of hours. Then, he could go home and take a nap or watch television. This particular student later learned the need to be accountable because there was no one that was going to hold his hand in college. After he participated in a class, he was quoted as saying “You gotta do it [be academically successful] all on your own” (Karp, 2012, p. 25). This was a perfect teachable moment about accountability. Based on the participant’s comment he now acknowledged his mistaken preconceived notions surrounding college expectations. The student learned it all depended on one’s commitment level to succeed. In order to be successful in the course it took a great deal of hard work, dedication, and effective work/study habits.

Burns and Lewis’s (2000) participant said there was no one at the college level to offer the what, where, and how unless you asked for help. The college environment forced her to be accountable. This student also admitted she was worried in the beginning but quickly realized once she became comfortable with her new surroundings she was proud of herself (Burns & Lewis, 2000). Subsequently the students learned about college behaviors and expectations from the other college students. Fortunately, the DE experience allows the students to have one foot in high school and another in college.

Role of a college student. In Karp’s (2012) discussions with 26 DE participants all except one had no idea of what it meant to be a college student. By the end of the study 17 of the participants had a very different understanding of college, teachers, and their expectations. One of Karp’s participants was quoted as saying, “[College students] could pick like what times they wanna go in and what times they wanna leave. They can go to class if they want, or not, and I guess, the teachers don’t really mark them there” (Karp, 2012, p. 24). When more questions
were asked, she responded, “I don’t know, I’ve never been to college!” (Karp, 2012, p. 24). The last comment was very profound because the fact was she did not know, and why, because she had never been a college student. This was especially true in this particular study, because the at promise population did not know what to expect and most of their parents could not offer any assistance because they had never been to college. Lastly, according to Hugo (2001), this population of students encounters substantial obstacles when attempting to attain a college education (Hugo, 2001).

A textbook illustration of this new role was expressed in Karp’s (2012) study, when one participant stated he “did not learn about the expectations college professors have of their students because someone told me about them or because I observed others engage in them.” Rather, he experienced them for himself: “He was expected to act as a college student and came to understand the demand placed upon role incumbents” (Karp, 2012, p. 26). In the literature review Karp (2012) referenced this was role rehearsal and anticipatory socialization. These participants’ stories were perfect examples of learned behaviors. These learned behaviors enabled students to understand the role expected of them. It exposed them to different circumstances that helped them to grow into their new role and become excited about what college had to offer them (Karp, 2012).

Positive experience—desire to continue in college. Burns and Lewis’s (2000) participants noted the DE program was a positive experience for them. Three participants also used terms such as: “fun,” “a step up,” and made it “easier to switch gears between high school and college” (Burns & Lewis, 2000, p. 6). All of the participants were quoted as saying they would continue in the DE program (Burns and Lewis, 2000). In another study done by Medvide and Bluestein (2010), all of their participants stated they now had goals to continue in college,
work, and also felt better prepared to choose their majors. Four of Medvide and Bluestein’s (2010) participants stated the DE program exposed them to STEM courses. One of the participants said, “I know that the dual enrollment program is better than hanging out in the streets, than just doing a lot of things that aren’t educational or academic. I think that academics are one of the most important things in life” (p. 547). Based on the comments above it was clear many students appreciated the experience and can now envision the value of the program. After participating in the DE program the students felt better prepared for college. They also had more of a direction in regards to potential college majors as well as career options.

**Value Added**

DE is an investment for secondary and postsecondary education (Jones, 2014). Based on the research students are ready for the rigors of college and understand how to pilot the college system (Jones, 2014). In other words, they understand how to sign up for tutoring, purchase textbooks, register for classes, speak with a teacher during office hours, and how to submit work online (Parke, Nichols, & Brown, 2002). They also experienced a newfound respect and understanding for their high school classes (Jones, 2014).

The CTE program prevented many students from dropping out of high school and gave them the ability to visualize the real world connection (Hoffman, 2012). According to Joe Klein (2012), “Career and technical education (CTE) …has become a pathway that even some college-bound advanced-placement students are pursuing,” especially since many CTE high school courses are now majors in most colleges. The data demonstrated the students that participated in CTE coursework were more likely to be successful in college (D’Amico, Morgan, Robertson, & Rivers, 2013).

Gehring’s (2001) study emphasized that many seniors were not suffering from
“senioritis” because of the newness and excitement of the DE program. Moreover, in a study done by The Silent Epidemic (Bridgeland et al., 2006), it was reported 81% percent of dropouts stated they would have stayed in school if they were able to make a more real-world connection. Interestingly, a ratio of one CTE class for every two academic courses minimized the risk of student dropouts (Plank, DeLuca, & Estacion, 2005). In the words of Allen & Dadgar (2012), some of the results of CTE coursework and programs included higher GPAs, increased college enrollment, and students obtaining more high school credits. According to Bailey, Hughes, & Karp (2002), none of the previous research seemed to cover the fact that CTE coursework and programs motivated the unmotivated students while preparing them for real jobs.

There were components of the program that symbolized several forms of capital for students (Cates and Schaefle, 2011), for instance, the ability to learn the more valued cultural capital, an increase in their human capital by completing a degree and/or certification, and expanding their social capital by learning how to network with individuals that could assist them later in life. Through the CTE program, students could now view school as more relevant to their needs and make postsecondary decisions based on their newly-obtained knowledge through the DE program and coursework. Although the ACTE website was not an empirical study it was important to note it had the following information (D’Amico, Morgan, Robertson, & Rivers, 2013).

- CTE engages students in active participation and hands-on learning, and provides opportunity for personalized learning, thereby enabling students to feel empowered and involved in their own decision-making while encouraging critical-thinking skills.
- The once-limited vocational education is now CTE take-away skills that prepare
students to be productive citizens immediately.

- Upon graduating from high school, some students have industry-recognized certifications. They are able to obtain jobs in high technology fields, making more money than most educators with advanced degrees.

- Moreover, CTE improves our nation's global competitiveness, which in turn helps with economic growth while also providing the United States with a guaranteed prepared workforce.

The DE students increased their independence and desired to continue in college, insisted Burns and Lewis (2003). Educators should be able to visualize the importance of bridging the divide between the core and CTE (Plank et al., 2005). In a study done by Plank et al., (2005) when CTE was combined with core, it was “good medicine” because the combination played a vital role in the success of all students.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education stated there were 12 million students participating in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs. This was proof CTE goes beyond the walls of high school. In another study performed by I. A. Ghazalah (1987), an Ohio University professor concluded the performance of college students in CTE programs revealed these students were able to obtain higher paying jobs than non-CTE students and maintained their income advantage over a five year period.

The Stakeholders

There are many stakeholders in the DE program. The students benefit the most because their CTE skills are portable and stackable credentials (ACTE, n.d.). The DE program provides exposure to the college environment (Karp, 2012). Karp (2012) asserted that “Students in dual enrollment participated in anticipatory socialization and were able to learn the role of the college
students in advance of matriculation” (p. 23). In other words, they learned how to maneuver through the complicated higher education system more easily (Valadez, 1993), ultimately increasing their cultural capital exposure; this played a critical role in terms of college readiness (Cates & Schaeble, 2011).

A study performed by Johnson and Brophy (2006) determined parents benefitted indirectly from the cost-saving feature of having to pay for fewer college courses, because their children would have fewer classes to take once they enrolled in college full time (Hoffman 2005). Lastly, the evidence dictated the students were less likely to change majors in college because they now had more of a direction and/or focus because of the DE program (Hoffman, 2005).

The high school benefitted from having less overcrowded classrooms, especially in courses; students did not need to graduate (Bailey et al., 2002). The teachers had more motivated students because students could now envision real-life applications (Karp and Jeong, 2008). The college/universities benefitted from the increased enrollment after high school graduation and less need for remedial coursework (Bridgeland, DiLulio & Morrison, 2006). Finally, the college admissions staff benefitted from having students that truly knew what they wanted to pursue in college because of their exposure in the DE program.

**Summary**

Farrell and Seifert (2007) emphasized DE programs increased their states’ human capital. Each state that participated in the program now had a more educated population. Hence, it was critical to the future of students as well as to the success of our nation's economic system and global competitiveness. The research established there was an association with capital as it encompassed self-fulfilling employment and determining an individual's quality of life as it
involved CTE programs. In the study performed by Cates and Schafle (2011) the findings concluded it was necessary to track students after graduation to determine if social and culture capital played a role in their preparation.

Lastly, the research disclosed there was very little information that included the student’s perspective after taking CTE coursework and/or participating in the programs. It was important to acknowledge that CTE was not a waste of time for intelligent students because Ganzert’s (2014) findings concluded dual enrollment was positively related to college success. Therefore, it was a necessity to develop a comprehensive program that incorporated best practices for supporting students in their CTE coursework and programs (Bailey et al., 2002).

**Discoveries and Implications that Inform the Study for Further Research**

The literature pointed to several implications for further research in the following areas: the need to implement an advisory period (high school), a DE peer support group, academic support services (college), development of a program of study (high school and college), in-depth application process (high school and college), comprehensive orientation process (high school and college), and more definitive roles of the high school and college personnel. Farrell and Seifert (2007) believed “Postsecondary institutions and high schools entered into dual-enrollment programs for well-intentioned reasons…common issues were availability of college student services and academic preparation” (p. 70). However, it was important to have a definitive policy on whose responsibility it was to help ensure these students had a smooth transition into their new roles as high school and college student.

An advisory period was found to be very beneficial in the high school setting ((Museus et al., 2007). The free period generally occurred between 30-45 minutes each day. With the advisory period built into the school day it could alleviate some stress for the students. It would
allow students the ability to meet up with peers, speak with guidance counselors, and consult teachers for extra help/clarity. This advisory period would also be advantageous to the DE students because it would permit them time to speak with other DE students for peer support.

The next implication for research concerned peer support groups that consist of all DE students and an adult advisor. The peer support group would be accompanied by an advisory period added to the high school day. It would be a safe place where students could ask questions, research, and still feel connected to the high school experience. Lastly, the college could provide academic support services for struggling students.

Museus et al. (2007) theorized the need for academic support services where advisors could work with the DE students. The research findings of Reid and Moore (2008) determined it was important for the school counselors to be knowledgeable in regards to the college process and the importance of disseminating information in a timely manner. Farrell and Seifert (2007) insisted that “Dual enrollment programs assist students to prepare for college integration if classes are taught on the college campus and students have access to academic and student affairs opportunities” (p. 74). Offering academic support services to students to assist with the transition from high school student to college student was a necessity (Museus et al., 2007).

Another hurdle in the literature exposed there was no clear process or path established for students in regards to college course selection. There is a need to develop a program of study for the DE students. How this program is delivered and supported would have a greater and positive impact with students (An, 2013). Hoffman (2005) suggested creating an educational plan for each DE student that outlined his or her college and high school courses. Core teachers at the high school level could help develop a detailed program of study to guide students through the course selection process. For instance, the program of study would include the progression of
math courses (Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, etc.) as opposed to letting students choose college courses haphazardly with no regard to their strengths, weaknesses, and prior completed courses. This idea would allow students to imagine the trajectory of their coursework in comparison to their postsecondary options.

Interestingly, the outcome from the literature further confirmed there was a need to incorporate a more thorough application process. “Black and Hispanic seniors were still significantly underrepresented and White seniors overrepresented in dual enrollment courses” (Pretlow & Wathington, 2014, p.47). It is central to implement a process that would cast a wider net to reach a more diverse group of students (An, 2013). There was a recommendation that the admissions process should entail a review of applications on an individual basis (Museus et al., 2007). This would allow the administrators to determine eligibility by not just reviewing GPAs and test scores but taking into consideration those that demonstrate growth. Indeed, it is highly likely a thorough application and in-depth orientation process would give students a better understanding of the expectations and once on the college campus the college advisor could provide further support.

Therefore, in order to improve an existing program, it would be most beneficial to invite a college academic advisor from the local community college to speak with the students to help oriented them to the college experience prior to starting their first college course (Charlier & Duggan, 2009). This orientation could include information on the student ID, parking permit, tutoring services, etc. In most cases, the college academic advisor would have access to more in-depth information than the local high school liaison.

With the ongoing sparring between the high schools and the colleges, the last research implication revealed the important roles high school and college personnel play in the DE
program (Reid & Moore, 2008). The research findings of Reid and Moore (2008) determined that it is important for the high school counselors to be knowledgeable in regards to the college process and for information to be disseminated in a timely manner. There is a need for collaboration between the secondary and postsecondary (Karp and Jeong, 2008). There must be a combined accountability for secondary and postsecondary institutions to help with identifying and advising the DE students (Hoffman 2005).

A high school principal in an article written by Gehring (2001) said high schools do not have resources such as college-caliber lab facilities, research capabilities, and tutoring services, therefore high schools cannot provide classes that are equivalent to what students receive in a college setting. After participating in the DE program students are prepared for the rigors of college level work (Pretlow & Wathington, 2014). This makes DE even more important therefore we must examine the implications from the research.

There was a scaffolding effect for each gap in the literature, thereby creating layers of potential solutions, with the advisory period at the core. The following were the ripple effects: The advisory period would allow the peer support group to meet. The DE students would have time to attend a thorough application and orientation process during the advisory period. The core teachers would meet with the DE students during the advisory period to develop a program of study. Students could also schedule time to meet with the college’s academic support services department to discuss concerns. In sum, the high school and college personnel would have clear best practices of their role in the process, especially since for most they are the first and only point of contact for students in the DE program.
Chapter 3: Research Design: Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine why disproportionate amounts of \textit{at promise} students participate in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004), and to examine its relationship to cultural capital. Therefore, there was a need to understand the experiences of students in the DE program. The audience for this study included parents, students, high school faculty, administrators, community college faculty, staff, and policymakers.

Research Questions

This study intended to fill the gap in the literature of the under-researched areas by exploring the DE students’ perceptions while participating in the program and was guided by the following research questions:

1) What experiences led students’ enrollment in the dual enrollment program?
2) What are the 12th-grade student’s experiences in the dual enrollment program?
3) How does the DE program support cultural capital needed to prepare students for college?

Methodology

This phenomenology study sought to examine, challenge, and explore the perceptions of the currently dual enrolled students. This path was insightful, thoughtful, and asked unpretentious and easy to understand questions with a qualitative aim that brought about awareness of the problem while providing answers (Chenail, 1995). The goal was to take a holistic approach that would expose patterns of relationships amongst the voices of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).
Paradigm Relationship

Interpretivism (Clark, 1956) focused on the process rather than outcomes. It was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore the participants’ truth. The paradigm assumed that there were “multiples realities…reality is not an object that can be discovered and measured but rather a construction of the human mind” (Merriam, 1991, p. 48). More specifically, as a researcher it was important to recognize when working with human subjects there would be many variables in each scenario.

The demographic breakdown of the participants in this study included minority, under-represented, under-served, and first generation college students populations. The researcher kept in mind the participants’ belief systems would construct their perception rather than facts (Merriam, 1991). Therefore, it was imperative to acknowledge the importance of having individuals with varied experiences and this method allowed the researcher to capture those occurrences.

Research Design

A phenomenological research design was selected as a flexible and proven resource to compose a detailed analysis on the perceptions of the DE students. It illuminated the participants perceptions’ that triggered and impacted their behavior as it related to cultural capital (Creswell, 2013). Since the relationship between the participants and the researcher was less formal than a teacher/student relationship they were comfortable elaborating. This permitted the opportunity for the researcher to capture the language and imagery of the participants. The goal was to advance the topic of study therefore it was crucial to choose the right paths for framing the questions. The researcher asked simple questions that allowed this qualitative study to shed light on this multifaceted issue and find solutions (Chenail, 1995). It offered the researcher an
opportunity to uncover and comprehend the connections among existing research, personal interests, and methodological approaches. Additionally, the design permitted the researcher to respond instantaneously to the participants with subsequent questions based on the information they provided.

Ultimately, it provided a rich description of this complex phenomenon, allowed a description of the individual experiences, explained relationships, and provided a better understanding of potential group norms. Beginning this endeavor as a novice scholar, the researcher was required to feel personally invested in the topic of focus. This assisted the researcher with conducting a study that will contribute to the field of dual enrollment.

**Role of Researcher**

The researcher’s role was both primary investigator and DE Coordinator. It was important to note the DE Coordinator of the program did not provide a grade to any of the DE students. The students’ college professors graded all of their work and the DE Coordinator merely added the grades to the high school transcript. This was important because there was no undue pressure on the student participants to fear repercussions from their responses.

The researcher determined there was a need to understand a particular phenomenon from a lived experienced perspective. The role was complex, multifaceted, and responsible for ensuring the student participants understood the questions being asked of them. If there were any misunderstandings regarding the questions a non-leading explanation was provided in a concise manner. All student participants were made aware of exactly the purpose and the sponsor of the study. During the process, the student participants described their experiences without being directed but were rather encouraged to give a full and rich description of what they felt, smelled, and touched with their involvement in the DE program. From that perspective, it
was acceptable to ask clarifying questions that would allow the researcher to obtain a thorough description of the phenomenon.

The researcher was able to gain the knowledge necessary to understand what the expectations were going into the program, the students’ preparedness, fairness of the program requirements, advantages/disadvantages of other Credit Based Transition Programs, and how other CTE coursework/programs assisted them in this transition.

Therefore, the researcher was committed to increasing early college access for all while equaling the playing field for minorities, under-served, under-represented, and first generation college students. As a Coordinator, the advantage was having an inside glimpse of the struggles and triumphs of the DE students. As a researcher, it was imperative authentic research was composed that would enrich the existing literature in the field.

**Research Tradition**

**Phenomenology.** Phenomenology was chosen because it was a qualitative study that assisted the researcher with understanding the perceptions of the participants through a lived phenomenon (Chenail, 1995). Wertz (2005) claimed “Phenomenology is a low-hovering, indwelling, meditative philosophy that glories in the concreteness of a person-world relations and accords lived experience, with all its indeterminacy and ambiguity primacy over they unknown” (p. 175). Essentially, this method sought to describe and not explain a person’s reality (Husserl, 1964). What made this approach interesting was that it did not necessitate a theory at the inception of the research, as it was much more crucial to develop a theory along the way (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

This method was common in the work of behavioral and social scientists such as Amedo Giorgio and Alfred Schutz. They expanded phenomenology that posited humans were complex
and diverse in nature (Van den berg, 1997). Giorgio (2012) further explained phenomenology does not demand the phenomena, it attempts to comprehend the way in which particular phenomena present themselves on a conscious level and to interpret the task at hand.

The characteristics of phenomenology are its flexibility, that could overlap with other qualitative approaches (hermeneutics, ethnography, and symbolic interactionism); the ability to adjust to the research; and processes to regulate the data collection process. What made this method unique was the ability to view it as a language with many different dialects. The approach allowed for a single case, selected samples, and multiple participants. The researcher was able to choose from interviews, focus meetings, participant observation, conversations, and diaries. Although interviews were chosen all of the methods offered various nuances (Smith et al., 2009). Unlike other methods, phenomenology resists structure and allows researchers to “go with the flow.” It provided the researcher with some freedoms and allowed a glimpse into another person’s lived experience. Ultimately, this powerful lens of phenomenology permitted the researcher to give a voice to the study’s participants (Smith et al., 2009).

**Key Theorists**

Although the origins of phenomenology can be traced back to Kant, Hegel, and Van den Berg, most regard Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) as the founder. He was a 20th century German philosopher and mathematician who described phenomenology as studying the human consciousness. Husserl established phenomenology as deeply rooted in philosophical traditions, which created the transcendental (Giorgio, 2012, p. 9). It encompassed the simple guidelines of an experience comparable to can be established for geometry and arithmetic. His method was a methodical and structured piece of knowledge that developed over time (Giorgio, 2012).

Martin Heidegger was also a 20th century philosopher. He further developed Husserl’s
approach by introducing the concept of “Dasein or Being There” (Smith et al., 2009). He believed it was important to understand the screenplay of someone’s life, which referred to hermeneutic phenomenology. The belief was not about a phenomenon; nevertheless, the purpose was to uncover the existence. He believed communicating was key and taking heed through listening, hearing, and knowing when to be silent was crucial (Smith et al., 2009). According to Van den berg (1997), others that further developed phenomenology and influenced by Heidegger were Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Smith et al., 2009).

**Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA).** IPA was the best-fit approach for this study in order to understand the perceptions of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). The goal of IPA was to provide an episodically dissected, synthesized, and reflected upon interpretation of the participants’ experiences and then focus on a small portion of their lives to comprehend the problem of practice (Smith et al., 2009). IPA did not require identifying one theorist, but desired to expound upon the conversation and advance the theory of phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). This transpired when the researcher reflected on the importance of the occurrences (Smith et al., 2009). This interpretation of behavior was influenced by hermeneutics (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA allowed the researcher to not only point out a phenomenon but also signified how that phenomenon had meaning behind it that also related to the cultural capital framework of this study (Smith et al., 2009). The intent was not to ground or explain a theory, rather to interpret what occurred (Van Manen, 1990). The IPA questions focused on exploring sensory perceptions, memories, and thoughts that were specific to the participant’s interpretations (Smith et al., 2009).

As human beings we seek to make sense of things that happen to us and with much reflection we tend to recognize what those occurrences tell us (Smith et al., 2009). As the
researcher, these revelations were crucial when making connections. Some believe IPA researchers participate in double hermeneutics because the researcher and the participants were both attempting to make sense of what occurred (Smith et al., 2009).

All phenomenology is descriptive and the goal was to describe rather than explain IPA (Smith et al., 2009). Husserl, the originator of phenomenological studies, posited the importance of carefully scrutinizing a person’s experience (Smith et al., 2009). In doing so, the hope was the individuals would also uncover the phenomenon of their experience. In order to truly dissect a phenomenon we must move away from our routine, which Husserl referred to as our natural attitude (Smith et al., 2009). As a result, once we self-consciously reflect we are being phenomenological (Smith et al., 2009).

Another component Husserl focused on was bracketing any previous understandings, assumptions, and prior knowledge regarding the phenomena. This allowed the researcher to focus on the newly formed phenomena. This was done by refraining from positing completely and reviewing the data with openness (Giorgio, 1994). Therefore, the researcher was aware of potential preconceptions that were subconscious in nature but through self-reflection became conscious (Smith et al., 2009).

A series of transcendental reductions allowed the researcher to see the phenomena with a different lens (Smith et al., 2009). It permitted the researcher to explore a different way of thinking and reasoning (Smith et al., 2009). Ultimately, the reductions removed the researcher’s hindrances and focused on the essence of the phenomena (Smith et al., 2009).

As a student of Husserl, Heidegger attempted to move from the transcendental to hermeneutics. He believed Husserl was too theoretical and vague (Smith et al., 2009). As a hermeneutic philosopher Heidegger’s argument was the insertion of language and relationships.
His language was very different from Husserl; it was more poetic (Smith et al., 2009).

According to Heidegger phenomenology lies in interpretation (Heidegger, 1962). This descriptive interpretation was a continuum, not an additional step but rather an environment of “being in the world” also referred to as Dasein (literally there-being) (Heidegger, 1962).

**Why phenomenology was chosen.** Phenomenology was the chosen approach because it assisted the researcher with understanding perceptions of the DE students. The phenomenological approach illuminated and identified a phenomenon of the participants’ lived experience through their eyes. The realization was this method acknowledged the importance of hearing from the authoritative voice, the students.

Specifically, this approach allowed the researcher to uncover the students’ expectations going into the program, their preparedness, the fairness of the program requirements, advantages/disadvantages of other Credit Based Transition Programs, and how other CTE coursework/programs assisted them in this transition and its relation to cultural capital.

The students in this study had a shared experience of participating in the DE program at the local community college. Their family circumstances and socio-economic status were similar thereby making their experiences in the program interesting enough to explore further. The goal was to have phenomenology represent the first-person experiences of the DE students (Moustakas, 1994).

**Research Site**

To ensure the researcher would get a full range of perceptions of the students participating in the DE program, nine students at the same high school located on the east coast in a southern state were selected. The city is plagued with generational poverty and ranks as one of the lowest states for upward mobility. This is to say, individuals born into poverty are likely
to stay. Although the study was conducted in the southeast it is important to note five students were not born in the United States. Three were born in northern states (NY, NJ, DC) and only one student was born in Florida.

In order to maintain anonymity, the high school will be referred to as Barack Preparatory Academy. It is a traditional and comprehensive high school serving ninth through 12th-grades. The 2014-15 school report was the most current information on the state’s website (see below). The institution chosen was deemed a Title 1 high school based on the percentages of students participating in the free and reduced lunch program.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Sites</th>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>College &amp; Career Ready (all groups)</th>
<th>College &amp; Career Ready (Blacks)</th>
<th>College &amp; Career Ready (Hispanics)</th>
<th>College &amp; Career Ready (Economically Disadvantaged)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barack Academy HS</td>
<td>1695</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*School Report Card From The School Year 2014-15*

The research was located in the natural context of the college campus where the students participated in their DE coursework and the researcher held a professional affiliation as the Dual Enrollment liaison. In addition, the chosen site permitted easier accessibility to interview the students participating in the DE program. The room chosen varied based on the student’s request and comfort level. A sign was placed on the door to avoid disturbances during the interviews (Smith et al., 2009).

**Participants**

The participants were purposively selected for this DE study (Creswell, 2013).
Purposeful sampling was chosen because the primary investigator desired to discern, comprehend, and increase perceptiveness of the DE students. The reason the 12th-graders were selected to participate in the study was “because of their special experience and competence” in the DE program (Chein, 1981, p. 440). In other words, the students would obviously be more versed on the DE program while also being able recollect their initial perception before participating in college level coursework. According to Rubin and Rubin (2011), it was important to have a one to two year relationship with the participants prior to conducting the interviews.

**Participant breakdown.** Once the institutional review board (IRB) approval was received, the call for participants who were representative of the researcher’s school population, and included minority, under-served, under-represented, and first generation students (earlier referred to as *at promise* students), since the study had a cultural capital component, was issued. The group criteria specified 12th-grade students with a minimum 2.6 GPA and enrolled in at least one college course. The researcher recruited a quality pool of nine students total. These nine students were invited to participate in two rounds of one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

**Sampling strategy for recruitment.** When the IRB approved the study and site, the participants were asked for their full support. Once all approvals were received students were invited to an orientation that explained the study in greater detail. The researcher sent a group text message invitation via Remind.com inviting students to an orientation. The text message briefly explained there was an orientation planned where we discussed the dual enrollment program and the recruitment for the study. During the orientation the consent forms (Appendix C) were available in order to obtain signatures from interested potential participants. Since the study only interviewed age 18 or older students they were allowed to sign their own consent
The participants received information about the purpose of the study and the research questions during the orientation (Appendix D). It was further explained that participation in the study was completely voluntary. More importantly, at any time during the process students could opt out of the study without any consequences and the significance of confidentiality was stressed. In order to maintain privacy and confidentiality all personal information was secured in a locked cabinet and redacted. All computer files were password protected on the researcher’s personal laptop.

**Weakness in sampling.** The participants were purposively selected for this dual enrollment study. Critics consider purposeful sampling as the greatest weakness in qualitative research (Morse, 2010, p. 238). Morse (2010) goes on to further say, “We are solving problems detective-style, looking for clues, sifting and sorting, and creating a plausible case” (p. 238). He believed researchers that utilized purposively sampling were choosing their participants and were pretending to be investigators. However, once the data were compiled, classified, and sorted the potential weaknesses were minimized. Another weakness was the very detailed and time-consuming analysis required (Smith et al., 2009).

**Strategies to minimize weaknesses.** In order to minimize weakness the researcher minimized the arbitrary and subjective nature of the selection process. The questions were not narrowly focused and the researcher used a varied sample size. The desire was to reduce the deviance in the results thereby creating a cross-section of information. More importantly, the researcher was aware of biases and those were taken into account when analyzing the data. The goal was to make a decision based solely on the criteria and not on what best suited the chosen theory. Lastly, the researcher transcribed all of the interview transcripts carefully to reduce time,
cost, and external human error.

**Data Collection**

Data collection yielded rich, detailed, and first-person accounts (Smith et al., 2009). In this phase the researcher employed excellent interview skills, exercised active listening, and demonstrated the ability to ask open-ended questions that were not presumptions (Smith et al., 2009). The primary instrument was semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013). According to Giorgio (2009), the questions met the criteria needed to address the concern. The purpose of the interview was to permit the participants the opportunity to share their experiences in the DE program. Interviews were considered a deliberate effort to obtain information about the background of a participant’s experience (Bailey, 1996). According to the site location guidelines the interviews did not exceed 45 minutes and they were conducted at a pace the participants were comfortable with at all times.

The interview questions were formulated and broken down into the five themes that developed from the literature review. The themes were as follows: the need for an advisory period (high school), a DE peer support group, academic support services (college), development of a program of study (high school and college), in-depth application process (high school and college), comprehensive orientation process (high school and college), and more definitive roles of the high school and college personnel. Also investigated was how these themes related to cultural capital.

During the 2016-17 academic school year students were interviewed in the beginning and middle of the spring semester. The study’s design included two rounds of one-on-one, open-ended, and recorded semi-structured interviews. The same questions were asked of all participants and enough time was given to respond. The participants were encouraged to tell
their stories regarding the DE program. Small talk made the process feel less stressful. During the interviews the researcher listened more than spoke. All the while the researcher continued to reassure the participants that the interviews were voluntary, private, and confidential. The researcher realized with semi-structured interviews some participants went off topic; however, they were calmly redirected. At all times, the researcher made it a point to keep positionality in check as not to persuade or influence the participants in any way.

The phenomenology data collection included interview transcripts and field notes. Those field notes were a secondary data storing method that recorded what the researcher saw and felt during the interview process (Kvale, 1996). One of the advantages of the notes was the ability to use them later to analyze the data. Another crucial component of the process was the reliability of the data storing method. With permission from the participants beforehand, the researcher utilized a laptop-recording app that recorded the audio. Lastly, the recordings were dated and labeled with a code that identified each participant (Kvale, 1996).

Summary. Kvale (1996) postulated when it came to qualitative research the interview was the main data collection method in qualitative research. The data the researcher captured in a qualitative interview was “literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (Kvale, 1996, p. 84). In other words, the interviews were casual conversations between two individuals interested in the DE program and its success.

Data Analysis

Analytic methods required the researcher to portray herself as insignificant and neutral as possible (Smith, et al., 2009). Data reduction was “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appears in written-up notes or
transcriptions” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.10). In other words, this was referred to as data reduction. Hyener (1985) maintained there was a five-step process to data analysis. The steps are bracketing, delineating units of meaning, clustering units of meaning into themes, summarizing the interview, and extracting unique themes from all of the interviews, then compiling a summary.

It is important for researchers to immerse themselves in the data. Then the next step involves the IPA of the data, which is considered inductive in nature (Smith et al., 2009). This was not a single step process of the data. It included the following, composing what was exclusive and mutual amongst the participants. Then came analyzing the explanation of the experience and converting it to an interpretation of that particular event. It was critical throughout this process to be devoted to comprehending the participant’s point of view. Concentrating on the emotional mannerisms was essential (Smith et al., 2009). After the IPA was completed the researcher took notes that included linguistic, descriptive, and conceptual statements (Smith et al., 2009).

This phase of the data collection process involved typing the transcripts for all of the interviews. Then line-by-line the responses were typed in a password protected MS Word document (Creswell, 2012). When completed, the transcripts were returned to the participants to review transcriptions errors. The process was referred to as member checks (Schwandt, 2001). After receiving the returned edited transcripts back from the participants the researcher corrected errors, made deletions, and additions. This was a form of checks and balances in qualitative research that ensured the participants’ viewpoints were accurately captured. Then descriptive comments were added utilizing the MS Word comment feature on the interview transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). That allowed the researcher to define the contents of the data while
recognizing crucial phrases, accounts, emotions, and explanations (Smith et al., 2009). Then what emerged in the content and its significance was how it was presented linguistically (hows and whats) (Smith et al., 2009). All of this helped the researcher categorize a meaning to the participant’s words.

The next stage of the process involved identifying relationships in the information provided by the participants. It was quite messy because the information did not fall into distinct categories. That is why the researcher read the transcription the first time, merely for understanding the essence of the information, then read transcriptions a second time. This it involved writing notes on the transcripts and underlining key words. The next phase entailed attaching codes to the underlined words. It was important to assign the codes to a code category and the code category was then associated with a theme (Saldaña, 2015). It was also important to utilize an emotion coding that was applicable to IPA (Saldaña, 2015). Miles and Huberman (1994) posited, “Coding helps the researcher elaborate a cognitive map, an evolving, more integrated schema for understanding local incidents and interactions” (p.69). It was central to realize this method was very time consuming and some researchers may choose to use a service for the data collection process. Finally, it was vital for the researcher to step away from the data collection to gain a fresh new perspective, as then, it became easier to identify preliminary relationships.

Validity

Qualitative research involves a naturalistic investigation that analyzes subjective meanings and perceptions; this process makes trustworthiness a fundamental component of the study (Krefting, 1991). Guba’s (1981) model combined four components of trustworthiness in a qualitative study. They included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability
(Krefting, 1991). These components had several different validation techniques which the researcher utilized to measure trustworthiness.

*Credibility* in a qualitative study was obtained through the encounter of a particular human experience (Krefting, 1991). This was how the researcher represented the realities of the participants. This was done in the form of testing the data findings by presenting the most accurate description and/or interpretation of the human experience (Krefting, 1991). *Credibility* was achieved in this study by employing the member checking validation technique (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). The technique allowed each participant to review his or her transcript for accuracy and make any necessary changes. Another validation technique was *prolonged engagement* which occurred when the researcher spent a substantial amount of time with the participants in order to establish a rapport (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). This technique permitted the researcher to acknowledge the position of power, and check perspectives and biases (Krefting, 1991).

*Transferability* was the ability to transfer the findings to another situation other than original study (Krefting, 1991). This process allowed another researcher to use the descriptive data and the findings from this research to address applicability and to conduct further research (Krefting, 1991). The validation technique employed was *purposeful sampling* (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). This technique certified that the participant pool would increase the scope of evidence gathered; it provided the most rigorous conditions for theory grounding (Guba and Lincoln, 1982). Additionally, the validation technique *thick descriptions* helped supplement the research. It provided thorough information about the context and the students’ experiences, and the findings of the research allowed transferability (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

*Dependability* involved consistency in the research and having trackable variability
(Krefting, 1991). It included assigning a code to the data in the analysis phase and aligned the demographic breakdowns of each participant. The classification included grade levels and their high school GPAs (before the DE program). All of the previously stated information was included in the Appendix G, thus allowing another researcher to follow the research thereby making it auditable (Guba, 1981).

Confirmability allowed the researcher to confirm accuracy of the information obtained. The validation technique executed to ensure confirmability was a reflective journal (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). The journal permitted the researcher to keep well-documented notes on the interview process. The above components combined with their respective validation techniques provided trustworthiness.

The collecting of data took several months to complete. The timeline allowed the researcher an opportunity to conduct several rounds of interviews with DE students resulting in an in-depth analysis of each participant.

Limitations

As with all research there were some limitations. The first limitation was the small number (n=9) of participants that completed the study. In addition the study was voluntary therefore some students were able to choose whether or not to participate. To overcome this concern two rounds of in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant.

The second limitation was the combination of roles as primary investigator and Coordinator of the dual enrollment program. Extra time was taken at the commencement of the orientation to explain the roles to the students to reassure them the two roles would not intersect. In order to overcome that particular limitation it was essential to point out the Coordinator’s role did not entail giving student grades for their college courses, therefore it did not cause concern.
Third limitation was the differences in age between the participants and the researcher. Creswell (2013) posited there were risks when dealing with an imbalance of power. On the other hand Rubin and Rubin (2011) viewed the imbalance of power as a favorable when a good foundational relationship is established. To overcome that limitation, the researcher acknowledged the awareness of power in the validity and positionality sections in chapter one.

The last limitation was the process of gaining access to necessary information and assistance from a large school district. The conflicting perception of working in and against the organization was a challenge. Relying heavily on the district to provide the necessary data while equally being critical of their policies and procedures was originally thought to be problematic. Therefore, to alleviate this limitation the researcher was able to obtain all of the necessary information from a public information website.

Summary

In conclusion, the study shed light on the DE students’ perceptions. More importantly it determined why there was a disproportionate number of at promise students participating in the DE program (Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2004) and as well as its relationship to cultural capital. The study intended to fill the gap in the literature of the under-researched areas by exploring the DE students’ perceptions while participating in the program.
Chapter 4: Report of Research Findings

The purpose of the study was to determine why disproportionate numbers of at promise students participate in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004), and to examine its relationship to cultural capital. Following Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) tradition, this study used purposeful sampling to guarantee all student-participants had a shared experience (Smith et al., 2009). A study of each participant’s unique experiences in the DE program was obtained through recorded interviews, a methodical scrutiny of the transcripts, and a reflective journal.

This IPA study was a comprehensive and meticulous account that explained the student-participants’ experiences in the DE program. According to Smith et al. (2009) it was essential the participant group was a small number of students that experienced the phenomenon. Ten student-participants were recruited for two rounds of interviews. In addition, some of the student-participants preferred to complete the entire interview in one sitting due to their demanding college and high school workload. The interviews were recorded and some were transcribed the same day or the following day. An analysis of each participant’s transcripts allowed the researcher to identify themes.

To classify the student-participants’ experiences in the DE program the study was steered by the following research questions:

1) What experiences led students’ enrollment in the dual enrollment program?
2) What are the 12th-grade students’ experiences in the dual enrollment program?
3) How does the dual enrollment program support cultural capital needed to prepare students for college?

The interview questions in conjunction with the research questions were intended to identify themes. The derived themes were compared to the literature review to identify the
discrepancies in existing literature on DE programs as they relate to minority enrollment. This chapter is divided into the following five categories: student-participants’ personal background information, student-participants’ college course pathway, GPA, plans after high school, and career goals.

**Overview of Participants**

Nine DE student-participants interviewed for this study resided in a southeastern city. Four of the student-participants were enrolled in the DE program for over a year and the other five started the program in the spring 2017 semester. All of the student-participants were high school seniors and 18 years or older. Initially 10 were recruited but one dropped out of the program because he needed to work instead of taking college courses. One of the student-participants only completed round one of the interview because she decided to graduate early (January 2017). Table 2 below provides personal background information for all of the student-participants. It is important to note the student-participants were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birthplace/Place</th>
<th>Whom They Live With</th>
<th>Parent’s Highest Level of Education</th>
<th>Parent’s Occupation</th>
<th>Socio-Economic Status (according to the student-participant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>mom, dad &amp; siblings</td>
<td>high school (first gen)</td>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>mom, grandma &amp; sister</td>
<td>high school (first gen)</td>
<td>Fast food</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>mom &amp; dad</td>
<td>high school (first gen)</td>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>New Brunswick, NJNJ</td>
<td>brothers</td>
<td>completed college</td>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Lower class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>mom, stepdad, &amp; siblings</td>
<td>completed college</td>
<td>Travel Agent</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>mom, dad, &amp; siblings</td>
<td>high school (first gen)</td>
<td>Cabinet maker</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
<td>mom</td>
<td>some college (first gen)</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Parents &amp; two siblings</td>
<td>high school (first gen)</td>
<td>Cashier Painters</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JB</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Bronx, NY</td>
<td>Mom and two siblings</td>
<td>high school (first gen)</td>
<td>Security Guard</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CR.** CR was an 18-year-old female who was born in Vietnam and only lived there and in this southeastern city. Four of her siblings in addition to CR resided with her parents. When the question was raised to describe herself she responded, “*an independent student that liked to work hard and do my best in school.*” Although she struggled when speaking English, she understood it well, and spoke three languages. Her parents were factory workers. though, when asked the question regarding her socio-economic status (SES) her response was “*middle class.*” Based on her body language it appeared to be an uncomfortable question. It was safe to presume since this
was a Title 1 high school (95% below poverty level); the student-participant would most likely be categorized as a low SES category.

**LF.** LF was an 18-year-old female who was born in Cuba. She has also lived in Florida for six months but she did not remember living there. LF has one sibling, and resided with her mother and grandmother. She defined herself as “a senior that wants to attend a four-year college. I am an honor roll student-participant. I also play sports and I very interested in sports medicine as a career to pursue.” Her mother worked in the fast food industry, was extremely supportive, and trusted LF would make wise decisions that would impact her life positively. Although she also self-identified her SES as middle class, yet again as with the previous student-participant it was safe to assume she was also probably in a low SES category.

**NS.** NS was an 18-year-old male who was born in Vietnam and only lived there and this southeastern city. NS lived with six siblings and both parents. He portrayed himself as a student that enjoyed drawing and playing sports. Although he spoke two languages it was obvious as with some of the other student-participants his understanding of English was better than his delivery. He was not sure where his mother worked but his father made shirts in a factory. He self-identified his SES as middle class. As with several of the other student-participants this student-participant also exhibited a discomfort when asked about his family’s financial status.

**JM.** JM was a 19-year-old male student-participant who was born in New Brunswick, NJ, and also lived in Georgia and Virginia. JM labeled himself as an outgoing and hardworking student. He self-identified as an independent student, who resided with his two older brothers. He further revealed he had 15 other siblings. However, he did not disclose why he did not live with his parents. When he was asked about where his parents worked he divulged his father worked for UPS. He further described his family as “We are like any other regular family we
have our ups and downs and bumps and we try to get past them.” Interestingly, he was one of three students who conveyed his financial status was low income nevertheless he was very optimistic about his future.

**ZP.** ZP was an 18-year-old female who was born in Washington, DC and lived in Georgia, Maryland, and Massachusetts. ZP resided with three siblings, her mother, and stepfather. She described her family as “very dynamic and a lot of big personalities which sometimes clash. But we always have each other’s back.” Her mother was a travel agent and her stepfather worked in the cosmetology field. She stated her willingness to help others and how it was centered on what she wanted to do with her career, which was to become a firefighter. As with several of the other student-participants this student also exhibited a discomfort when asked about her family’s financial status, but nonetheless self-identified her SES as middle class. Unfortunately, this participant dropped out of school at the start of second semester and did not complete the second round of the interview. However, this student-participant would not be classified as a dropout because she technically had enough credits to graduate early.

**PA.** PA was an 18-year-old female who was born in Vietnam and only lived there and in this southeastern city. Although English was her second language she understood and spoke it well. She resided with her younger brother and parents. PA depicted coming to America as having a huge impact on her educational options. Although her parents did not attend college she had a brother taking engineering classes in this program at another high school. Her father was employed as a cabinet-maker and her mother worked in a cardboard box factory. Interestingly, as with some of the other student-participants, she still classified her SES as middle class.

**AD.** AD was an 18-year-old female who was born in Miami and lived there and in this
southeastern city with her mother and two siblings. She defined her family unit as having a strong foundation. English was her first language and she spoke a little Spanish. AD defined herself as an honor roll student-participant who was very serious about school and desired to be an orthodontist. AD stated her mother was an accountant and she self-identified her SES as middle class.

**DA.** DA was an 18-year-old male who was born in Vietnam and spoke two other languages. He also lived in Cambodia and Greensboro, NC. DA explained his peers classified him “arrogant…but I think, I just act confident and they misinterpret that.” He explained he preferred to call it confident and ambitious. He resided with his parents and siblings. His parent’s story was one of determination as he shared how they “escaped prosecution and oppression from the communist government so they had to go through this disease infested jungle.” DA’s parents both worked blue-collar jobs; his mother worked in a restaurant in an airport and his father was a painter. He further acknowledged his family’s SES was below average but his entrepreneurial interest gave him hope for the future.

**JB.** JB was an 18-year-old female who was born in the Bronx, NY and now resided in this southeastern city. She lived with her mom and two younger siblings. When asked to tell about her family she defined it as “a dysfunctional family that loves one another.” Several times in the interview she defined herself as lazy; however, her family kept her motivated and encouraged her to complete her schoolwork. Out of the nine student-participants interviewed she was the second one that did not have a computer at home with Internet access. Her mother worked a second shift security job and since JB was the oldest she was responsible for her two younger siblings overnight.
Table 3

Student-Participant College Course Pathway, GPA, Plans After High School, & Career Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-participant</th>
<th>Dual Enrollment Pathway</th>
<th>Type of Pathway</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Plans after High School</th>
<th>Career Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Medical Assisting</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Four-year college</td>
<td>Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF</td>
<td>Science Core</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Four-year college</td>
<td>Sports Medicine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Simulation Game Develop.</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Two-year college and p/t job</td>
<td>Game Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM</td>
<td>Automotive Systems</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>National Guard &amp; two-year college</td>
<td>Mechanic Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP</td>
<td>Emergency Medical</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Four-year college</td>
<td>Firefighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Science Core</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Two-year college &amp; transfer to four-year college</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Science Core</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Two-year college &amp; transfer to four-year college</td>
<td>Orthodontist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Engineering Core</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>GAP Year</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JB</td>
<td>Early Childhood Elective</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>Four-year college</td>
<td>Social Worker/Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To review, as stated in an earlier chapter, the current context of the DE program has two pathways: the Elective Pathway (EP) and the Core Pathway (CP). In the EP, there were over 30 different tracks, including Architecture, Cosmetology, Horticulture, and Criminal Justice, to name a few. These electives courses required a 2.6 GPA minimum. The GPA minimum was set by principal discretion; therefore the limit would vary by schools.

The CP was comprised of art, science, and engineering tracks. It was considered the four-year college transfer track and the courses were liberal arts classes. The CP pathway required the students to certify as “college ready” through several benchmarks. The benchmarks were ACCUPLACER (placement exam), SAT, ACT, PLAN scores, or 3.5+ GPA with two years of English and math with a B or higher. Subsequently, several of the student-participants were
interested in the CP pathway but many did not qualify based on the benchmarks listed above, therefore they signed up for the EP by default.

All student-participants (n=9) interviewed in the study were enrolled in a variety of pathways (See Table 2). Four were in the CP and their tracks were Science and Engineering. The remaining five student-participants were in the EP and their tracks were Medical Assisting, Simulation Game Development, Early Childhood, Automotive Systems, and Emergency Services. This variety allowed for a broad range of perspectives of the student-participant’s experiences in the program.

**Thematic Structure**

The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the best-fit approach for the study in order to understand the perceptions of the student-participants (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA provided an episodically dissected, synthesized, and reflected-upon interpretation of the student-participants’ experiences and then focused on a small portion of their lives to comprehend the problem of practice (Smith et al., 2009).

The analytic methods employed allowed the researcher to be insignificant and neutral as possible (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The data were reduced, which included “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appears in written-up notes or transcriptions” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.10). Hycner (1985) maintained there was a five-step process to data analysis: bracketing, delineating units of meaning, clustering units of meaning into themes, summarizing the interview, and extracting unique themes from all of the interviews then compiling a summary. The results provided an understanding of the DE student-participant’s experiences in the program, while also gathering a little about their parents’ educational background, the student-participants’ motives for enrolling in the program, and how
they now feel after taking a college course(s). Two broad themes and six sub themes emerged from the analysis:

(1) Changed Perspectives
   a. Postsecondary Awareness
   b. High School vs. College
   c. Reflection

(2) Academic Preparation
   a. College/Career Preparatory Programs
   b. Postsecondary Plans
   c. Determination

The next section of this chapter will expound upon the themes above. Direct excerpts from some of the interview questions support the evidence and reveal the student-participants’ lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). By extension this ensured the student-participants’ authoritative voice was heard. IPA allowed the researcher to not only point out a phenomenon but also signified how that phenomenon had meaning behind it related to the cultural capital framework of this study (Smith et al., 2009).

Theme 1: Changed Perspectives

A primary benefit of enrolling in the DE program, one of the most commonly cited reasons for enrolling in the program was the cost-saving feature. AD depended on this free program based on her statement, “It’s [the DE program] good we don’t have much money. Being able to take free classes...it’s pretty cool.” This cost-saving feature permitted the student-participants to save on future college tuition, textbooks, and all related college fees. The savings in cost was important for two reasons. First all of the student-participants could not afford to pay for the items listed above. For instance, when asked what was most appealing about the DE program, three of the participants, NS, AD, & DY, all noted what attracted them to the program was that it was “free.” The student-participants reiterated the cost-saving feature almost 20 times throughout the study. Students’ being able to take college courses for free was a key part of the
student-participants experiences. For example, LF: “Doing classes [taking college classes while in high school]...I am getting out of the way [less classes to take in college].” More specifically, the students were able to take free college courses and obtain free textbooks while in high school, resulting in fewer classes when they enroll in college full time. The articulation agreement permits the students to transfer the college credits to a postsecondary institution. NS put it more bluntly, “There [the classes] for free.” JM indicated that not only were the savings important for him as an individual, but that the cost-reduction was important for his entire family. He said, “I could graduate from college a little earlier, and it’s good.”

In contrast to the other students who focused on the economic aspects of the DE program, DY took a different perspective as he did with most of the questions. He conveyed that the program allowed him to have a “glimpse of what college would look like.” Based on his response he did not enroll in the program because it was free and would eliminate some college courses, rather, he was there for the social experiment aspect.

**Subtheme: Postsecondary awareness.** When the researcher asked the student-participants who in their family, if anyone, had postsecondary training, certain (n=6) student-participants indeed had family members that participated in several college courses. However; they did not complete a degree program. CR noted “My brother stud[ied] for 4 years [and] just transferred to UNCC Charlotte. He wants to be a police officer... he is studying law. My older sister went to CPCC for cosmetology. My parents did not go to college.” Consequently, she freely acknowledged some ideas of what was expected in postsecondary education; however, she expressed some regret from her parents for not attending college. For instance, both of her parents are factory workers.

NS mentioned that his older brother attended college but did not finish. He stated that his
bother only took a math class at the local community college. On the other hand, JM conveyed that his mother completed college but his father dropped out. When he was asked for specifics, he responded he did not know. PA, a student-participant in the DE program for two years, said that her sister only took core classes at the community college but she did not finish. Lastly, AD also added her uncles and mother both attended college but did not complete a program.

In contrast, DY had an opposing reaction to the DE program. DY spoke of witnessing his brother “struggling working three jobs.” He expressed not wanting to continue in college right now and potentially taking a gap year. He continued by explaining he was working with a mentor and was interested at trying his luck as a t-shirt entrepreneur, unlike all of the student-participants (n=8) who expressed that their newly-found knowledge of postsecondary education made them aspire to continue in college after graduating high school. As such JM acknowledged he “could graduate from college a little earlier. Get some credits underneath my belt before I actually go.” ZP added she was intrigued by the fact she was actually challenging herself with college coursework. Based on observation notes, most of the student-participants witnessed the financial struggles of their parents/family members and it had apparently impacted them sub-consciously.

Subtheme: High school vs. college. The DE students in this study were relatively strong academically. Eight of the students had GPAs 3.0+ and one had a 2.7. When asked what subject was their favorite, seven of them listed core classes including math, science, and English, one said Spanish, and on the other hand one noted an elective course titled Game Art & Design. AD insisted, “I am A-B honor roll student. I am very serious about school and I want to graduate and be an orthodontist. Another student-participant, LF, noted she was always good at science and wants to be a physical therapist. ZP added English was her favorite; however,
science would be her easiest class. DY explained Game Art & Design was his favorite because he enjoyed using his hands. This is to say, these students appeared to already be focused and driven but needed directions on how to achieve their goals.

However, the decision to enroll in the program came with many complications for the student-participants. One of those complications was the benchmark qualifiers for the program. With that being said it was safe for the student-participants to assume they would have academic difficulty with their college courses. In contrast, it was apparent from LF, NS, JB, PA, and AD, the student-participants, that the college coursework was not as difficult as expected. LF remarked, “Honestly, I thought it [DE classes] would be harder than what it was.” This student-participant seemed relieved the coursework was not as hard as he initially assumed. PA concurred with LF’s statement by saying “I thought it [the DE program] would be much harder than I expected.” Despite the enrollment challenges that resulted in five of the students taking elective courses instead of core classes the temporary enrollment hurdle was worth the long-term benefits.

One of the great benefits in the DE program was it allowed the students to dig a little deeper into the subject areas that interested them. Unfortunately, on the high school level electives courses are also chosen for the students based on space, not interest. It is an advantage when students have the option to choose the class they want as opposed to being assigned a class. The DE program gives them that choice.

Several of the student-participants discussed their dislike of the high school setting and spoke of the lack of maturity from the high school students. For instance, AD believed that some of the high school students misbehaved. She said, “I dislike…some kids being childish.” When the participant JB was asked the question, “What do you now enjoy that you did not before the
DE program?” her reply was “actually being in class.” In contrast NS described students in the college environment as more motivated. He said, “There are other people [in the college environment] that are really pursuing their goals and they really want it [to be successful].” This provides confirmation that he recognized the high school students were not motivated. Another student DY expressed his displeasure regarding high school. He said, “I don’t like a lot about high school. The students and teachers...not because they piss me off...I just don’t agree with how they teach.” Lastly, JM recognized, “The teachers [college] go in depth.” There was also a mention by two students, CR and JM, that they appreciated the hands-on learning via the lab classes. JM loved the idea of taking a mechanic course and having the opportunity to work on actual cars. He is quoted as saying “It was actually things that I wanted to further in my life. I wanted to be a mechanic and I got a mechanic class and we just talk about mechanic stuff.” This was proof; all students need a healthy balance of core and elective classes to truly learn what they are passionate about. The common thread here illustrated the student-participants felt there were critical differences between the high school and college environments.

For most of the student-participants, the high school environment was not conducive to learning. Additionally, according to the student-participants their high school had limited resources and was populated with unskilled teachers. For instance, DY said, “[In] math I sucked. When [the college professor] taught I learned more than what I would have learned here [high school].” DY went on to say that during high school he always believed that he was not math-inclined. However now, after experiencing a different type of math instructor on the college campus, he realized that the high school math teacher’s style made learning more challenging for him. His experiences on the college campus led him to conclude that he doesn’t “agree with how they [high school teachers] teach.”
Going to the community college appeared to be refreshing for the student-participants. Continuing on that note, it appeared the high school setting came with challenges. Another student PA reiterated that she did not like high school, because of “the students.” As an immigrant student she voiced, “The students take advantage of public education.” Hence, the synopsis was there are many disparities between the college and the high school atmosphere. The differences noted included the milieu, the student body, and the instructional staff.

Being in the college environment created additional responsibilities for the students that differed from the high school setting. An example of that included being prepared for the lesson by reading the material before class as opposed to reading the material during class time. The student-participant DY stated he enjoyed not being on the high school campus all day. This meant he enjoyed the level of responsibility that was bestowed upon him. He realized more freedom meant more was expected of him. There were also additional academic responsibilities; according to DY he explained there was a need to have good study habits. He recalled, “By the time you get to class you need to know [the course material]. If you don’t catch up you are going to be left behind.” In other words, there was recognition that college work requires prep work before class. AD voiced that college is very serious and there was no time to play around. What she meant was students are responsible for their own learning and the teachers were not going to do any handholding. LF said she liked that the college’s teachers “have a syllabus [that they] follow.” She appreciated the level of organization (a system) the college environment provided. LF summed up the responsibility of being a college student by saying, “I am not going to be babied.”

CR described another example of the responsibilities of being a college student. She said, “College professors don’t play like high school [teachers do].” More specifically, CR, like
many of the other student-participants, recognized a deadline in college is firm. Student-participants learned they are now responsible for themselves and there was no one that would harass them to complete their assignments. College level work came with a higher level of accountability. JM said it well, “Yeah it’s a lot different [college vs. high school]. I feel like college is a great place to be. Everyone that says they are not going to college should at least try…one class. It would probably change [their] mind about it.”

Subtheme: Reflection. Many of the student-participants were terrified about starting the DE program. Some of their responses included JM stating “It’s [taking college courses] gonna be one of the hardest things I did in my life;” JB sharing, “I thought it was going to be hard and the professor wasn’t going to know how to talk and explain themselves;” NS stating, “I was kinda afraid of it [the DE program];” and CR claiming, “I was kinda nervous and scared at the same time.” This is understandable, considering their limited exposure to someone they know actually completing a postsecondary program. Again for most of the student-participants they witnessed their family members starting a college program and not finishing, leaving them to presume it was due to difficulty.

Summary: Change perspectives. Experiences in the DE program changed students’ behaviors and beliefs. Students described how taking college courses forced them to be more responsible. For instance, PA said “We had to turn in the work [by] the due date. In high school we have a due date but some teachers... give us more time.” Students also had to become more responsible with their time. JM described, “It’s been a little rocky balancing out the schedules.” Students had to learn how to manage not only completing assignments but also traveling back and forth between the high school and college campuses. Furthermore, students also had to keep track of two school calendars with different holidays and school breaks.
Students also experienced academic changes. Based on the responses the student-participants had matured, performed better in their “similar” college classes than high school courses, and scored higher on their standardized testing. For example, according to DY, “I learned more [college math] than what I would have learned here [high school math].” He went on to say his ACT math score increased and he is doing better in college math than his high school math. LF also stated, “I feel like I have been better at my work…[in college] than in high school.” Student-participants described the difference in expectations from faculty, being surrounded by more motivated students in college, and a different style of teaching, as well as other influences such as family being instrumental in their change. Although self-doubt was constant at the beginning of the program, all of the participants appeared to have more confidence in their academic abilities toward the end.

**Theme 2: Academic Preparation**

All students do not qualify for the DE program based on their prior academic preparation. In order to be accepted into the DE program, students are required to meet the following criteria: GPA, standardized test scores, good attendance, and good behavior. Based on these requirements, half of the student-participants that applied for the CP (core classes) were not eligible because they did not meet the necessary standardized test benchmarks. In other words, five students (CR, NS, JM, ZP, and JB) were only eligible to take college elective courses. Not being able to take core class means there was a chance the courses they take within the DE program may not transfer to a four-year university. It was central that CR expressed “I wish I have known I could take core classes there [at the college campus].” She did not believe it was an option for her since she did not perform well on standardized testing in the past.

**Subtheme: College/career preparatory programs.** The students were asked about
their prior college preparatory high school coursework (AP, IB, and CTE courses). Four of the student-participants (ZP, PA, AD, and JP) took AP/IB courses. Eight of the students (CR, LF, NS, JM, PA, AD, DY and JB) took at least one CTE course. These courses were important to ask about because as with the DE program they are also considered college preparatory classes. Half of the participants agreed none of the courses listed below helped them make a college/career decision. For instance, PA stated, “I don’t think it [CTE courses] helped much ’cause it was about fashion and studying about fashion stuff.” AD concurred when she indicated, “It [AP courses] really hasn’t helped me that much.” Hoffman (2003) stated, “Educational terrain belonged almost exclusively to a small privileged group of young people: those whose families could afford high-quality private high schools and those in well-funded public school districts that offered AP and similar options to their highest achieving students” (p.44). In other words, in the United States the quality of education one receives is mostly dependent upon their home address (Hoffman, 2003). Although these student-participants had access to such courses, based on their responses they did not feel it prepared them for college/careers. Contradictory to the other student-participants, DY believed his CTE coursework helped him “develop[ed] entrepreneurial skills…and was considering a GAP year.” For him it was important to investigate his options, as he was not convinced college was for him. Since more often than not, college preparedness alone would overlook the realism that some students will not go to college and would instead work (Epperson, 2011).

Another college/career preparatory program was the DE program. The student-participants were asked what was appealing to them about the DE program. LF shared, “The fact that I am doing classes [participating in college coursework] that are college class. I’m getting it out of the way [fewer classes to take in college] before actually going to college and having to
More often than not some of the student-participants viewed DE as way to increase their academic preparation for college. Some envision it as a way to get ahead of their peers while increasing their college options, though others signed up because they wanted to save themselves money. For instance, NS claimed “I get go there [college] for free.” In particular, some of the student-participants were undocumented and recognized when they attend an in-state college they would be expected to pay out-of-state tuition and would not be eligible for federal and state funding. It was fair to say for most, without this funding, college would not be financially conceivable.

**Subtheme: Postsecondary plans.** Student-participants repeatedly commented on their future college and career plans. Seven of the nine student-participants conveyed that they all planned on going to college once they graduate from high school. AD proclaimed, “After two years I plan to go to Chapel Hill.” NS confirmed he was going to continue at the community college where the DE program was held and get a part time job. One of the student-participants, JM, did not live with his parents and had 15 siblings. He had every reason to doubt his future. Instead, JM expressed teachers have given him the support he needed to accomplish his goals in life. He was also quoted as saying:

> Right now I am already enrolled with the National Guard. I ship out June well after I graduation. They [National Guard] are going to let me go to [community college] to finish...my classes for Automotive Technology. I want to have my own business shop. So, I wanna make sure I get all my credits to complete the Automotive Technician certification.

Overwhelmingly, persistency and goal orientation were constant throughout. These traits were critical to success in the DE program, as the program required the student-participants to be
self-driven.

Another participant, LF, claimed she was interested in sports medicine. She further explained how she wished she had more exposure to other medical fields. She optimistically said, “Once I am in college it [her interest] may change but right now it is sports medicine” that interested her. It was apparent from the student-participants voices they were inspired to pursue some form of postsecondary options.

However, the student-participant DY had another perspective. He expressed his goals were to explore other non-traditional educational experiences. DY stated, “I am leaning toward taking a gap year. I am going to experiment with business. I want to see if this is something I want to pursue. Right now it seems like a really good idea.” Although this particular student-participant enjoyed the program, he was the only one that approached it from a different perspective. He was intrigued by the DE experience, but he also wanted to see what the world had to offer him before making a college commitment. The assumption why this student-participant is thus very different from the others was probably due to the story he shared about his parents fleeing “prosecution and oppression from the communist government.”

**Subtheme: Determination.** Common to all the themes identified in this study was the determination of these student-participants to be successful. Seemingly all of the student-participants were minorities and immigrants; while not mentioned but implied, they felt determined to succeed based on discrimination they encountered. They were keenly aware of potential roadblocks for them later in life especially as minorities and immigrant students.

JB, an African American student, insisted she was determined to triumph and wanted to see more African American students in the program. When asked what a typical DE student would look like, she asserted we need “African Americans so we can be little better
While DY, an immigrant student, articulated “My parents’ generation came here [to the United States] escaping prosecution and oppression from the communist government and so they had to go through this disease infested jungles just to bring us [my siblings] over here” so they could obtain a quality education.

The student-participants in so many words highlighted the central role their own internal drive played. Some noted before the DE program they attributed their academic difficulties to internal factors, which resulted in a lack of effort expended on their class work. JB reiterated this when she said “It’s [DE program] helping me take better notes and learn how to study. I didn’t study in high school.” PA emphasized, “It [DE program] helped me…stay focused and on track with my homework in high school.” After the DE program internal motivators improved their self-confidence and achievement. The program was believed to be directly correlated with raising their academic abilities and self-esteem. JB and LF articulated “I am strong when I put my mind to it” and “I am more responsible than I thought I was.” Their outlook on career options, social, and cultural outcomes that lie in wait for them when they graduate encouraged the academic decisions the student-participants made. In closing, the incorporation of both external and internal factors powered their higher levels of academic determination and achievement.

**Summary: Academic preparation.** Given the differences between having difficulty qualifying for the DE program and once enrolled, they found the classes to be easy. Then the question that came to mind was “Are the college courses too easy?” If so, then why did half (n=5) of the student-participants have trouble meeting the benchmark qualifications and defaulted to an elective pathway that did not require benchmarks? Is this to say that the benchmarks should not be necessary or the community college was not rigorous enough? On the
other hand, did the student-participant feel the pressure to step up their game? Lastly, more research needs to be done on how parents culturally and socially influence their children’s goal setting abilities.

**Summary**

The study used qualitative analysis and semi-structured interviews to determine why, there was a disproportionate amount of *at promise* student-participants in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004) and examined its relationship to cultural capital. Moreover, how educational disparities could limit college, employment, and wealth opportunities for these student-participants (Epperson, 2013) was addressed. Again the research questions were:

1) What experiences led student-participants’ enrollment in the dual enrollment program?

2) What are the 12th-grade student’s experiences in the dual enrollment program?

3) How does the dual enrollment program support cultural capital needed to prepare students for college?

The chapter presented profiles of nine 12th-grade student-participants that participated in the dual enrollment program IPA study. The data analysis resulted in two broad themes and six sub themes:

(1) Changed Perspectives
   a. Postsecondary Awareness
   b. High School vs. College
   c. Reflection

(2) Academic Preparation
   a. College/Career Preparatory Programs
   b. Postsecondary Plans
   c. Determination

The purpose of this study was to determine why there were disproportionate numbers of *at promise* students participating in the dual enrollment (DE) program (Karp et al., 2004) and to examine the relationship to cultural capital. The data findings delineated in this chapter
attempted to provide clarity through detailed accounts to support the emerging themes. These two themes surfaced from the rich stories of their DE experiences and provided answers to the research questions.

Research question one inquired about what led the student-participants to enroll in the DE program. Based on the student-participants’ responses it was revealed they were not motivated by neither internal nor external factors rather it was multidimensional. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators directly and indirectly fed into the student-participant’s determination to succeed. It was no surprise none of the student-participants said they were motivated purely by the “love of learning.”

Research question two spoke to the student-participants experiences in the DE program, which also lead to an area to explore further. Again half of the student-participants had difficulty meeting the benchmark qualifiers for the program but in turn found the college coursework to be easy. Although they struggled initially balancing high school and college studies the day-to-day classwork was not challenging for the student-participants.

Research question three examined how the DE program supported cultural capital needed to prepare students for college. The responses revealed their changed behavior was a result of their frustrations with their low-performing and under-resourced school, unmotivated teachers and students, and lastly seeing their own parents’ financial struggles pushed them to want to be successful for themselves. As low-income students with limited exposure to the widely accepted cultural capital, this academic preparation provided them a high sense of self-efficacy, clearly articulated goals, a network, and motivated them despite their life’s circumstances.

Moving forward for potential future research, it would be central for the DE students to have a support structure that would help them mitigate the factors that entail navigating between
the world of high school student and college student. This support system could come in the form of a peer group, advisory period (high school), academic support services (college), development of a program of study (high school and college), in-depth application process (high school and college), comprehensive orientation process (high school and college), and more definitive roles of the high school and college personnel.

Chapter 5 discusses how these findings answered the three research questions. It specifically compares the cultural capital theoretical framework and the literature review on the dual enrollment program. In doing so, this chapter will also discuss intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, give suggestions, limitations, and potential ideas for future studies.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to determine why disproportionate numbers of at promise students participate in the DE program (Karp et al., 2004), and to examine its relationship to cultural capital. The study applied interpretative phenomenological analysis as a qualitative research method to understand the experiences of the DE students.

A study of each participant’s unique experiences in the DE program was obtained through recorded interviews, a methodical scrutiny of the transcripts, and a reflective journal. To classify the student-participants’ experiences in the DE program the study was steered by the following research questions: “What experiences led student-participants’ enrollment in the dual enrollment program?” “What are the 12th-grade student’s experiences in the dual enrollment program?” and “How does the dual enrollment program support cultural capital needed to prepare students for college?”

Meeting the purpose of this study, nine participants were interviewed using qualitative analysis and semi-structured interviews. Each of the participants shared their lived stories and detailed accounts of their experiences in the DE program. From the rich narratives, two themes and six sub themes emerged. These themes and sub themes aligned with the study’s overarching research questions and theoretical framework.

This chapter offered a dialogue on the interpretation of the findings in Chapter 4. This chapter intended to highlight the interpretation of the themes, previous literature presented, implications for theory, implications for practice, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Themes

IPA was the best-fit approach for this study in order to understand the perceptions of the
participants (Smith et al., 2009). Several key findings were drawn from this study. The two themes that emerged each had specific sub themes. The first theme, changed perspectives, had three sub themes: (a) postsecondary awareness; (b) high school vs. college; and (c) reflection. The second theme, academic preparation, produced three sub themes: (a) college/career preparatory programs; (b) postsecondary plans; and (d) determination. The interpretation of the themes and sub themes produced several revelations.

**Changed Perspectives**

In general, the student-participants reported changed perspectives as a result of the DE program. When interpreting the changed perspectives findings with the literature it revealed the student-participants accepted the level of responsibility bestowed upon them, adjusted to the new milieu, and increased their confidence levels.

**Responsibility.** Although most would agree the average teenager would rather do less work than more, these student-participants desired to supplement their education. This was to say although they initially expressed fears about participating in the DE program they were all pleasantly surprised. This program required the students to increase their level of responsibility in various ways. They had to complete more work, which included their high school work and college coursework. They also juggled two school calendars and traveled back and forth between the high school and college campuses. They were able to come and go on the high school campus and leave when they had a free class period. As a result the students became more responsible as referenced in Karp’s (2012) study, where he discussed how the DE program provides students with the opportunity to exhibit role rehearsal and anticipatory socialization.

**Milieu.** Several of the student-participants compared the college milieu to that of the high school. The major factors were the variation of teaching styles, learning environment, and
student dispositions. The student-participants were pleasantly surprised with the flow of the college classes and especially the labs. For instance, they enjoyed being able to leave their college class once their work was complete. This would never be allowed on the high school level. One student-participant noted he enjoyed the hands-on learning the lab classes provided. Although it was a bit of a transition for the student-participants to be prepared for college classes beforehand as opposed to the high school classes where the teachers went over the lesson during class, the students still enjoyed their experience. Further examination of these findings supported Kanny (2015) and Lewis (2000) research that stated when students are pushed beyond their comfort level they will rise to the occasion.

Another factor noted was the differences in the student dispositions (high school and college students). Many of the student-participants noted their high school peers were immature, disrespectful, and unmotivated to learn, while the college campus was stimulating. One of the students discussed how several of his college classmates would meet up after class to work together. As with Medvide & Bluestein’s (2010) research students felt like their time was better spent being productive not just hanging out with friends. As with this research, it was the first time for many of them to see students who actually desired to learn and put forth the work necessary to succeed.

With all of that being said, the student-participants were surprised by the lack of difficulty with their college coursework. This is not to say they did not experience difficulty with the transition between college and high school. However, once they became accustomed to the schedule, teacher expectations, the differences in college and high school, and the course load they felt it was shockingly very easy. The level of college preparedness the DE program provided further excited them. They felt steps ahead of their peers that did not have the
opportunity to participate in the program, as also demonstrated in Medvide and Bluestein’s (2010) research.

**Confidence.** Regarding their increased confidence levels, as stated above the majority of the student-participants panicked about starting the DE program. The data on DE, in particular, represented several things. My student-participants like many other in the literature review struggled with qualifying for the program based on standardized test scores. They expressed concerns about whether or not they could be successful in this program based on prior schooling experiences. This created not only frustration for them and the DE Coordinator (the researcher) but it was also discouraging for the students. In other words, they struggled meeting the qualification criteria for a program but needed to believe they would be successful in that program. This took much convincing on the DE Coordinator’s part.

It was also important to note, the data represented some of the student-participants were more successful in their college coursework than a similar high school class. For instance, one student did not perform well in his high school math class but did well in the college math class and subsequently in the ACT math section. After taking the college courses it was apparent their confidence levels increased and they were excited about enrolling in college full time after their high school graduation.

In sum, these findings added to the current literature that focuses on Karp’s (2012) role rehearsal and anticipatory socialization. He stated, “Students in dual enrollment participate in anticipatory socialization and are able to learn the role of the college students in advance of matriculation” (Karp, 2012, p. 23). In other words, they learned how to maneuver through the complicated higher education system more easily. These participant’s stories were perfect examples of how they changed perspectives based on newly discovered learned behaviors.
These learned behaviors and exposure to a new milieu helped them to flourish in their new role and become excited about what college had to offer them. Ultimately the students’ level of responsibility and confidence increased, which played a critical role in terms of college readiness.

**Academic Preparation**

In keeping with Lekes et al. (2007) and Jones (2014), academic preparation comes in many forms on the high school level. They can include Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, CTE courses, and the Dual Enrollment program.

As already noted in order to be in the DE program students must first meet several qualifiers including GPA, standardized test scores, good behavior, and attendance records. Subsequently, students were vetted to determine their potential for success in the DE program. Eight of the students in the program had a 3.0+ GPA and one had a 2.7. Their favorite subjects included math, science, and English; one stated Spanish, and another one claimed an elective course. Out of the nine students, only four of them took AP classes and that data confirmed those classes did not prepare them for college level work. Based on Hoffman (2005) the data from this research concurred DE is more valuable because it permitted the student-participants to measure learning multiple ways and over an entire semester, not a one-day test as in AP courses. The research outcomes also concluded that academic preparation comes in non-academic forms, awareness and motivation.

**Awareness.** The supporting data from this study highlighted the student-participants were aware of advanced coursework and college preparatory program; however, based on the data they did not feel most of these programs prepared them for college/careers, with the exception of the DE program.
The researcher was astonished by the teenagers’ level of maturity and awareness. As low-income minorities and immigrant students residing in poor neighborhoods, they were keenly aware of potential roadblocks that lay in wait for them later in life. This is to say they were cognizant that in the United States the quality of education one receives is mostly dependent upon home address (Hoffman, 2003).

**Motivation.** The data from this study demonstrated these student-participants were motivated extrinsically and intrinsically. Some student-participants mentioned their siblings and parents were their motivators. For instance, LF reported, “My family there are amazing they are very supportive of everything I do. Because they know that at the end of the day I am doing what is best for me.” Similarly, ZP expressed “[My family is my support system.” Just knowing they were doing something to prepare for their future was something they expressed great pride in.

Another example of an external motivator was a community support system. PA said, “There was a person from my church, she also was enrolled into this program.” DY spoke of his mentor, a gentleman, that he credits for helping him develop entrepreneurial skills. Although the student-participants mentioned support from their parents and the community, the study’s findings indicated it was quite apparent they named themselves as their principal source of motivation. For instance, CR stated, “I am an independent person…[I] like to work hard do what is best…for my…school work.” When in fact, none of the student-participants described their parents as forcing them to work hard, or requiring them to implement certain achievement goals, and none of the student-participants were required to participate in the DE program. All nine of the student-participants made the choice to participant in the DE program on their own and simply shared their intentions with their parents. There were similar findings in the study done by Burns and Lewis (2000); they discussed how the students took their college courses
more seriously and felt accountable.

**Implications for Theory**

This study was informed by Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital theory. Pierre Bourdieu (2011) was a French sociologist and seminal author of the cultural capital theory. This theory was chosen to frame the research question and to provide a natural alignment with the intended research.

This theory provided a consistent lens on the examination of the nine minority, under-served, under-represented, and first generation college student-participants. The students in this study have lived in impoverished settings and have never really enjoyed the benefits that wealth brings. Yet at the same time, it was important to reiterate that while these students may not have what Delpit (1988) refers to as the “culture of power,” these students did have their own capital emerging from their respective cultures (Yosso, 2005). Consequently, the lack of access to the culture of power resulted in limitations and exclusion that produced an inequality of access to institutional resources. For example, top notch education to help them become educationally competitive.

Bourdieu (2011) also suggested that people from the dominant group have certain skill sets and awareness that is converted into cultural capital, which gives them an advantage over those that do not possess those abilities. Unfortunately, the Title 1 students in this study could “never achieve the natural familiarity of those born to these classes and are academically penalized” (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p.155). In other words, the DE program helped provide students with social and cultural resources. The program in turn, helped students build skills and experiences that can help “yield social profits” (Lamont and Lareau, 1988). For instance, the DE program assisted students with building a network, seeing the value of education, and potentially
changing the trajectory of their lives and future generations. Therefore, this research added another piece to the repertoire of understanding how the DE program left the students with changed perspectives and academic preparation.

Generally speaking, parents convey cultural capital by enlightening their children about the worth of securing an education. Likewise, LF in this study had family members encourage her to continue her education. The theory further confirmed that cultural capital can be obtained over time, primarily through socialization at home and through parental investment in certain types of cultural training (Dumais, 2010). Supported by current empirical literature, *at promise* students will encounter the roadblock that their parents may be ill equipped on how to prepare their children. More specifically, given that eight participants were first-generation college students, their parents did not have first-hand experience that they could leverage to help their students acclimate to a college environment. As such, the DE program functioned in a way that helped students get a better understanding of what college was like. For instance, the program allowed for a more handholding experience. They have the benefit of having the DE Coordinator on the high school level to provide assistance where needed.

Cultural capital linked with the DE program created a valuable commodity. Schools tend to reward students on the basis of their cultural capital, defined as "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" (Bourdieu, 2011). This research proved the need for additional studies exploring how to stop certain forms of cultural capital from hindering students from participating in highly selective courses and automatically screening them out. In doing so this limited the types of courses (core or electives) students were able to register for each semester based on academic gatekeepers (GPA and standardized test scores).
Moreover, largely absent in the literature, although a central tenet of the framework, are studies on how all cultures can be valued and/or how can students develop a more highly valued type of cultural capital. Although the theory was beneficial in supporting the researcher with understanding cultural capital, the researcher acknowledged that where this research and most other studies failed is by not interviewing both the DE students and their parents.

**Implications for Practice**

The data concluded the students had a changed perspective after participating in the DE program. This was further broken down to mean the students in this study accepted the level of responsibility bestowed upon them, adjusted to the new milieu, and increased their confidence levels. Based on these data, the suggested implications for practice should include the following: (1) an advisory period, (2) a DE peer support group, (3) an in-depth application process, (4) a comprehensive orientation program, (5) an in-depth college/career fair, (6) a free SAT/ACT prep courses online, (7) a clear and consistent articulation agreement between all colleges and universities, (8) professional development for college teachers on cultural capital, (9) providing students with a college student mentor, and (10) informing students about various academic support services.

Some of the challenges that emerged from the data were the lack of prior knowledge regarding postsecondary education, increased responsibilities, and the huge disparities between the high school and college environments. Having an *advisory period* (high school) to become a peer model would permit the students to coach one another. A dual enrollment *peer support group* (high school) would help students adjust to the challenges within the program including managing their schedules. Ultimately, it is hoped tying back to the problem of practice would increase the *at promise* enrollment rate due to the support system in place.
Participants in the study suggested their parents were unable to provide assistance with the college process. In these instances, it would have been helpful to know more about the students’ backgrounds. This could be achieved through a more in-depth application process (high school). This would entail asking more questions about their parents’ level of education and current teacher recommendations. Knowing the parents level of education could help determine what additional services the student may require. A comprehensive orientation program (both high school and college) would require the attendance of both the high school coordinator of the program and a representative from the college. Since the data suggested students found major differences in the college environment, the college representative can better explain the college milieu and the various services offered to the students. The presentation can cover college/career programs and services and help students to understand the requirements of their postsecondary plans. Both the high school and college can work together to provide a comprehensive orientation and an in-depth college and career fair (college). This would not be the ordinary college/career fair, but rather one that has representatives from various industries and a representative from a particular college department to explain the connections. For example: a woman from an engineering company explaining what her job responsibilities are and the department chair from the engineering department speaking about the various engineering majors. Since many of the participants had difficulty qualifying for the various benchmarks, free SAT/ACT online prep courses (college) would be ideal.

Another recommendation is to design a professional development opportunity for both the high school and college teachers on cultural capital. This professional development would allow the teachers to not only assess their own cultural capital but to perhaps understand the cultural capital of the students they serve. A college student mentor (college) would be another
recommended option. When students start the program the college would assign a college student to mentor them. This mentor will help the student navigate the college process, which would include but not limited to registering for courses, understanding office hours, student tutoring/work groups, etc. Lastly, academic support services (college) would be beneficial to students as well. Most colleges have these departments but none of the DE students mentioned knowing or utilizing these services.

**Limitations**

Whereas this research delivered valuable data that will underwrite future scholarly and practitioner work there were some limitations to be noted. First was the small sample size of nine student-participants. Another limitation was the lack of socio-economic diversity. Since the researcher is employed at a Title 1 high school there were no students from higher income brackets represented. Also, the majority of the participants were not born in the United States or in the southeastern city where the study was conducted.

As with this particular methodology, it was based on the student-participants lived experiences. In other words, it was their interpretation of their involvement in the DE program. This could mean several things; one, they could have embellished some of the self-reported information. Unfortunately, it was impossible to verify all the information provided by the student-participants.

Although this method was enjoyable, after analyzing the data there were many times where the researcher felt supplementary questions could have been asked to gather more all-inclusive information. For instance, the research could have benefitted if it was determined why the student-participants saw their families as middle class, since it was obvious based on their parent’s job titles they were not. The student-participants exhibited such discomfort with
questions of finances the researcher decided not to dig deeper.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The overarching intention of this study was to determine why disproportionate numbers of *at promise* students are participating in the dual enrollment program (Karp, Bailey, Hughes, & Fermin, 2004) and to examine its relationship to cultural capital.

Farrell and Seifert (2007) believed “Postsecondary institutions and high schools entered into dual-enrollment programs for well-intentioned reasons...common issues were availability of college student services and academic preparation” (p. 70). However, it is important to have a definitive policy nationwide on whose responsibility it was to help ensure these students have a smooth transition into their new roles as high school and college student.

Therefore, the recommendation for future research should entail a case study. It should examine the curriculum, articulation agreements, and the roles and responsibilities of both institutions. The case study should be more holistic of the DE program. It should include high school educators, college professors, students and parents. This would be needed based on the concerns the participants expressed in the study. They include understanding their new role as high school/college student, their parents’ limited post-secondary knowledge, and the initial difficulties qualifying for the program. Having a discussion regarding all of the things listed above would be helpful with increasing the *at promise* enrollment rate in the DE program. In regards to the selection of the participants, it would be most beneficial if the majority of the students chosen were actually from the same city in which the study was conducted.

Since one of the limitations was the small sample size another recommendation is to have an entrance survey and exit survey for the DE students. This survey would provide a better understanding of the students’ thoughts of the program prior to enrollment and then afterwards.
This survey would provide valuable data that would expose patterns and provide a broader perspective across a larger group of students.

**Reflection**

In a reflective moment, the researcher learned the *at promise* students are the epitome of tenacity, perseverance, and determination. Another lesson was conducting a scholar-practitioner research is not for the faint at heart. The researcher struggled with “not being the expert” after having worked in the field for over 17 years. Now understanding the word “expert” means you have proven data to make certain statements and not just one’s opinion—it now makes sense. The skills learned about the DE program have better prepared the researcher to be an advocate for the DE students especially when it comes to hurdles like lack of transportation or textbook expenses. As a result, the data will be shared with the community college and DE staff to ensure everyone is better prepared to assist their students.

**Summary**

As it relates to cultural capital, the participants’ responses seemed to only scratched the surface on what the program could do for them long term. For instance, JB indicated, “*It’s helping me take better notes and learn how to study. I didn’t study in high school.*” Some of the responses noted only mentioned classwork, better study habits, and staying focused on the work. One could agree based on the responses the students were only looking at the “now.” This was translated to mean the students were missing a key component of the program, cultural capital. When in fact, none of the participants comprehended in what way the program and the individuals they came into contact with could benefit them in their future endeavors.
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## Appendix A

### Definition of Terms

Early college access programs occur in various ways. Below are the most common forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Dual Enrollment Courses** | This occurs when high school students take college courses on the campus of a postsecondary institution. Students are in regular college classes with college students. Completion of the program yields a high school diploma and postsecondary credit. Dependent upon the college the student enrolls in the credit will transfer.  
(Hoffman, 2012) |
| **Concurrent Enrollment Courses** | This occurs when high school students take college courses on the high school campus. The high school teachers are certified as adjunct professors. Completion of the program yields a high school diploma and postsecondary credit. Dependent upon the college the student enrolls in the credit will transfer.  
(Hoffman, 2012) |
| **Advanced Placement Courses** | These are examination-based college credit courses taken on the high school level. There is a test the students take at the end of the year and dependent upon what their score is they are given college credit for that particular course. They will not need to retake that course in college.  
(Herbert, 2001) |
| **Early College Program**     | This occurs when students’ high school is located on the campus of a postsecondary institution. Most of these programs enroll 9-12th-graders but some offer the option of a 13th year. Students take a combination of high school and college classes. Completion of the program yields a high school diploma and postsecondary credit.  
(Burns and Lewis, 2000) |
| **Middle College Program**    | This occurs when students’ high school is located on the campus of a postsecondary institution. Unlike the early college program only 11th- and 12th-graders are able to enroll. Completion of the program yields a high school diploma and postsecondary credit.  
(Hoffman, 2012) |
Appendix B

Letter to Student Participants

Dual Enrollment: The Experience, The Benefits, and The Hurdles

I, Natascha Pendergrass, a doctoral student at Northeastern University and the Dual Enrollment Coordinator will be conducting an independent research project on the student’s insights regarding the dual enrollment program.

I am inviting you to be a part of a research project on your experiences in the dual enrollment program, its benefits, and its hurdles. I want to understand your individual experiences with the dual enrollment program. If you volunteer to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in two rounds of one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Each conversation will be recorded and transcribed. The transcripts will be made available to you to review for potential errors. At the time you can choose to delete or add any additional information. The conversation will be completely confidential and voluntary. I will not include any information that would identify anyone because again no identifying information including names or school ID# will be obtained.

You will receive a $20 Amazon gift card and we hope that this study will contribute to the dual enrollment program to help improve its intended goals. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate now, you may change their mind and stop at any time. Please respond to this email and indicate whether or not you desire to participate in this study. If you do not want to participate, you will not be contacted regarding this research again. I will send a reminder text message a week after the initial email to individuals that did not respond.

If you have questions about this research study or if you would like to volunteer to participate, you can contact me at pendergrass.n@husky.neu.edu.

Regards,

Natascha Pendergrass
pendergrass.n@husky.neu.edu
Appendix C
Informed Consent Form

Dual Enrollment: The Experience, The Benefits, and The Hurdles

'Northeastern University, Department of Education

Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Corliss Brown Thompson [Principal Investigator],
Natascha Pendergrass [Student Researcher]

Title of Project: Dual Enrollment: The Experience, The Benefits, and The Hurdles

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you, the CPCC College and Career Promise student, to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the Student Researcher (Natascha Pendergrass) will explain it to you at the orientation. You may ask this Student Researcher any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, regarding your participation in this study, you may tell the Student Researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why are you being asked to take part in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because of your enrollment in the dual enrollment program.

Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this study is to determine why, there is a disproportionate amount of at promise students participating in the DE program.

What will you be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, I will ask you to share their perceptions about the dual enrollment program.
The participants will be asked to participate in two rounds of 45-minute one-on-one recorded semi-structured interviews (conducted by Natascha Pendergrass, the Student Researcher). The purpose of the interview is to permit the participants the opportunity to share their experiences in the dual enrollment program. The same questions will be asked of all participants and enough time will be given to respond. Small talk will be allowed to make the process feel less stressful. During the interview the researcher will listen more than speak. All the while the researcher will continue to reassure the participants that the interviews are voluntary, private, and confidential. The participants will be encouraged to tell their stories regarding the dual enrollment program.

**Where will this take place and how much of your time will it take?**

The two rounds of 45-minute one-on-one interviews will take place in a location of the participants’ choice. The interviews will start in mid-January and conclude by mid-February.

**Will there be any risk or discomfort?**

There are few foreseeable risks, harms, discomforts or inconvenience that the participant may experience. If any questions are difficult, you can skip them. It is important to note that the Student Researcher does not provide a grade to any of the dual enrolled students. The student’s college professor grades all of their work and the DE Coordinator merely adds the grade to the high school transcript. This is important because there is no undue pressure on the student participants to fear repercussions from their responses.

**Will you benefit from this research?**

There are no direct benefits from participating in this study. However, there are potential benefits to other students that participate in the dual enrollment program in the future.

**Who will see the information about me?**

Your part in this study will be completely confidential. The identities will be matched with the responses and only the researcher will know the identity of the participant. No reports will be generated with the information obtained in the study that would identify your name. All reports will only use pseudonyms and will not identify you and the school.

**If I do not want to take part in the study, what choices do I have?**

Your decision to participate is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to sign this form.

**What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?**

Again, as noted previously there are no foreseeable risks, harms, discomforts or
inconvenience that the participant may experience.

**Can I stop my participation in this study?**

Since this study is completely voluntary you can stop participating at any time without consequence. Please note that even if you start the research you can still stop participating at any time in this process without consequence.

**Who can you contact if you have questions or problems?**

If you have any questions about this research please feel free to contact the Student Researcher: Natascha Pendergrass (pendergrass.n@husky.neu.edu). You can also contact the Principal Investigator Dr. Corliss Brown Thompson (co.brown@northeastern.edu).

**Will you be paid for their participation?**

The participants will receive a $20 Amazon gift card.

**Will it cost me anything to participate?**

There will not be any cost incurred by you to participate in this study.

**Is there anything else I need to know?**

You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

**I /________________________/agree to take part in this research.**

________________________
Signature agreeing to take part in the study Date

________________________
Printed name of person above Date
Appendix D

Verbal Script to Students during the Orientation

Good morning, my name is Natascha Pendergrass. I am your Dual Enrollment Coordinator. I want to thank everyone for coming out to the orientation. I know you are all excited and probably nervous about taking college courses. Please know one of my responsibilities is to alleviate some of those concerns. In addition, this year is special because you may be selected to participate in a dual enrollment study.

As a doctoral student at Northeastern University and the Dual Enrollment Coordinator I will be conducting an independent research project on the student’s insights regarding the dual enrollment program. I have a true passion for helping students with early college access since, dual enrollment is one of those program I am very excited about the potential findings.

Initially students will be asked to complete a preliminary five minute survey to determine their eligibility. Then over the college semester I want to meet with the students one-on-one to interview them and understand their experiences in the dual enrollment program. With your permission, I want to meet with you twice over the semester. All the meetings will be held in a private location. I will coordinate the meetings times during their college “free period.” For instance, if their college course meets during 2nd period on Monday and Wednesdays I will schedule them Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday. All interviews will be recorded. The students will be provided the transcripts from the interviews.

Again, the participation is completely voluntary and students may decide to leave the study at any time. I will make every effort to keep all the information obtained confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in all written and oral presentations. I anticipate there will be no risks to the student as a result of participating in this study.
By participating in this study the student will help future students who want to participate in the dual enrollment program. The student’s experiences may also help illustrate the importance of the dual enrollment program and show the value of these programs for future students. The final nine-twelve students chosen will receive a $20 Amazon gift card at the completion of the study.

To participate in this study I will need you to sign the informed consent form. If you have any questions and concerns please feel free to email me at pendergrass.n@husky.neu.edu.
Appendix E

One-on-one Interview Questions (round one)

INTRODUCTION

These are preliminary questions.

1. What is your name?
2. How are old you?
3. Describe yourself. What do you want me to know about you?
4. Where were you born?
5. Where else have you lived, other than here?

FAMILY/HOME

Below are questions related to your family and home life.

1. Who do you live with?
2. Tell me about your family.
3. What language do you speak other than English?
4. Do you have a computer with internet access at home?
5. Do you have siblings?
6. If so, are you the oldest, youngest, or middle child?
7. If at all, what type of car do you have?
8. Do your parents/guardians own or rent their home?
9. If at all, what type of car does your parents/guardians have?
10. Who in your family, if anyone, had postsecondary training (i.e. college, community college, trade school)?
11. Describe what you know about their postsecondary experience:
   a. Where did they go to school?
b. What did they study?

12. The adults you live with do they work?

13. If so, what fields do they work in? For example: If you live with two adults type both job 
ex. Teacher/Banker

14. How would you classify your family’s financial status?  
a. Upper Class (rich)  
b. Middle Class (average)  
c. Lower Class (poor)

15. Will you be the first person in your family to graduate from high school?  
a. Yes  
b. No

16. Are you the first person in your family to take college classes?  
a. Yes  
b. No

17. What is most appealing to you and your family about the dual enrollment program?

18. What role has your family played in your college/career goals?

---

**HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

All the questions below are related to your high school experiences.

1. What is your GPA NOW?  
a. 4.0+  
b. 3.5-3.9  
c. 3.0-3.4  
d. 2.5-2.9  
e. Other: ______________________

2. Describe your high school experience:  
a. What were your favorite classes? Why?  
b. Which classes were easy or hard? Why?  
c. What do you like about high school?  
d. What do you dislike about high school?

3. What are your goals after high school?  
a. Stay at the community college  
b. Enroll in a 4 year university  
c. Enroll in a trade school (ex. DeVry, ITT Tech)  
d. Go to the military  
e. Go into the workforce
f. Other: ________________________

4. What are your career goals? Why/how did you decide on this career goal?
   a. i.e. medical, law, education, banking, technology, or another area

5. Before starting the dual enrollment program what has been your school experience?

6. How are you preparing for college and/or career?

7. Who if anyone is helping you with these preparations?

8. How often do you meet with your guidance counselor each school year?

9. Have you taken any of these courses? (transcripts will verify the information provided)
   a. AP courses
   b. IB courses
   c. Marketing and/or Fashion Merchandising (CTE Courses)
   d. Business Law and/or Entrepreneurship (CTE Courses)
   e. Sci Vis and/or Game Art (CTE Courses)
   f. Foods and/or Culinary (CTE Courses)
   g. Cosmetology and/or Apparel (CTE Courses)
   h. Multimedia and/or Principles of Business (CTE Courses)
   i. Other:  ______________________________________________

10. How have CTE courses helped you make your college/career decision?

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

This section is referring to the enrollment process into the dual enrollment program.

1. Do you feel the orientation was helpful in preparing you for what to expect in college?

2. Would you prefer to take any class without following a pathway?

3. Do you feel it is necessary to require a GPA and testing requirements for some courses?

4. Did the lack of transportation and knowing you had to pay for textbooks minus $50 concerned you?
Appendix F

One-on-One Interview Questions (round two)

DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

Below are questions about your participation in the dual enrollment program.

1. Describe your experience in the dual enrollment program.

2. How did you hear about the dual enrollment program?

3. What did you find most appealing about the dual enrollment program?

4. What are your expectations of the dual enrollment program BEFORE enrolling in the program?

5. What type of courses are you taking core classes (liberal arts) or elective courses at the college campus?

6. What are your thoughts now about the program and how is it different?

7. How has the dual enrollment program prepared you for college and/or a career?

8. What is the best thing about the dual enrollment program?

9. Do you have any concerns about paying for college once you finish this FREE program?

10. How, if at all, do peers support you in the DE program? Is this important to you? Why?

11. How has the transition been for you? (Being between two worlds of high school and college)?

12. How would you describe the typical DE student? Why do you believe this is the typical student?

13. How do you stay in contact with high school activities? For example Pep rallies, homecoming, football games, and other social events

14. Estimate how much you think you are saving by participating in this program?

15. Has this program allowed you to create a network for future employment or other opportunities?
   a. If so, do you feel this is important?
   b. If so, how do you see yourself utilizing these networks in the future?

16. What challenges you experienced in this program?
COLLEGE CAMPUS

The questions below pertain to the college campus.

1. What is your experience on the college campus?

2. Describe your first college class?
   a. What did you take?

3. Describe the differences, if any, between your high school classes and your college class(es)?

4. Describe your typical day going to the college campus.
   a. How do you get there?
   b. How long are you there?
   c. What do you do there?
   d. Who, if anyone, do you talk to on campus?

5. Are you participating in any social activities on the college level?
   a. If so, describe the activities.

6. Did you feel like you fit in on the college campus? Why?

7. How, if at all, do you believe the DE program prepared you for life after high school?

ENTERTAINMENT

This section asks questions about what you do for fun.

1. What do you do when you are not at school or work?
   a. How do you spend your free time?
   b. How do you spend free time with family members?
   c. How do you spend free time with friends?

2. What plays have you been to if any? Ex. Lion King

3. What museums have you been to if any? Ex. Museum of Natural History in New York

4. What type of music do you listen to?

5. If any, what type of poetry do you read or write?

6. Have you seen any operas? If so, which one?
7. When you go out to eat, what restaurants do you go to? Ex. Korean, India, Africa

8. Have you traveled to any other places outside of Charlotte?
   a. Where have you traveled?
   b. Why did you travel to those places (family, vacation, business trip, etc.)?

9. Does your family take vacations?
   a. If so, where have you traveled with your family?

**CLOSING**

*This is your last section...you are almost done.*

1. What do you wish you would have known before starting the dual enrollment program?

2. What have you learned about the world or society as a result of being in DE program?

3. What changes have you experienced since participating in the DE program?

4. What have you learn about yourself, others, and the world?

5. What do you now enjoy that you didn’t either enjoy or know of before participating in the DE program?

6. What activities do you now take part in since participating in the program?

7. If you had the opportunity to do it differently would you sign up for the dual enrollment program again?

8. Would you recommend this program to people you know?

**THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO MEET WITH ME.**

**I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!**
# Appendix G

## Dual Enrolled Students College Course Selections and GPA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Initials/Grade</th>
<th>Program Type/Pathway (CTE or College Transfer)</th>
<th>College Courses</th>
<th>Initial GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA 12</td>
<td>College Transfer (Science)</td>
<td>Writing &amp; Inquiry PreCalculus Algebra General Chemistry American History I</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JB 12</td>
<td>Career &amp; Tech Ed (Early Childhood)</td>
<td>Intro to Early Childhood</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 12</td>
<td>College Transfer (Science)</td>
<td>Writing &amp; Inquiry PreCalculus Algebra PreCalculus Trig Writing/Research</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF 12</td>
<td>College Transfer (Science)</td>
<td>Writing &amp; Inquiry</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JM 12</td>
<td>Career &amp; Tech Ed (Automotive Systems)</td>
<td>Engine Repair/Lab Safety &amp; Emissions Non-Structural Damage</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZP 12</td>
<td>Career &amp; Tech Ed (Emergency Medical)</td>
<td>Orientation to Health Careers Transcultural Healthcare</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 12</td>
<td>Career &amp; Tech Ed (Medical Assisting)</td>
<td>Orientation to Health Careers Transcultural Healthcare</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS 12</td>
<td>Career &amp; Tech Ed (Simulation Game Dev.)</td>
<td>SGD Design 3D Modeling Intro to SGD SGD Programming</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 12</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>PreCalculus Algebra</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

Remind Text Message Screenshot Reminder

Send a class announcement

Keep everyone in the loop with class announcements. Schedule them ahead to save time.

All
This is an invitation to participate in a research study regarding the dual enrollment program. Please come to my office for more info.

Send
Appendix I

Permission

November 17, 2016

Dr. Terri XXXX,

As you know, I am in the Doctor of Education program at Northeastern University. I am finally at the point where I will begin my research. I have identified XXXX XXXX Community College as a research site because I work as a Coordinator with the XXXXXX and XXXX XXXX program (dual enrollment) students. My intention is to interview the students that participate in the program.

The research will gain insight into the experiences of at promise (minority, low-income, underserved, underrepresented, and first generation-going college) students participating in the dual enrollment program and the cultural capital that they develop as part of their experience.

In order to learn the perception of these students, I need to gain access to them, which is why I am writing this letter.

The research study will include dual enrolled students (18 years/or older). These students are dual enrolled in XXXX XXXX Community College and a local high school. There will be an initial pool of thirty students that will complete the computer-based preliminary survey. I will request a list of students from XXXX XXXX (Program Coordinator). This survey will shrink the initial pool down to hopefully a quality pool of nine-twelve students total. Then those nine-twelve students will then be invited to participate in two rounds of one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

Please sign below and return this form to me at pendergrass.n@husky.neu.edu if there are any questions or concerns about this study that I may address for you.

I approve this research to take place.

______________________________________________   ________________________
Signature of person agreeing for the study to occur   Date

_______________________________________________
Printed name of person agreeing for the study to occur

______________________________________________    ________________________
Signature of the researcher     Date

_____________________________________________
Printed name of the researcher