Educational Capacity Development:
The Journey of Five First-generation College Graduate Teachers Through Acquisition of
Social and Cultural Capital and Transmission Towards Their High School Students

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2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

I dedicate this writing to my mom, Mary Frances Royall. Who I am and where I've gotten in life is a direct result of the love, compassion, and strength given to me by her. She knew I could do this before I even dreamed it. Although, it wouldn't have mattered to her. She would have loved me just the same.

Thank you to my beautiful wife, Patricia, for putting up with this nonsense. You gave me unconditional support over the past 12 years, so that I could make my dream come true. Although I may be called Dr. Royall at work, I will still take the garbage out on Monday nights.

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And in the end, I hope that I've changed the future and inspired my son, Bayne Thomas Royall. You're a dreamer who will do great things in the world. I love you to the moon and back.

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ABSTRACT

The transmission of social and cultural capital is the condition under which skills, knowledge and beliefs can be acquired by students. Having benefitted from such transformative engagements, first-generation college graduates who become teachers can effectively compensate for the deficiencies yet to be known by first-generation college bound students. These students do not specifically know what they are missing, but teachers who have completed the journey do. Teachers need to be looked at as key educational resources who can provide information and support to students so that they can get ahead in the college arena. First-generation college graduates who become teachers are unique educational resources for students navigating the complex and daunting journey from a non-collegiate home to a post-collegiate career. When looking at sources of social and cultural capital for first-generation college students, each source has a unique amount of capacity and influence upon a college bound student. Following a qualitative approach of narrative inquiry, five high school teachers with the life experience of being first-generation college graduates narrated their personal journey and its

relationship to helping first-generation college students. A teacher's capacity and direct opportunity to instruct students in the school setting are the foundation for this narrative inquiry.

Educational capacity is the level of cultural and social capital combined that is necessary to navigate through advanced educational situations. This research provides a framework for investigating the concept of educational capacity as it is developed by first-generation college graduate teachers, the simultaneous transmission of social and cultural capital to their students, and the programmatic response by educational institutions to address the inadequate capital among low socioeconomic status students. Several common traits emerged that give perspective to the phenomena of first-generation college graduate teachers and the social and cultural capital that is transmitted to their students. Teachers can have a profound impact in the presence of deficient educational capacity. High school curricula can not prevent years of insufficient adolescent development of social and cultural capital, but targeted development of educational capacity by teachers would create an opportunity for intervention.

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"I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It's not just quitting on yourself, it's quitting on your country — and this country needs and values the talents of every American. That is why we will provide the support necessary for you to complete college and meet a new goal: by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world."

President Obama
February 24, 2009
Address to a Joint Session of Congress

1.0 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Faced with the discrepancy that 82 percent of students whose parents have a bachelor's degree or higher enroll in college after high school compared to only 54 percent of those whose parents only completed high school (Choy, 2001, p. 3), I became concerned. Faced with the realization that first-generation college students have nearly a 15% gap in completion rates (National Student Clearinghouse, 2011), I was dismayed. As a first-generation college graduate, I began to reflect on possible reasons for my success despite the odds presented in the literature. More so, what could I do to help students like I once was to overcome these odds? As I reflected on my educational journey and an increasing sense of personal obligation, I began to look at the world around me to find ways to improve it. I began to informally ask this question of a few of my colleagues in education. The awareness of first-generation college graduates as teachers became a noticeable opportunity to transmit values and skills upon students growing up in similar settings. I began to see the cycle of students becoming teachers who help students. A need for action among high school educators is reinforced when reflecting on the end product of our American educational system, the diploma. The cumulative effect of a child's life experiences on graduating from high school is articulated by Toutkoushian and Curtis (2005): "High schools are but the final stage in the K-12 education system; whatever happens to students at the preschool, elementary, and middle or junior high school levels is as important to students' success as that which occurs in the high schools" (p. 267).

I grew up in the suburbs of Erie, Pennsylvania. The youngest of four children, I was raised by hard-working blue collar parents who barely made ends meet. It wouldn't be until years

later that I would figure out what that red lunch ticket actually meant and that society didn't expect me to amount to much more than my lower class status. But, nobody ever told me so I pressed on as though anything was possible. My perspective on what education is came from teachers and peers in high school. They were taking the SAT and asking me where I was going to college. Before then, I never thought about a bachelor's degree, and I certainly never imagined that one day I'd be writing a dissertation to affect change in the lives of young people like I once was. In essence, this document is a letter to my previous self. Now that I, and many others like me, have entered the realm of the college-degreed, we can share our knowledge and encourage others who step onto that path. First-generation college graduates can pass along skills and information that can greatly benefit children growing up in non-collegiate homes and the resultant low socioeconomic status.

1.2   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research focused on teachers who are first-generation college *graduates*. Much research has already been devoted to first-generation college *students* focusing on a high school student's preparation, transition and retention in college (Figure 1 Linear Model of Social Capital Acquisition).

Figure 1 Linear Model of Social Capital Acquisition

Parents: ▪ High School Diploma ▪ Low Social Capital	→	*High School Student:* ▪ Need to Acquire Social Capital	→	*First-Generation College Graduate:* ▪ Value of Education
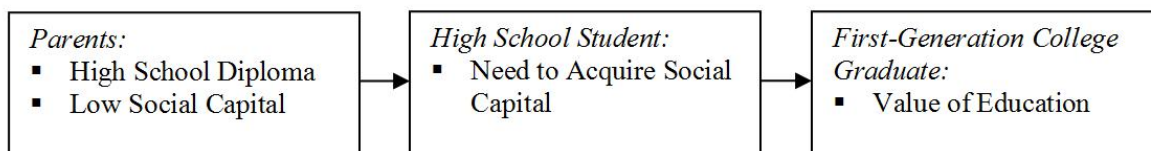
Research has not been focused on the next tier in the puzzle for this subgroup - the individual's impact on society through an achieved occupation. The purpose of this study was to explore personal narratives of social capital acquisition and transmission from the perspective of first-generation college graduates who became teachers. Specifically, this study will examined how the concept of educational social capital is perceived by first-generation college graduate teachers and then knowingly or unintentionally transmitted to their students.

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

On October 26, 2011, the PA Senate Education Committee passed a proposal to create a school voucher program for Pennsylvania students (Opportunity Scholarship and Educational Improvement Tax Credit Act - Senate Bill 1), moving the plan on to the House for consideration. In brief, the idea is to give "scholarships" of up to $9,000 to the parents of children in Pennsylvania's 144 lowest performing public schools. The program is targeted to low-income families - a family of four with an annual income of under $29,000 would be eligible. Phased in over three years, the aid would eventually be expanded to all low-income families, regardless of the schools their children attend (Mauriello, 2011). As a high school principal of a large, urban-fringe, public high school, I saw a clear need for research into intervention of process factors at the secondary level that could substitute for family capital, especially now for low-income families. This pending legislation would force school districts to react to a sudden influx of low SES students. Addressing their needs will not only benefit transfer students, but also our own low-income residents.

With prior research focused primarily on the pre-college process, transition to college and persistence during college (Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996),

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research is needed in the area of what happens after college for this specific group. Most of the literature reviewed centered on college students. However, Barrington (2004) studied experiences of first-generation college graduates who attend graduate school. This research was the first that I found on post-college activities. Pascarella et al. studied how college experiences could enhance social capital, both cognitive and psychosocial, and how these experiences helped make up for deficits in social capital among first-generation students (p. 250). If "the college experience itself provides a vehicle for acquiring additional cultural/social capital" (p. 252), then I would hypothesize that the secondary classroom could also be a setting for the acquisition of social capital (Figure 2 Cyclical Model of Social Capital Transmission). If parents transmit messages about college to their children prior to attending college (Williams, 2010), then high school teachers could also be a source of social capital transmission for their students.

Figure 2 Cyclical Model of Social Capital Transmission
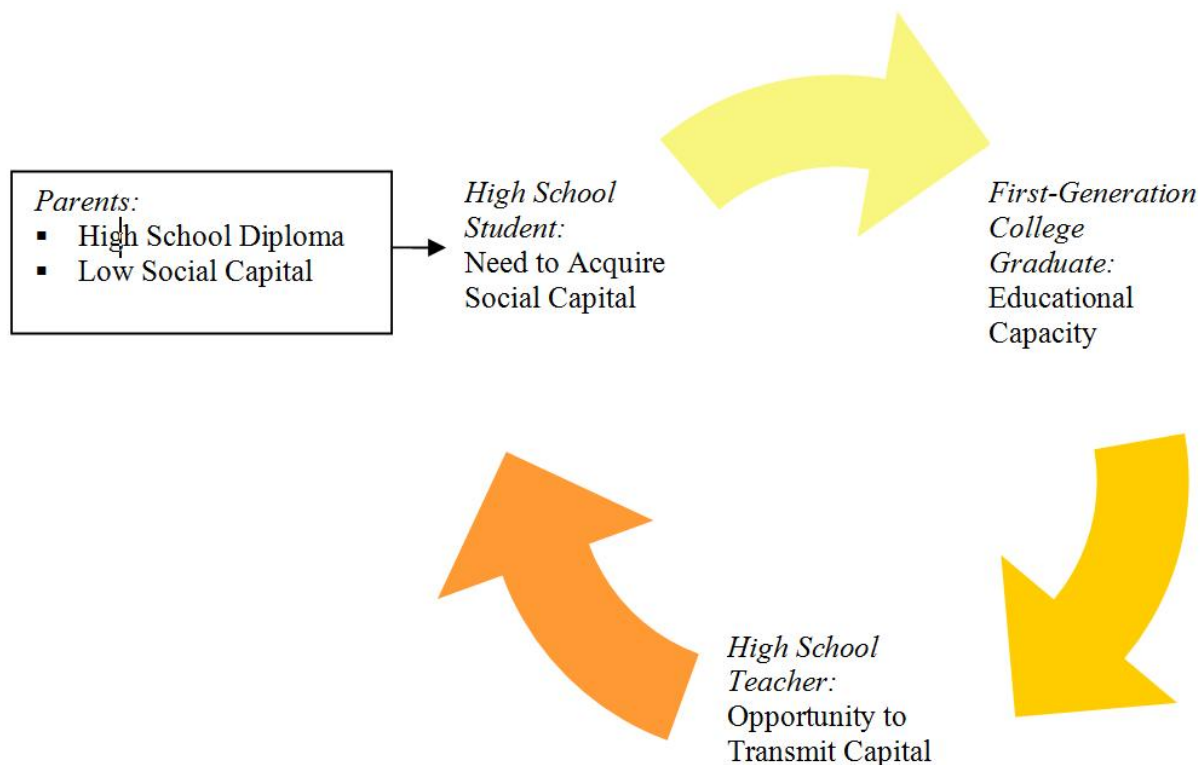
As I reflect on my high school's standardized achievement scores, it is dramatically noticeable that many low SES students are underperforming their peers. For example, low SES students scored approximately 30% less proficient than our general population on the 2012 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) mathematics' exam. Historically, research draws correlations between low socioeconomic status (SES), low social capital and low academic success. Student performance may not be tied directly to SES, but Toutkoushian and Curtis (2005) believe that attributes associated with SES may affect a student's academic results. Walpole (2007) reports that 78% of first-generation college students are low SES students as well (p. 35). Therefore, I am compelled to find a way to increase social and cultural capital among my school's FGCS population, which in turn could improve their academic success. Research in the area of FGCS could help educational institutions address the inadequate social capital among low SES students and improve a child's chance at not only achieving greater academic success, but also providing a greater opportunity to raise their SES throughout their lives.

1.4   DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

1.4.1   first-generation college student (FGCS):

a pre-college student whose parents or guardians may have high school diploma, but did not complete a bachelor's degree. Parents may have attended college to some level, however they did not persist in attaining a bachelor's degree.

1.4.2   multi-generation college student (MGCS):

a pre-college student whose parents or guardians have at least a bachelor's degree.
One or more of their parents attended college and attained a bachelor's degree.

1.4.3   first-generation college graduate (FGCG):

a first-generation college student who completes a bachelor's degree.

1.4.4   first-generation college teacher (FGCT):

a first-generation college graduate who attains a job as a teacher.

1.4.5   educational capacity:

the level of cultural and social capital combined that is necessary to navigate
through advanced educational situations.

2.0   CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following review of the literature will explore relationships between low SES, low social capital, and academic success. One personal dynamic that will be described in this literature review as significantly interfering with academic success of high school students is low SES of their family. This aspect of a student's life sets the stage for social class ranking and without intervention could affect that student over the course of their life. Working with a deductive design, improving academic success may directly improve a student's intergenerational socioeconomic status. Frempong et al. (2012) found that low SES students who attend low SES school systems are particularly vulnerable to limited access to college (p. 30). We cannot prevent a student's current SES, but we can intervene with assistance towards academic improvements and possibly be transformative in their future SES status.

Reflection on the many possible influences on SES, education is a consistent topic in the literature that plays a direct role in social class reproduction. Espinoza (2011) suggests that working-class students will end up as working-class adults (p. 17). Although degree attainment rates have progressively increased for students in high SES families, they have remained constant for students from low SES families (Nichols, 2011, p. 2). Langhout et al. (2007) found that attending college can represent social class mobility for working-class students because of the possibility of gaining access to higher paying jobs (p. 146). Since the majority of first-generation college students are low SES (Walpole, 2007, p. 35), research into sources that influence degree attainment for first-generation college bound students (Figure 3 Sources of Influence on First-Generation College Students) could be beneficial in affecting SES outcomes for high school students.

Figure 3 Sources of Influence on First-Generation College Students

First-Generation
College Student
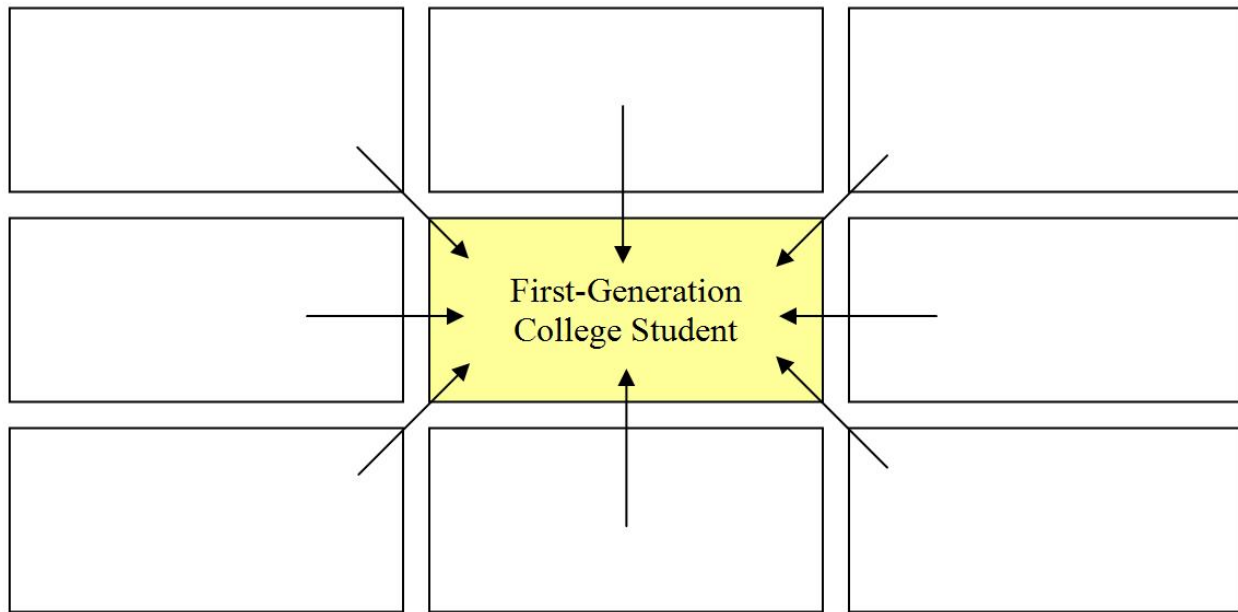
2.1 SOCIOECONOMICS

Student performance may not be tied directly to SES, but Toutkoushian and Curtis (2005) believe that attributes associated with SES may affect a student's academic results. If low SES students begin high school at a deficit, it would follow that regardless of achievement rates they may always lag behind high SES students. With this thought in mind, it was even more significant to identify low SES students and provide academic interventions that may level the playing field prior to college selection. If "students from high-SES households are likely to live in neighborhoods composed primarily of other high-SES households, attending well-funded schools that have strong cultures of academic achievement" (p. 319), then low SES students may be subjected to low-funded schools with low achievement.

Low SES students are less academically prepared for college, less likely to graduate from high school, and less likely to enroll in a 4-year institution (Walpole, 2007, p. 31). By the end of

high school, Walpole reports that low SES students complete 30% of the academic requirements for college compared to high SES students who complete 80% of the requirements. Less than 75% of low SES will graduate from high school, while 98% of high SES students will receive their diploma. And lastly, less than 15% of low SES students enrolled in 4-year institutions, while over 50% of high SES students enrolled (p. 32). When they do attend a post-secondary institution, low SES students are more likely to enroll in a 2-year public college (p. 33). Of the 15% of low SES students that attend a 4-year institution, Walpole reports that mentors played a critical role in informing them of the possibilities of a college education and helped them through the process (p. 33). Teachers from an academically-focused culture could be the mentors for low SES students in need of academic guidance.

2.1.1 Low SES Implications Within High School

By focusing on individual student needs, Bloom et al. (2011) reported high success rates for disadvantage students. The New York City School District developed small schools of choice that focused on academic rigor and personalization. This combination allowed for the delivery of strong academic content while providing close attention to student needs. Bloom et al. (2011) clearly showed the benefits of a personalized education in a student's life. Their results showed an improvement in graduation rates and achievement on standardized tests (p. A-4).

Academic programs in public high schools can be significantly affected by the tax base that supports them. Utilizing data from the California Department of Education (CDE), Rector (2011) showed a strong positive relationship between a county's median income and the API (Academic Performance Index) and a strong negative relationship between an individual high school's percent of low SES students and the California Standards Test. Rector (2011) also found

higher correlation coefficients among high schools with larger populations, indicating greater overall effects from SES within larger school systems.

The MetLife Survey of the American Teachers (2002) revealed a direct correlation between low SES students and school factors such as poor grades, lower self-esteem, lower school satisfaction, lower student-teacher connectedness, lower participation in activities and sports, and higher thoughts of dropping out of high school (p. 191). The survey also discovered home factors impeding success such as not having a quiet place to do homework, increased family problems, less likelihood of eating breakfast, anxiety about money, and a general disconnectedness to their parents (p. 195). Limited student-adult communication was found to be connected with lower academic success, and low SES students were noted to have fewer discussions with adults than others (p. 200). With an intentional focus on improving student achievement through instructional leadership strategies, teachers and principals can positively influence student outcomes (Fancera, 2009, p. 28). Fancera concluded that a school's collective efficacy is a significant organizational level variable with strong influences on student achievement (p. 101). Therefore, improving collective efficacy can minimize the negative influence of SES on student achievement (p. 102).

2.1.2   Effects of Low SES on College Degree Attainment

There have been significant shifts in student demographics over the past fifty years. If today's political leaders are in their 50s and 60s, then they would have graduated from high school in the 1970s. The demographics of their graduating class would have been predominately white (O'Hare & Casey, 2011, p. 5), which is not the trend of current high school populations. O'Hare and Casey poignantly state that "demographic trends have strongly influenced the socioeconomic

structure of our country" (p. 3). The number of children in the United States grew by 14 percent between 1990 and 2000 compared to only 3 percent between 2000 and 2010 (p. 1). Minority children (that is, any group other than non-Hispanic white) accounted for 31 percent of the population under 18 in 1990, 39 percent in 2000, and 46 percent in 2010 (p. 1). Although degree attainment rates have progressively increased for students in high SES families and they have remained constant for students from low SES families (Nichols, 2011, p. 2). This "income-based inequality in degree attainment" is a difficult obstacle for today's student (p. 6). Nichols recommends setting goals to reduce income-based disparities, provide federal financial support to low SES students, protect federal Pell Grants, and increase college access and support services for low SES students (p. 6).

Family SES tends to affect students throughout their lives with distinct implications that "by age 24, only 12 percent of students from low income families will earn a bachelor's degree compared to 73 percent of their higher-income peers" (Engle & O'Brien, 2007, p. 11).

Figure 4 Degree Attainment by Socioeconomic Status

PIPELINE TO COLLEGE BY FAMILY INCOME
OUT OF 100 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, HOW MANY WILL...

GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL: 69, 86, 93
GO TO COLLEGE: 40, 65, 81
GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE BY AGE 24: 12, 22, 73

BOTTOM QUARTILE   MIDDLE QUARTILES   TOP QUARTILE

(Engle & O'Brien, 2007, p. 11)
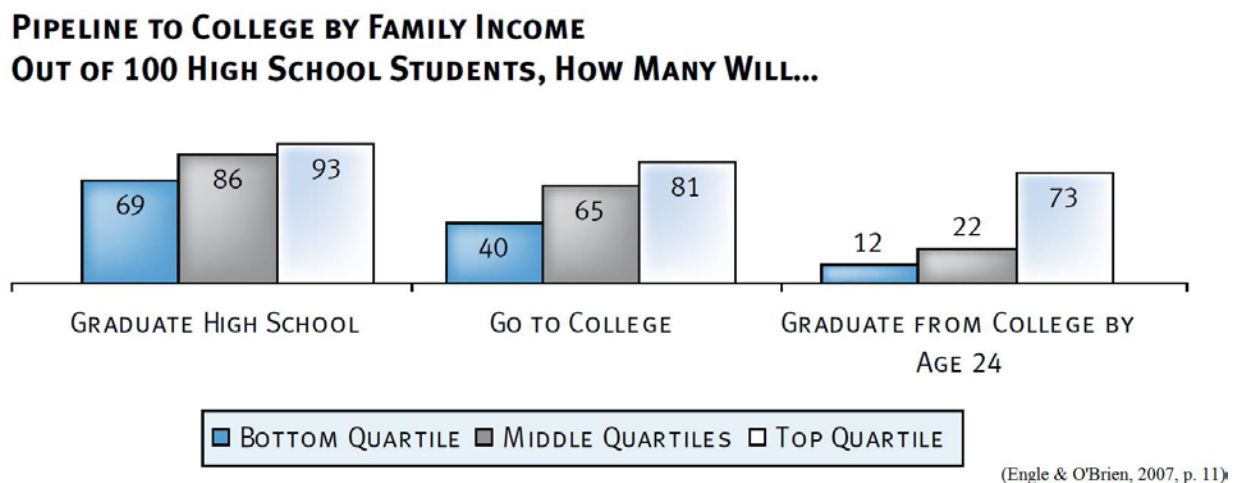
Canadian researchers Frempong et al. (2012) support the findings of American studies on low SES indicating that socioeconomic status of students is a predictive factor for academic success in school (p. 20). Researchers have argued that most students from low SES families do not have the financial capital needed to attend college. Others note that the child's home and community environment do not encourage post-secondary education, so the student may be less interested. And a third hypothesis suggests lower academic preparation for students coming from schools in low income neighborhoods (p. 21). Whether it is access, interest, or performance, children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds are clearly more vulnerable to academic failure. Frempong et al. found that low SES students who attend low SES school systems are particularly vulnerable to limited access to college (p. 30). Financial constraints coupled with low academic achievement created a barrier to college access. In spite of those negative findings, Frempong et al. did find that students who attend schools with positive student-teacher relationship and a high priority on academic achievement were more likely to go to college (p. 30).

Results from Australian researchers Perry and McConney (2010) similarly find the higher a student's SES, the better his educational outcome. In addition to the student's SES having correlative attributes, so too does the school's SES correspond with academic success. When high SES students attend high SES schools, the educational outcomes are higher than simply a high SES student alone. Likewise, when low SES students attend low SES schools, their inferior educational outcomes are exacerbated (p. 1138). High SES schools may show advantages due to higher funding for educational resources and a larger focus on college preparatory curriculum (p. 1159). Perry and McConney conclude that "all students are sensitive to the influence of the aggregated socioeconomic composition of their school" (p. 1158).

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Two demographic trends over the past century were noted by O'Hare and Casey (2011). First, a movement toward smaller families resulted in fewer children being born per household. Second, increases in life expectancy have resulted in a larger adult population (p. 4). So, despite fewer children being born per family, there are more families, which has the effect of a net increase in total children in the United States between 1900 and 2010 from 30 million to 74 million children (p. 4). Looking at the demographics of children born in the 1990s, there is an increasingly growing minority population and these students are in the appropriate age range (12-22) to be matriculating into college at this time. With these facts in mind, today's policy makers will need to rethink their concept of the American college student. Although Hispanics represent 11% of public high school students, they only attain 6% of the post-secondary bachelor's degrees (Perna, 2005, p. 1). African Americans represent 13% of our high school students, yet only earn 9% of the total bachelor's degrees (p. 1). Enrollment in college corresponds directly to the amount of tuition, especially for students from minority and low SES families (p. 2).

Cohesive planning at the post-secondary level has demonstrated positive outcomes for low SES students. "Institutions with relatively high graduation rates intervene actively in students' course and program planning" (Muraskin et al., 2004, p. 48). Common characteristics among universities with large numbers of low SES students and higher rates of retention and ultimately graduation include: targeted academic planning for struggling students; smaller class sizes; advising programs for at-risk students; accessible faculty members; academic support with tutoring, group study, and supplemental instruction; formal developmental courses; focus on an integrated campus life; freshmen are required to live on campus; similar backgrounds among

students and staff; prerequisite skills aligned with graduation goals; merit-based aid for high performing students; and a college mission focused on retention and graduation (p. 45).

2.1.3   Post-College Implications of Low SES

Walpole (2007) indicates that low SES students reported lower incomes, while high SES graduates attain higher occupational status, incomes and overall socioeconomic status (p. 54). However, findings by Nuñez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) indicate that once first-generation college students (FGCS) and multi-generation college students (MGCS) completed their degree there were no significant differences when competing for employment (p. 44). Although many FGCS come from low SES families, further research would be needed to clarify the reasons for these different research findings between low SES students and FGCS. Since low SES students disproportionately major in vocational fields (Walpole, 2007, p. 54) and have higher preferences for realistic careers as indicated by the Vocational Preference Inventory (p. 56) than high SES students, it is possible that their choice in career paths or the community they work in could shed light on this discrepancy.

Attending college can represent social class mobility for working-class students because of the possibility of gaining access to higher paying jobs (Langhout et al., 2007, p. 146). Since colleges attract students from a multitude of communities with both high and low SES, they have a wide array of social classes coming together in one location (p. 147). If colleges do not address this aspect of a student's environment, the student may begin to feel isolated and have increased levels of stress (p. 148). Under these conditions, "institutionalized classism" can occur because of educational structures, policies, and procedures that affect students differently based on their social class background (p. 150). Classism is a type of discrimination, much like sexism or

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racism, where people occupying lower social class levels are treated in ways that exclude, devalue, discount, and separate them from other groups. Students experiencing institutionalized classism feel less connected, an increased desire to leave college, lower levels of academic adjustment, and negative feelings about school (p. 170). Students with less financial, cultural or social capital experience higher levels of institutionalized classism (p. 173). In today's more progressive society, an increase in transition programs for low income students and federal laws geared towards equal access for all students have improved the chances for attaining a college degree regardless of SES. Fifty years ago, college was less accessible to lower class students therefore they were being excluded. Upward mobility through educational attainment may now be better described as class inclusion rather than class exclusion.

Following a cohort of 1992 high school gradates, Perna (2005) found higher incomes among those who attained a bachelor's degree ($30,570) compared with those with no post-secondary degree ($25,237) (p. 30). Differences in earnings between degreed and non-degreed were greatest for women and minorities (p. 31). Several economic and non-economic benefits are connected with attaining a college degree, including higher incomes, health insurance coverage, greater job satisfaction, lower rates of smoking, increased cultural activities, and increased community involvement (p. 44). Crissey (2009) concluded that one of the potential benefits of educational attainment is economic success, particularly through access to higher earnings. Data from a 2007 U.S. Census Bureau summary reinforces the point:

Table 1 Salary Comparison by Degree Earned

Median Annual Earnings	Not a High School Graduate	High School Graduate	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree
	$19,405	$26,894	$46,805	$61,287

First-generation college graduates (FGCG) will earn an average of $20,000 more per year than their parents holding only a high school diploma. Over 50 years of a life's work, that would amount to a million dollars more earnings for a FGCG. Although financial capital is only one piece of a student's family setting, creating the opportunity for advanced financial earnings could significantly empower a FGCG. The Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 offered financial assistance to the general American population to assist students who are academically capable but lack money to attend college (Ohl-Gigliotti, 2008, p. 31). Providing access to economic capital would allow low SES families greater access to college for their children.

Another correlation was found between a family's SES and a child's selection of course work. Intergenerational transmission of SES through course work is affected by "a complex field of institutional constraints on and options for high school course work" (Crosnoe & Schneider, 2010, p.102). Job attainment can therefore be directly related to current SES. Crosnoe and Schneider (2010) demonstrated that a family's current SES predicts a child's math selection which ultimately affects social mobility. A decreased learning and skill development in high school course work would negatively influence post secondary education attainment, which would then have consequential effects on job selection. Goddard (2003) expanded on some SES factors beyond the control of schools, such as a parent's education level, a family's income, or unemployment. In this line of logic, a child's high school education would influence how SES is transmitted intergenerationally - a family's current SES influencing a child's future SES.

2.2 SOCIAL CAPITAL

When the term social capital originated, it was viewed by many as a source of control. Early research from 1966 (Coleman) and 1972 (Jencks) expressed that "individuals' educational

success was almost entirely dependent on their social background" (Lee & Burkam, 2003, p.356). According to Goddard (2003), Coleman and Putman were pioneers in social capital theory and provided direct implications for policy reform. Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) compare social capital to financial capital in that it could be exchanged for a desired object. Like purchasing an item from a store, social capital could be spent to obtain certain outcomes. Social capital was also seen by Portes (2000) as an attribute of an individual rather than the broader community. As our society moves from an industrialized era to a more fast-paced technology era, communities are becoming more connected. With an increase in electronic networking and physical mobility of the Millennial Generation (Howe & Strauss, 2000), students are becoming more influenced by society through their more immediate connection with it. With the expansion of social media and its influence on children, their personal capital has been influenced by evolving social norms. So, although social capital may still influence educational success, its source of control has shifted from the nuclear family to a more networked family. As part of that larger network, educators have the opportunity to reflect on their changing role in the lives of their students.

With over forty years of research in the field of social capital, many variations exist in operational definitions (Figure 5). Despite the vast array in wording, most researchers agree that social capital is based upon social relationships that allow an individual to obtain success that would otherwise be unobtainable. Early researchers, such as Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) center on the concept of school systems perpetuating social class structure. They elaborate on social capital as more of a constant and self-fulfilling status (Bourdieu, 1986, p.255). A root definition does carry across researchers through the years to include key relationships through which various types of access are granted. However, the concept of social

capital seems to evolve over the past two decades to be more progressive and representative of an opportunity to be accessed by those who persevere. This is different than Bourdieu's expression of a cast theory where an individual is more bond by circumstance. Pascarella et al. (2004) clarified the value of social capital among FGCS who can acquire such a resource through degree attainment (p. 280). The later definitions of social capital are more aligned with my research, providing a transformative provision to the acquisition of social capital among low-socioeconomic groups.

Table 2 Timeline of Operational Definitions of Social Capital

YEAR	THEORIST	SOCIAL CAPITAL
1986	Bourdieu	▪ Resources based on group membership, relationships, networks of influence and support ▪ The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.
1988	Coleman	▪ It consists of some facet of social interaction and includes certain actions by people within the structure. Social capital makes possible the achievement of certain goals that would not be possible without it. It exists in relationships among people.
1999	Lin	▪ Resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions
2000	Baron	▪ Supportive social relationships, providing students with a knowledge base, academic support, and insight into personal skills needed for educational advancement
2000	Portes	▪ A source of control, family benefit, and resource
2001	Stanton-Salazar	▪ The value of a relationship that provides support and assistance in a given social situation
2003	Goddard	▪ Has structure (relationships, networks, opportunities for the exchange of information) and function (quality interactions, trust, norms, support, encouragement, parent investment, disposition, confidence, caring, benevolence).
2004	Pascarella et al.	▪ Capital that resides in relationships among individuals that facilitate transaction and the transmission of different resources
2006	Yuan et al.	▪ Resources that people can obtain from a network of relationships
2007	Mitchell	▪ Allows an individual (first-generation student) to take available resources provided by an actor (cultural capital facilitator) and utilize them in beneficial ways within a specified organization (the community college)
2009	Shecter	▪ Perceived available resources from social connections
2011	Algan et al.	▪ The capacity of people in a community to cooperate with others

A pioneer in social capital research, Coleman (1988) defines social capital by its function. Essentially, it consists of some facet of social interaction and includes certain actions by people within the structure. Social capital makes possible the achievement of certain goals that would not be possible without it (p. 98). Because social capital is not tangible, it is sometimes difficult to describe. It exists in relationships among people. Within a group in which there is general trustworthiness they are able to accomplish much more than a similar group without that level of trust (p. 101). Relationships that can be used as resources are social capital (Coleman, 1988, p. 102). Coleman notes: "If A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B. This obligation can be conceived as a credit slip held by A for performance by B" (p. 102). The use of the term "credit" certainly implies an obligation and potential for future transaction. Students navigating their way through a school setting would find great benefit in a social capital exchange between teachers and students.

2.2.1   Acquisition of Social Capital

A child's family background is often seen as a predictor of success in college with the potential to promote or interfere with their child's academic success. Coleman helps distinguish the variety of components that makeup a family's background. He elaborates on three different components: financial capital, human capital, and social capital (p. 110). Financial capital can be measured by the family's income. This can provide physical resources that support a student's overall learning environment. Human capital is measured by the parents' education and academic ability. This can provide the potential for intellectual and educational support. Social capital is the

interactions between children and their parents. If parents lack financial and human capital, their level of social capital will be irrelevant to the child's educational growth. If parents possess financial and human capital but lack social capital, a child will not be able to receive the benefit of those resources. A balance among the various capital sources will therefore be significant in predicting student success.

Structural and functional components of social capital are interrelated and have been expanded upon by several researchers. As social capital theorists explain it, structure is representative of function, but may not always be a predictor of functional capital (Portes, 2000). Libraries, playgrounds, stores, theaters, housing plans and sidewalks represent structures that could lead to desired functions. A quick structural survey of a community could identify structural capital imbalance and elicit a need for further research into that community's functional capital. If a community lacks structures that provide opportunities for the development of functional social capital, there could be a social capital deficit among the children in that community. Since those desired social-emotional characteristics are used like currency to obtain certain outcomes, it becomes important to look at these innate and learned characteristics. When students come into a school system, they bring a specific skill set, both academic and social. Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) determined that school social capital plays an important role in adolescent development when it complements family social capital. In their study, parent involvement in school led to an association with parents committed to academic values. Although school quality partially substitutes for risky family environments, Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) believe that family factors are the key determinant for adolescent outcomes and that norms are transmitted through these interactions. Research also shows that increased networking improves social capital and ultimately improves school attendance (Drewry, 2007). These

relational networks can be increased through community solidarity, such as volunteering within one's own community (Goddard, 2003). The Family-School-Community dynamic creates a synergistic social capital. A supposition occurs that if one area is inadequate, then compensation must occur in another area to maintain equilibrium.

Horn and Nunez (2000) suggest that low SES and FGCS have less access to family social capital and may need more sources of information about college to come from the school setting (p. 29). They will be more dependent on institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) within the school to assist them with academic planning for college (p. 29). "Communication with institutional agents and greater variety of agents... were related to higher college GPA for both first-generation and non-first-generation students. These findings are consistent with the literature showing that social capital is linked to academic performance" (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008, p. 29). If the parents of a FGCS don't have the cultural capital to encourage advance math curriculum, school staff with the coveted cultural capital could share this knowledge through social capital networking. This would be an example of the opportunity that teachers have to compensate for social and cultural capital that was absent in a student's family.

Over the last century, the obtainment of social capital has shifted away from the family. Schools are now looked upon as a source, sometimes a primary source, of social capital. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1999), nearly 20% of adolescents experience mental health issues every year, yet 80 percent of them do not receive the necessary interventions (Weissberg & O'Brien, 2004). We can't ignore the need for intervention. Instead of looking at high-risk students, the focus should be on high-risk schools (Lee &

Burkam, 2003). This paradigm shift gives greater responsibility and influence to school systems over student outcomes.

2.2.2   Effects of Social Capital

Being a college graduate brings membership into an elite group. Becoming a member of that group, specifically an individual college and in general a college graduate, can bring certain benefits to an individual. Members of this group have established relationships with formal and informal social networks. A college degree can be seen as a representation of the aggregate social capital accumulated by all college graduates. Bourdieu (1986) sees educational qualifications as an effective neutralizer for inequity between classes. "As the educational qualification... becomes the condition for legitimate access to a growing number of positions, particularly the dominant ones, the educational system tends increasingly to dispossess the domestic group of the monopoly of the transmission of power and privileges" (p. 255). He proposes that membership in a group will allow the member certain profits. (p. 251). As a member of the elite college graduate group, teachers can transmit social capital to students and help them gain admission to this group. Being a member of the group, a teacher knows the trials and tribulations that the student is yet to confront. A parent who did not gradate from college would not have the cultural capital to share via social capital conversations with their child.

None of the students studied by Drewry et al. (2010), had relationships with family members who had the capacity to assist them in their educational pursuits (p. 515). This description parallels Coleman's (1988) social vs. human capital theory. Although students had access to family relationships, i.e. social capital, those family members lacked the capacity to share pertinent skills needed to be successful in school, i.e. human capital. Croninger and Lee

(2001) found that social capital benefits gained from teachers were more significant for students who are at risk of dropping out of school. They reported that students who had good relationships with their teachers were more likely to graduate from high school than at-risk students who had no personal relationships with their teachers. Drewry et al. (2010), observed that students with access to social capital via teacher-student relationships did not solicit and use that relationship effectively (p. 515). Educators need to proactively assist students with social capital deficits.

When a school system and family structure contribute equally to a child's levels of social and cultural capital, a complementary balance exits. When the loci of influence shifts, one of the partners will need to substitute for the other. In a family that provides a high level of social capital, a child will not need the school system to provide this basic need. However, in a family with low social capital, a school's substitute process will be critical. Pascarella et al. (2004) clarified the value of social capital among FGCS in stating that they "benefit more from their academic experiences than other students because these experiences act in a compensatory manner" building upon the "stock of cultural capital" (p. 280). Lundberg (2007) agrees that academic interactions with peers and faculty does "help compensate for first-generation students' lack of cultural capital" (p. 9).

Social capital can be looked at from two perspectives, having both structure (relationships, networks, opportunities for the exchange of information) and function (quality interactions, trust, norms, support, encouragement, parent investment, disposition, confidence, caring, benevolence) (Lee & Burkam, 2003). Student-teacher relations are a structural design of schools, while the quality of those relationships is a functional characteristic (p.386). In a similar

way, Drewry (2007) described the basic elements of social capital as relationships [structure] and the interactions [function] among those people. A form of structural social capital, closure, is created when parents know their children's friends and the parents of those children (Portes, 2000, p.6). Since intact families double the supportive capacity of parents, closure expands these capacities further by involving other adults in functional capital, rearing and supervision of their children (Portes, 2000, p.6). Extending this premise to a school setting, families can rely on college-degreed professionals to provide both structural and functional social capital to their children.

A set of common social-emotional characteristics were found by Bernard (2006) among students with high academic achievement and low disciplinary problems. Several studies also showed positive results from teaching these non-academic, social-emotional-motivational qualities to children. When social-emotional characteristics are used to acquire a commodity, such as academic success, it can be viewed as capital. Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) depict social capital as similar to financial capital in that it, like money, can be exchanged for an object, be it tangible or intangible. School-related capital described by Drewry (2007) includes academic achievement, educational aspirations, school involvement, and attitudes toward education. Bernard (2006) summarized multiple studies comparing students who were achiever/underachievers, special/regular education, or academic and behavior problems. Participants included varied races, genders, SES, and IEP status. Survey results from teachers were used to place students into two criterion categories, achievers or underachievers based on affective-motivational characteristics (Bernard, 2006). Hoy et al. (2006) described social capital as predictor variables working together in a unified way, forming a construct that they labeled academic optimism. The new construct was then shown to have a positive influence on student

achievement. Both Bernard and Hoy revealed a positive correlation between high academic achievement and social capital.

The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study by the US Department of Education in 2002 provides a rich source of data to explore relationships among SES, social capital and student achievement. Bernard (2006) used data from that study to argue that a positive correlation exists between SES and social-emotional characteristics, which ultimately accounted for variance in academic achievement. Goddard (2003) explored a link between the independent variable of social capital and the dependent variable of performance on state-mandated assessment among elementary school students. "Schools characterized by high levels of social capital had higher pass rates for their students on the high-stakes state-mandated assessments of mathematics and writing" (Goddard, 2003, p.69). More than the combined effect of family composition, parental school involvement and closure, Portes (2000) found that family SES has a significant correlation to test scores.

The cumulative effect of a student's educational journey is describe by Lee and Burkam (2003) in terms of drop out rates. Although there is a critical point that a student drops out of school, disengagement from school is a process that occurs over the lifetime of a student. Since compulsory attendance is through the age of 16 in Pennsylvania, which is approximately grade 10 in high school, any decision to drop out can only occur in a high school setting. If dropping out of school is the manifestation of years of disengagement, high school administrators need to take a closer look at factors that influence such decisions.

When looking at dependent variables affected by social capital, dropping out of high school can be considered the ultimate academic failure. Identifying and ultimately increasing

social capital in school may reduce drop outs and by default improve academic success. Drewry's (2007) perspective as an assistant to the principal of a large urban high school revealed an insider's look at five students and their justification for dropping out of school. Drewry's research takes a narrative approach to look at student rationales for dropping out of school. She found a lack of family social capital as a common theme among the five stories. Lee and Burkam (2003) found risk factors for dropouts that included "(a) social background (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status [SES], family structure, inner-city residence); (b) academic background (e.g., ability, test scores, grade-repeating history); and (c) academically related behaviors (e.g., engagement with school, school grades, course completions and failures, truancy, school disciplinary encounters)" (p.354). If dropouts exhibit high levels of dissatisfaction in the classroom social environment (p. 152), either the students or the teacher will need to adjust their contribution to the relationship in order to prevent the attrition. Since FGCS lack the prior knowledge and skills in this arena, then teachers will need to elevate their contribution of knowledge. Teachers who are themselves first-generation college graduates may have a greater understanding of the needs of FGCS.

Social capital also has an effect on delinquency, which in turn affects academic success. Delinquency is influenced by "family structure, family disruption, parental involvement, parent-child relationships, and other family variables" (Hoffmann & Dufur, 2008, p.29). Inappropriate adolescent behavior can be considered a violation of social norms and resistance to normative structures that support academic success (Goddard, 2003). In essence, a child's lack of social capital can lead to circumstances that perpetuate that deficit.

Although there are multiple layers to a student that have an effect on poor achievement and dropping out, a commonality among white and black students is parental involvement (Carpenter & Ramirez, 2007, p. 33). Moreover, increases in parental involvement and SES are shown to specifically increase math achievement. If parents are not involved in their child and that results in poor achievement, it would follow that either family intervention is needed or someone else needs to stand in for that essential role. Without that role being met outcomes for students can be dismal. Croninger and Lee (2001) found that teachers can be a significant model for social capital transmission, preventing drop out rates by fifty percent.

2.2.3   Interventions for Social Capital Deficiency

Although the literature does propose significant effects from deficient social capital among students, some studies do suggested possible interventions. Bernard's (2006) program, You Can Do It! Education, promotes direct instruction of positive characteristics and may help students increase effort and achievement. He details several habits that, when coupled with effective curriculum, instruction, programs and services, may lead to academic achievement and social-emotional-behavioral well-being (Bernard, 2006). Weissberg and O'Brien (2004) describe several K-6 programs that focus on prevention during early school years, including Caring School Community (CSC), Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), and Skills, Opportunities and Recognition (SOAR). These programs focus on social and emotional learning (SEL), addressing the developmental needs of children and the organizational issues of schools.

In an early childhood perspective, schools could take a preventive approach within their communities that would reduce the breakdown of social capital occurring in families. Prevention would focus on an individual's innate social capital. Toutkoushian & Curtis (2005) describe these

external influences as input factors. Children come to school with a certain skill set acquired from their parents. By the time a child reaches high school, the child's persona is more developed and patterns of behavior become solidified. Any deficits in social capital would need to be addressed through intervention. Since disparities become cumulative throughout a child's education, finding the critical points of intervention are essential for public education reform (Crosnoe & Schneider, 2010). Toutkoushian and Curtis (2005) describe these school-based influences as process factors. As high school students naturally become more independent from their families, they become more disengaged with family-centered activities and are notably influenced by their peers and social settings. This opens the up the influence from a school system, where opportunities abound for students to receive direct curricular instruction of beneficial social capital.

Defining social capital as "the capacity of people in a community to cooperate with others," Algan et al. (2011) concur with the benefits of trust and cooperation that are transmitted through it (p. 2). They explore the transmission of social capital through schooling as complimentary to a family's social capital. Their working paper describes how teachers present content to students through either vertical or horizontal teaching methods (p. 3). Vertical teaching methods are a top down approach where teachers directly instruct students through lectures. Horizontal teaching methods are centered on students with learning through collaboration. Networking and relationships are key components of social capital and therefore transmitted more effectively through horizontal teaching methods (p. 3). Algan et al. found that vertical teaching methods had a negative correlation with trust and relationships. However, extreme use of horizontal teaching methods was shown to be detrimental to test scores, so a balance of teaching methods is recommended (p. 6).

School-based interventions can be divided into categories as substitutes or compliments of social capital. A school system could work in tandem with a child's family (compliment) or operate as more of a direct instructor (substitute). Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) report that "if adolescents are exposed to a better school environment, their involvement in delinquent behavior may be mitigated even in the presence of family-based risk factors" (p.30). This research finding implies that schools could have a profound impact in the presence of deficient adolescent social capital (Figure 5 School-Family Loci of Influence). High school curricula can't prevent years of insufficient adolescent development of social capital, so its direct instruction would be in the realm of intervention through substitute social capital. A complementary process may have a synergistic effect that is greater than either part alone; however, a school system would have greater control over a substitutive process. Schools could compensate for "deficiencies in family-based social capital" (p.33) by providing high-quality school environments with a curriculum influenced by important 21st century social capital.

Figure 5 School-Family Loci of Influence

Complimentary Balance	Substitutional Shift	Substitutional Shift
SCHOOL - FAMILY	*SCHOOL* - **FAMILY**	**SCHOOL** - *FAMILY*
Centered Loci of Influence – Normal Family Social Capital – School-Family Compliment – Process/Input Equilibrium	Shifted Loci of Influence – High Family Social Capital – Increased Family Substitution – Input is Greater	Shifted Loci of Influence – Low Family Social Capital – Increased School Substitution – Process is Greater

Walpole (2003) found that low SES students were more likely to network with faculty while working on a research project, while high SES were more likely to visit a faculty member at their home. Either way, interactions with college faculty provides opportunities for both cultural and social capital transmission to students (p. 54). Due to their lower rates of involvement in school activities, low SES students accumulated less social and cultural capital than their counterparts (p. 55). "Despite graduating from high school and enrolling in a four-year college or university, low SES students engage in a different pattern of activities in college and have lower early outcome nine years after entering college than their high SES peers" (p. 58). Oldfield (2007) poignantly stated, "Just by being the son or daughter of high-SES parents, a child gains far more of the social and cultural capital needed to perform better in formal education at all levels" (p. 8).

While most school-based programs focus on early childhood prevention, Crosnoe and Schneider (2010) looked at intervention in high school to reduce socioeconomic disparities. They observed students with low SES who were able to achieve high math outcomes, indicating the presence of beneficial social capital. They conclude that, "increasing the flow of such social capital to low SES students... may be one way to reduce socioeconomic disparities in the general student population" (p.84). In their sample, when higher SES students took higher-level math courses, they accumulated more math credits, which translated to better college admissions, better jobs, and higher SES. In the absence of effective family social capital, teachers can transmit the importance of math education, moving low SES students into higher math courses. The optimism would be for students to then follow the sequence of events leading to higher SES and propagation of a positive skill cycle. Crosnoe and Schneider (2010) refer to the potential for a greater impact with earlier intervention. It becomes imperative that researchers identify critical points of intervention when social capital begins to break down. This would avoid the cumulative effect seen in the high school years. The Lee and Burkam (2003) study provided "empirical evidence that schools can exert important organizational effects on students' decisions to drop out or stay in school, above and beyond their individual behaviors and backgrounds" (p.384). They determined that, "students are less likely to drop out of high schools where relationships between teachers and students are more positive" (p.385). It becomes clear that interventions are warranted at the high school level, especially when Dryfoos (1997) estimates that 30 percent of high school students engage in multiple high-risk behaviors. Lee and Burkam (2003) assert that multiple concurrent factors increase the risk of dropping out. Effective connections between students and teachers will help with necessary interventions.

In order for teachers to truly connect with their students, Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) asserts that they must provide "culturally relevant teaching" (p. 703) to their students. Although she is specifically referring to children of color, her point is well taken in many other aspects of student demographics. A teacher from a wealthy family may not completely understand the background of a child from a poor family. However, a teacher who grew up in a poor household may be more effective in relating to that child. A teacher who relates to a child personally will have better insight and be better suited to transmit key social capital. Beauboeuf-Lafontant clarifies that "teachers' understandings of systems of power and privilege poignantly influence the ways in which politically and economically subjugated students experience schooling" (p. 717). In other words, teachers can provide the necessary social capital as long as it is defined and specifically integrated into their teaching.

If affective-motivational characteristics account for 25% of the discrepancy in student academic success (Bernard, 2006, p. 104), then more attention needs to be directed towards these factors. Applying this to my own workplace, a student's disposition to learn becomes as significant as effective instruction. Knowing that by increasing a student's role in learning can improve their success, binds us as professional educators to address these areas. Teachers write academic lesson plans to deliver academic content, so it would follow that direct or indirect instructional plans could include key areas of social capital. If social capital is not transmitted at home, teachers in the know could certainly transmit these core values. On the surface, schools deliver core academic standards. Parents expect that. Below the surface, schools can make up for deficits in social capital needed to be successful in college. Children need that.

Without direct and targeted interventions, Espinoza (2011) suggests that working-class students will end up as working-class adults (p. 17). Much like Bourdieu (1986), Espinoza supports the concept of school systems perpetuating social class structure across generations. Teachers have the transformative power to break this cycle by acting as a resource (social capital) to provide college-specific knowledge (human capital) and transmit key dispositions about obtaining a college degree (cultural capital). Bourdieu (1986) refers to such cultural disposition, attitudes, and beliefs as habitus (p. 255). Lehmann (2009) argued that FGCS chose practical subjects in college which was a manifestation of their working class habitus. Low SES students have less financial capital and therefore are more sensitive to college tuition and their need for financial aid. Walpole (2007) reports that 78% of FGCS are low SES students as well (p. 35). Low SES students tend to focus more on working and earning money and consider the economic returns to their educational attainment (p. 31). Walpole relates that educational aspirations of FGCS are directly connected to their SES status, as well as individual perception of good grades and parental involvement (p. 35).

Social capital has been defined as a source of control, family benefit or resource. When children lack specific social-emotional factors, barriers to their education arise. Goddard (2003) explained that institutional social capital may offset dysfunctional family capital. Therefore, the disparity of institutional social capital among students could propagate that dysfunction and result in de facto oppression of low SES children. Following the assertion of Pascarella et al. (2004) that "social capital is a form of capital that resides in relationships among individuals that facilitate transaction and the transmission of different resources" (p. 252), my research will seek to identify the acquired social capital among first-generation college graduate teachers and explore patterns of transmission towards their students. A classroom's culture is created by

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teacher-student interactions which lead to particular attitudes and beliefs (Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987, p. 156). This social environment is key to the transmission of social capital.

In reflection on the literature, early family intervention coupled with direct skill instruction for secondary students seems like a complex, yet satisfying, systemic reform option. By reducing concurrent factors, we may mitigate disengagement. Keeping students socially and academically healthy should increase their ability to thrive in high school and beyond. Toutkoushian and Curtis (2005) attribute 60% of the variation in a student's high school outcome to SES factors and 40% to process factors such as curriculum and instruction. Once the underlying social capital associated with SES is identified, intentional transmission of that social capital can be included in a school's process factors and have a significant contribution towards student success. Schools cannot control family inputs, but internal systemic skill development could help students in overcoming their social capital deficits.

2.3   FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

The literature on first-generation college students has focuses primarily on three general areas: 1) the pre-college process during high school, 2) transition to college during the first year at a post-secondary institution, and 3) persistence and the resultant attrition during college (Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996). Pascarella et al. extended the Terenzini et al. study to include 2nd and 3rd year students and added to the literature on first-generation college student experiences from high school through college.

2.3.1 Pre-College Process

The pre-college process is often a complex process involving both high school preparation and family dynamics. Student decisions to attend college are often seen as a "multigenerational approach to family dynamics" (London, 1989, p. 166). Family characteristics, including their parent's education level, and more specifically their socioeconomic status, is positively related to student persistence and college degree completion (Terenzini et al., 1996). This initial stage along the path for first-generation college students opens the way for research on intervention programs in the high school setting.

In high school, homework is a valuable way to develop self-regulation with parents and teachers as part of a social environment that effect self-regulatory behavior (Williams & Hellman, 2004, p. 72). If there is a deficiency in the social support of FGCS students, they will be less successful (p. 77). Seeking help is another self-regulatory skill that was reported to predict attrition and retention (p. 78). Promoting an educational setting where students were encouraged to seek help would then increase self-regulation.

Entrance into the social network of a college graduate is a long process that begins back in high school. A high school student imagining himself as a successful college graduate is the first step. From there a student must prepare, apply, be accepted, and finally graduate from college (Choy, 2001, p. 9). Therefore, acquiring the social capital associated with a college degree begins in adolescence. A FGCG teacher has this social capital and begins the transmission process if parents cannot. DiPaula (2010) concurs with Choy (2001) when stating "a person's belief in his or her ability to perform a specific task influences the goals that he or she sets" (p. 40). Building self-efficacy is a strong component of social capital that allows a

student to envision himself as a college graduate. "Students with decreased expectations then develop the attitudes, aspirations, and activities that reflect their perception of their limited opportunities" according to DiPaula (p. 40). The suggestion is that social capital transmitted from teachers may therefore increase the academic aspirations of students leading to better academic success.

Erickson et al. (2009), define formal mentoring as being from an adult volunteer organization, such as Big Brothers/ Big Sisters, compared with informal mentoring from adults outside the family already in place in a child's life, such as teachers and coaches (p. 344). Erickson et al. (2009), found that mentors had a strong impact on student performance in high school as well as their level of educational achievement (p. 345). Such mentoring can be complimentary to family capital or compensatory when family capital is absent. Multi-generation college students benefit mostly from complementary social capital, whereas FGCS rely more on compensatory (substitute) social capital due to their lack of family resources (p. 345). Erickson et al. (2009), reaffirm that "teacher mentors have a substantial impact on the educational attainment of disadvantaged youths (p. 345).

Sources of compensatory capital (Figure 6 Sources of Social and Cultural Capital) will vary among students, as well as the patterns of influence from each source depending on the source's capacity. Some examples of social and cultural capital resources for first-generation college bound high school students include their high school's academic culture (Hoffmann and Dufur, 2008; Penrose, 2002), teachers and counselors (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Terenzini et al., 1996), peers (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lundberg, 2007), family (Hodge, 2009; Lask, 2008), parents

(Austin, 2011; Moschetti & Hudley, 2008), community (Portes, 2000; Toutkoushian & Curtis (2005), and self (Bernard, 2006; Moschetti, 2008, Williams & Hellman, 2004).

Figure 6 Sources of Social and Cultural Capital

School Culture	HS Teachers	HS Counselors
Peers	First-Generation College Student	Family
Parents	Community	Self

Similarities among FGCS include low-income families, weaker cognitive skills in reading, math and critical thinking, lower degree aspirations, less involvement with peers and teachers in high school, and less encouragement from parents to attend college (Terenzini et al., 1996, p. 8). In families of college-educated parents, decisions about going to college are less likely focused on whether to attend college, but rather on where to go and in what field to major (London, 1989, p. 167). "College-educated parents are often able to aid their children, both by direct teaching and by example, in understanding the culture of higher education and its role in future life chances" (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008, p. 26). Once the precarious decision is made to attend college, FGCS are disadvantaged by lacking social capital, specifically an understanding of the "culture of higher education and its role in personal development and socioeconomic

attainment" (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 252). Therefore, the acquisition of social capital is especially important for this group. Extracurricular activities during college may be a particularly useful way for FGCS to acquire the additional cultural capital that helps them succeed academically (p. 272). The research results from Penrose (2002) indicate that self-perception represents a critical factor in the academic success of this first-generation cohort. Extracurricular activities would be a significant way for FGCS to develop a positive self-perception.

Many researchers spent time interviewing the FGCS and asked them for their interpretation of their parent's feelings and attitudes. Ohl-Gigliotti (2008) explored parental perceptions of the experiences of FGCS through direct interviews with their parents (p. 4). She found high levels of parental input and support in contrast to other research. In her final reflection, Ohl-Gigliotti notes that most of the parents who were interviewed had some sort of post-secondary training, making these parents atypical of parents with only a high school diploma (p. 274). Ultimately, this research corroborates the value of social and cultural capital, even in the absence of financial capital.

2.3.2 Transition to College

In 1995-96, 34% of students entering 4-year colleges and 53% of students entering 2-year colleges were FGCS (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 249). Fifteen years later, statistics are roughly the same with 30% of freshmen entering American colleges as first-generation college students, and 24%, nearly 4.5 million students, are both FGCS and low SES (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This suggests that large numbers of students are venturing out against family norms to acquire a college degree. Along this path, difficulties often ensue. According to Warburton et al. there is a 15% gap between the 3-year persistence rate of first- and second-generation students

(as cited in Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 276). Although struggles are felt by most students entering college, this experience may be heightened for FGCS due to the major differences between home and school's academic culture (Penrose, 2002, p. 442). Upon entering college, FGCS have issues stacked against them - bringing lower high school grade point averages and lower SAT scores - resulting in increased academic problems and greater attrition rates (Ishitani, 2003).

Once admitted into a university, a FGCS's tenacity will be tested over the long span of years. In Canada, approximately 58% of children with parents having at least some post-secondary education attended post-secondary institutions, compared with 33% of students whose parents have only a high school diploma (Grayson, 2011, p. 605). Bourdieu (1986) maintains that an essential component of cultural reproduction theory is that schools systematically exclude children of lower SES from taking part in the educational system. Factors that contribute to this exclusion include deficits in economic, social and cultural capital on the part of the disadvantaged. However, if these children are able to gain sufficient cultural and social capital, they may be able to break through the prevailing cultural walls and gain access to a post-secondary education. Success in the college arena were found by Grayson to hinge on a students' background characteristics, prior levels of experience, institutional experiences, factors outside of the university, and involvement in campus activities (p. 607). Although Grayson reports that there is little research in Canada on FGCS, the existent literature supports that done in the United States (p. 608). First-generation Canadian students, at the end of both their first and third years of study, were found to be less involved than others in campus activities and had relatively lower grades (p. 626).

While in high school, FGCS are less likely to socialize with peers and communicate with teachers, have lower grades, have lower academic preparation for college, have lower entrance exam scores, and higher concerns about attending a local college (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004, p. 485). Once in college, they are often hindered with lower self-esteem, lower self-efficacy, lower family income, longer completion time, less family encouragement to attend college, lower social integration. lower post-secondary aspirations, and lower persistence toward degree completion (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004, p. 486). FGCS and MGCS had greater differences at the start of college than beyond the first year (p. 495).

With these notable characteristics, transitioning to college for first-generation students becomes critical, according to Inkelas et al. (2007), in that students must bridge their home environment with the collegiate environment and advanced educational expectations. Terenzini et al. (1996) described differences between first-generation students and traditional students on 14 of 37 pre-college characteristics. With distinct differences in social capital, the needs of first-generation college students were noted to require specific attention. Pike and Kuh (2005) concurred with the inadequate social capital of this group by describing them as less engaged with lower educational aspirations. Adjustments become apparent during this transition phase as "first-generation students must adjust to a new culture - the academic and social culture of college life" (Inkelas et al., 2007, p. 404).

Mitchell (2007) explored the role that college professors play as facilitators of cultural capital, student reception of that capital, and the student's academic success (p. 14). "Out-of-class contacts with professors and peers had a positive influence on students views of their environment, internal locus of control, degree plans, personal, and intellectual development"

(Moschetti & Hudley, 2008, p. 30). Combining social capital theory of Coleman (1988) and cultural capital theory of Bourdieu (1986), Mitchell includes structural and functional barriers to FGCS that might impede their learning (p. 12). Since 34% of students entering college are FGCS and half of those will start their journey at a community college (p. 29), it becomes clear why a large body of research is within community college settings (Lask, 2008; Mitchell, 2007; Moschetti, 2008; Pascarella et al., 2003; Smith & Miller, 2009; Vandal, 2008). Community college students are less likely than students who initially enroll at a four-year institution to complete a bachelor's degree within nine years, complete fewer credits and are more likely to drop out without earning any degree (Vandal, 2008, p. 2). Although students entering community colleges face greater challenges, particularly as it relates to earning a bachelor's degree, Vandal (2008) suggests that community colleges effectively serve students who are academically underprepared and/or are the first in their family to attend a postsecondary institution (p. 6). Community colleges show higher average rates of persistence for students with low social and cultural capital than similar students at four-year institutions (p. 5). Graduation rates for full-time, high-capital students at four-year institutions are 45% higher than for low-capital students (p. 5). At two-year institutions the gap is only 13% (p. 5).

Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Chen et al. (2005) found that first-generation college students represent 22% of freshmen entering the college scene. This is 6% less than the available first-generation pool leaving high school, which indicates a lower rate of college attendance among this cohort (p. iii). In addition, students who were multi-generation college students attained bachelor's degrees nearly 3 times as much - 68% compared to 24% (p. iv). Background characteristics of first-generation college students are often similar, including low SES, low academic preparedness, and delayed college entry (Chen et

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al., 2005; Ishtani, 2003; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). FGCS appear to have a deficit that reduces their performance in college as indicated by first-year grade point averages (p. vii). Many research studies indicate that FGCS have deficiencies in academic preparation, although they were in the same high schools as multi-generation college students. Perhaps their parents did not know to encourage a specific academic track in high school. Maybe they lacked the study habits needed to persist at a higher level. It could be a lack of social capital resulting in not fitting into the elite college group. FGCS need to be guided by someone who has been there. If their parents haven't achieved a college degree, they can not describe the environment and network of peers that exists in a college setting and beyond. Chen et al. (2005) presented graphical data indicating that FGCS declared their major as undecided at a rate of 3:1 over multi-generation college students (p. vi). It would follow that someone was guiding those MGCS to declare Social Science, Business, Science, and Engineering as their top majors (p. vi).

Hodge (2009) reports that FGCS tend to enter college with lower social capital - a key factor that can improve a student's persistence in college - than MGCS (p. 1). More than half of the FGCS who drop out do so in their first year (p. 2). Therefore, acquisition of social capital becomes critical for FGCS to improve their chances of persisting in college. Coleman (1988) showed that increasing a student's social capital helped them to persist in school. Moschetti (2008) explored social network access and use among low SES and working class, first-generation White students within a community college setting (p. 31). Consistent with prior research, FGCS were a) unclear about academic requirements, expectations, and course selection, b) demonstrated increased success through self-effort, self-motivation, or self-discipline, c) had lower parental encouragement to seek out institutional support, and d) worked extended hours that interfered with balancing their transition into college (p. 77).

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FGCS tend to have lower SAT scores, lower high school GPA, lower retention rates (Ishitani, 2003, p. 434). Ishitani found that first-generation college students were 71% more likely to drop out of college during their first year of school than were MGCS. Knowing the times and ways that FGCS struggle to succeed "would help administrators responsible for retention to develop profiles of at-risk students" (p. 447). "Low-income students face difficulties with seeking and asking for help because they fear exposing or stigmatizing themselves" (Engle & O'Brien, 2007, p. 5). Therefore, advisors should seek out these students early and offer to help them integrate into the college culture. Validating experiences between students and teachers in college promote educational value. Since FGCS have lower levels of expertise in networking, teachers need to actively make contact with first-generation students (Terenzini et al., p. 17) Transmission of social capital by an institution can then substitute for low family input.

Focusing on pre-college experiences, transitions to college, and the actual college experiences, Lask (2008) found an overarching theme of resilience among FGCS (p. 128). Although these students struggled with naysayers and difficult living environments, they persisted against the odds to complete their college degree. Family reactions, economic hardships, and college networking were all key obstacles that needed to be overcome (p. 130). FGCS need to transition from old norms and patterns of their current family life into new norms and behaviors to succeed college (Hodge, 2009, p. 5). For FGCS, enrollment in college epitomizes a break from family traditions and norms (London, 1989, p. 167). Although the family is a significant component in shaping a student's choice to pursue college, it is not the single determinant factor. London (1989) includes the family as a factor, but also relays that adolescent maturation and a complexity of psychological factors play a role in this decision (p.

167). These educational fledglings need to become educational pilots. To do so, someone needs to show them how to fly.

Findings from Horn and Nunez (2000) revealed that FGCS consistently lagged behind MGCS in activities leading to college enrollment (p. 26). After controlling for academic achievement, family SES, and family composition, Horn and Nunez (2000) found that FGCS were less likely to enroll in college within two tears after graduating than MGCS (p. 39). Regardless of first- or multi-generation status, students completing high school math curriculum beyond Algebra 2 increased the likelihood of enrollment in a 4-year college (p. 47). As parents' education level increases, so to does the level of math taken beginning in the eighth grade (p. 15). A students chance of enrolling in college also increased when parents were involved in college planning or the students received direct help from their high school when applying to college (p. 41). When FGCS took Algebra 1 in eighth grade, their chances of enrolling in a 4-year college more than doubled, increasing from 27% to 64% (p. v).

Austin (2011) focused on parental involvement in and their contribution towards their child's attainment of a college degree. Since they have not completed college themselves, their input is limited to sheer encouragement rather than specific skills needed to attain the degree. In his study, it becomes clear that parents of FGCS do not posses the necessary social capital to influence their child. Instead, they promote activities where their child can interact with others to "tap into social networks that developed the skills and dispositions to desire college attendance" (Austin, 2011, p. 169). By providing opportunities for their child to build social capital, these parents encouraged their child's decision to attend college. Beyond parental encouragement, students disclosed self-motivation and encouragement from their school as key factors in their

persistence (p. 181). Mitchell (2007) notes that FGCS's families provide lower encouragement and involvement, lack collegiate knowledge, and have fewer financial resources (p. 34). It becomes important then for FGCS to utilize vertical and horizontal social relationships to gain access to capital that is deficient in their families (p. 41). Mitchell refers to those individuals at the college level that interact with students helping them to acquire "the information, knowledge and experiences about higher education" as cultural capital facilitators (p. 16). "Cultural capital facilitators not only provide the information that students seek, but also the information that students do not know to ask for in the first place" (p. 196).

FGCS who feel a high degree of confidence in their ability to integrate and succeed are more likely to experience a smooth transition into college (Inkelas et al, 2006). Lancaster (2010) asserts a "connection between the amount of college related social capital that FGCS have access to and the likelihood of persistence and graduation" (p. 15). Pike and Kuh (2005) support that living on campus is a significant way to increase social capital among FGCS (p. 291). A cyclical pattern occurs when FGCS do not know which high school courses to take in preparation for college because their parents are not college degreed and therefore they are less prepared and less confident when entering college.

2.3.3 Persistence During College

FGCS report lower levels of self-regulation than MGCS and therefore benefit from learning environments that promote self-regulation - a key component in social cognitive theory (Williams & Hellman, 2004, p. 78). Zimmerman (as cited in Williams et al., 2004, p. 71-72) defines key characteristics of self-regulators:

- ability to set proximal goals [short-term]
- learning goal vs. performance goal orientation
- high self-efficacy [value, worth]
- intrinsic interest in a subject
- focus on performance [not distracted]
- self-instruction and imagery
- self-monitoring of processes
- self-evaluation
- attribute negative outcomes to faulty learning methods or practice
- attribute positive outcomes to ability
- adapt to contextual factors

Once planted firmly in college, retention and graduation goals surface. Social integration and persistence for this group are important social capital behaviors that will define their success or attrition in the college world (Terenzini et al., 1996). A study by Rendon (as cited in Terenzini et al., 1996) refers to various validating experiences between students and teachers in college that promote educational value. Rendon emphasizes the need for professors to actively make contact with these first-generation students to guide them towards acquiring the necessary social capital. Research by Ishitani (2003) explains that "knowing the risk periods... would help administrators responsible for retention to develop profiles of at-risk students" (p. 447). Advisors should note to seek out these students early and often to help them integrate into the college culture. Intervention is implied in the literature; however, few studies articulated how this would occur. One quantitative study did explore a Living-Learning (L/L) intervention program designed to address transition issues for first year students (Inkelas et al., 2007). Although not specifically targeted at first-generation college students, there may be incidental advantages for them.

FGCS have lower college persistence rates than MGCS with 58% of FGCS persisting in college compared to 77% of MGCS (Hodge, 2009, p. 1). Comparing retention factors such as faculty-student interaction, college mentoring, academic support, residential status, on-campus

involvement and financial status between first-generation college students and multi-generation college students, Williams (2009, p. 72) found that compared to MGCS, FGCS were:

- academically and socially less integrated into their college environment
- interacted less with their faculty
- developed less college mentor relationships
- met less often with their academic advisors
- were less involved in college clubs and organizations
- lived on-campus less
- and depended more on financial assistance to pay for their college education

When students become integrated into the social and academic systems of college through extracurricular activities, interactions with students, and interactions with faculty they are more likely to persist in college (Christie & Dinham, 1991, p. 412). Christie & Dinham (1991) elaborate on this integration as a rite of passage as students move from membership in one community to membership in another. Building high levels of networking would allow for higher levels of social capital influences. If a student is a FGCS, successful integration will be more difficult since their family and college communities are so different. A MGCS with family-learned social capital may find it easier to transition from one community to the next.

Lohfink and Paulsen (2005) examined the institutional retention of FGCS from their first to second year of college instead of within year persistence (p. 410). They found that 76.5% of FGCS persisted from their first to second year of college compared to 82.2% of MGCS (p. 414). MGCS were more likely to persist when they participated in clubs or activities, while FGCS were more likely to persist when they had increased interactions with faculty (p. 422). Lohfink and Paulsen did not find that pre-college variables, such as high school course work or entrance scores, were related to institutional retention of FGCS from their first to second year (p. 422).

First year GPA, educational aspirations, satisfaction with social life, and financial assistance were positively correlated to retention for both FGCS and MGCS.

Sy et al. (2012) found that emotional and informational support from parents was significantly lower among FGCS as compared to MGCS (p. 391). However, their results did not show any difference in stress levels between first- and multi-generation college students (p. 392). This coincides with other research where non-cognitive outcomes begin to equalize between FGCS and MGCS beyond the first year (Pascarella et al., 2003, p. 428). Although when both aspects were combined, parent emotional support did negatively predicted stress for FGCS but not MGCS (p. 392). This would indicate that FGCS are tied to their family's capital more than MGCS. With higher levels of social capital, MGCS would not need to rely on their family's capital as they would be receiving it from their new college networks. Investigation into the relationship between social support and academic stress has shown that students with strong social networks are more likely to reduce that stress and achieve academic success (Cohen & McKay, 1984).

Social capital during the attainment of a college degree has also been associated with the prevention some psychological and physical disorders (Cohen & McKay, 1984, p. 253). This phenomenon, referred to as "buffering," hypothesizes that the protective impact of social support is helpful during times of mental stress (p. 253). FGCS are outsiders to the college arena and may feel anxiety and tension as they yearn to assimilate into its culture. This stress will lessen their sense of belonging. Social support could provide students with a pool of resources to use during these times and alleviate some of their stressors (p. 259).

In addition to limited social capital, financial barriers also impede the collegiate success of FGCS. Since FGCS are at risk for low persistence in college (Choy, 2001; Engle & O'Brien, 2007; Ishitani, 2003; Moschetti & Hudley, 2008; Nuñez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pike et al., 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996), they may take longer to complete their degrees. Since FGCS are often low SES (Chen et al., 2005; Crosnoe, & Schneider, 2010; Frempong et al., 2012; Inkelas et al., 2007; Ishitani, 2003; Pike et al., 2005; Toutkoushian & Curtis, 2005), they may be caught in a predicament and lose the critical funding needed to complete their degree if they don't finish in the state-specified time limit. Ishitani (2003) reveals that "states have introduced legislation that limits the subsidies to students who exceed a certain time without the completion of a degree" (p. 448). Those who need more time and funding to complete their degrees are faced with limited time or a loss of funding. In addition, some colleges require students to live on campus for the first year, which would increase engagement (Pike & Kuh, 2005, p. 291), however low SES students may not be able to afford the expense of onsite boarding. Expanded by Pascarella et al. (2004), employment, often a necessity of low SES students, has a negative impact on academic success by reducing time connected with the school's culture (p. 279). FGCS who are low SES may work more and live off campus leading to increased barriers to social capital acquisition.

2.3.4   Post-College Outcomes

With prior research focused primarily on the pre-college process, transition to college and persistence during college (Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996), research is needed in the area of what happens after college for this specific group. Most of my found literature centered on college students. Barrington (2004) studied experiences of FGCS

who attend graduate school. This research was the first that I have found on post-college activities. Pascarella et al. studied how college experiences could enhance social capital, both cognitive and psychosocial, and how these experiences helped make up for deficits in social capital among FGCS (p. 250). If "the college experience itself provides a vehicle for acquiring additional cultural/social capital" (p. 252), then the secondary classroom also be a setting for the acquisition of social capital. And, if parents transmit messages about college to their children prior to attending college (Williams, 2010), then high school teachers could also be a source of social capital transmission for their students.

With the exception of Barrington's (2004) research, most studies of FGCS are limited to enrollment into college and persistence once there. Although her study goes beyond college to explore endeavors in graduate school, her research is still about potential success in post-secondary education. Barrington reaffirms the limited research on post-schooling employment of FGCS. A void in the literature in this area has prompted me to explore the perspective of a FGCS and their potential to perpetuate social capital, specifically as a public education teacher. The value in this cycle of capital attainment from sources external to family and then propagation among other first-generation college bound students is powerful.

Expanding on the work of Terenzini et al. (1996) who noted the transitional struggles of FGCS, Pascarella et al. (2003) examined FGCS over time beyond the first year. He found that after the initial year, any differences in cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes began to equalize between FGCS and MGCS (p. 428). Extending this notion that college can be a capital equalizer, Nuñez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) found that FGCS who acquired a college degree earned comparable salaries and were employed in similar occupations as MGCS (p. 46). Findings by

Nuñez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) concur with prior research that FGCS have lower persistence rates and degree attainment (p. 51). However, once FGCS and MGCS graduated there were no significant differences when competing for employment (p. 44). Furthermore, the status of being a FGCS does not appear to affect occupation or income. With this being noted, barriers to upward mobility appear to be on the front end of the college path, and not the back end. If the playing field is leveled once a college degree is obtained, efforts need to be centered on improving a FGCS's chance of entry into and completion of college.

"For many first-generation college students, the responsibility for understanding the game of higher education and negotiating its path is one they shoulder primarily on their own" (Lundberg, 2007, p. 8). In reflection on my own academic path as a FGCS, I often ask myself how I got _here_. FGCS are at the beginning of this path and need to reflect, asking themselves how to get _there_. "Due largely to their lack of exposure to college, low-income students aren't aware of the programs and services that exist on campus, or they don't understand the function these programs serve or how they could benefit from them" (Engle & O'Brien, 2007, p. 4). FGCS don't know what questions to ask, much like Lundberg (2007) didn't know about a special type of undershirt worn by baseball players on her son's team (p. 11). Lundberg had never played baseball and lacked detailed knowledge of game protocol. She lacked the cultural capital of the more experienced baseball families. She pinpoints that, "students who enter college with less cultural capital are disadvantaged, not through their ability or their commitment but through having less access to relationships and sources that foster success" (p. 9). Multi-generation baseball players have parents who can pass trade secrets on to their children. Allowing for a more even playing field among students, teachers can pass along trade secrets of college planning, transition and persistence.

Many researchers have examined the relationship between a student's skill set as a first-generation college student, preparedness for college, and the likelihood that he will persevere to obtain a bachelor's degree (Austin, 2011; Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007; Ishitani, 2003; London, 1989; Pascarella, Wolniak, Pierson, and Terenzini, 2003; Pike & Kuh, 2005). FGCS have lower high school grade point, lower completion of the SAT or ACT, and have taken fewer college preparatory courses (p. 30). When FGCS come out of high school academically unprepared, they are often required to take developmental education courses usually offered at community colleges to raise their skill level (p. 31). These prerequisite course will delay entry into a chosen major and could derail a less persistent FGCS.

2.4   SUMMARY

Drawing from these research theories, I propose that the transmission of social and cultural capital can only take place if positive teacher-student interactions are fostered. Without a strong and intentional social capital connection, there would be no path for information transfer. Espinoza (2011) defines key characteristics of these critical relationships to include high levels of interaction, a strong foundation of trust, consistency over time, and role substitution as an informal parent, mentor and advocate (p. 20). According to Espinoza, "trusting and caring relationships create the necessary conditions for the effective transfer of the information and skills needed for academic success" (p. 21). The transmission of social capital is the condition under which skills, knowledge and beliefs can be acquired by students. Having benefitted from such transformative engagements, first-generation college teachers can effectively compensate for the deficiencies yet to be known by first-generation college students. These students don't specifically know what they are missing, but teachers who have completed the journey do.

Although all teachers are college graduates and could transfer information about college access to their students, first-generation college teachers belong to a specific cohort that has proceeded through a similar path and may have overcome similar educational, economic and personal barriers. Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) describe social capital as a resource to be used to benefit an individual. Teachers need to be looked at as key educational resources who can provide information and support to students so that they can get ahead in the college arena. First -generation college graduates who become teachers are unique educational resources for students navigating the complex and daunting journey from a non-collegiate home to a post-collegiate career.

When looking at sources of social and cultural capital for FGCS (Figure 6 Sources of Social and Cultural Capital), each source has a unique amount of capacity and influence upon a college bound student. Not only does a source need to have knowledge of the college process, but also a high level of influence on the student. The combination of these two dynamics may increase the impact from that source on a FGCS when they are pursuing a college degree. Although all sources have some degree of influence on FGCS, institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) possess a higher amount of cultural capital pertaining to college degree acquisition (Pascarella et al., 2004). This impact is illustrated in Figure 7 Institutional Agents. Specifically, high school teachers have not only a high level of educational capacity, but also a high level of influence on students during classroom instruction (Fancera, 2009). I define educational capacity as the level of cultural and social capital combined that is necessary to navigate through advanced educational situations. A teacher's capacity and direct opportunity to instruct students in the school setting are the foundation for the narrative inquiry in Chapter 4 (4.2 Narratives).

Figure 7 Institutional Agents

School Culture	HS Teachers	HS Counselors
Peers	First-Generation College Student	Family
Parents	Community	Self
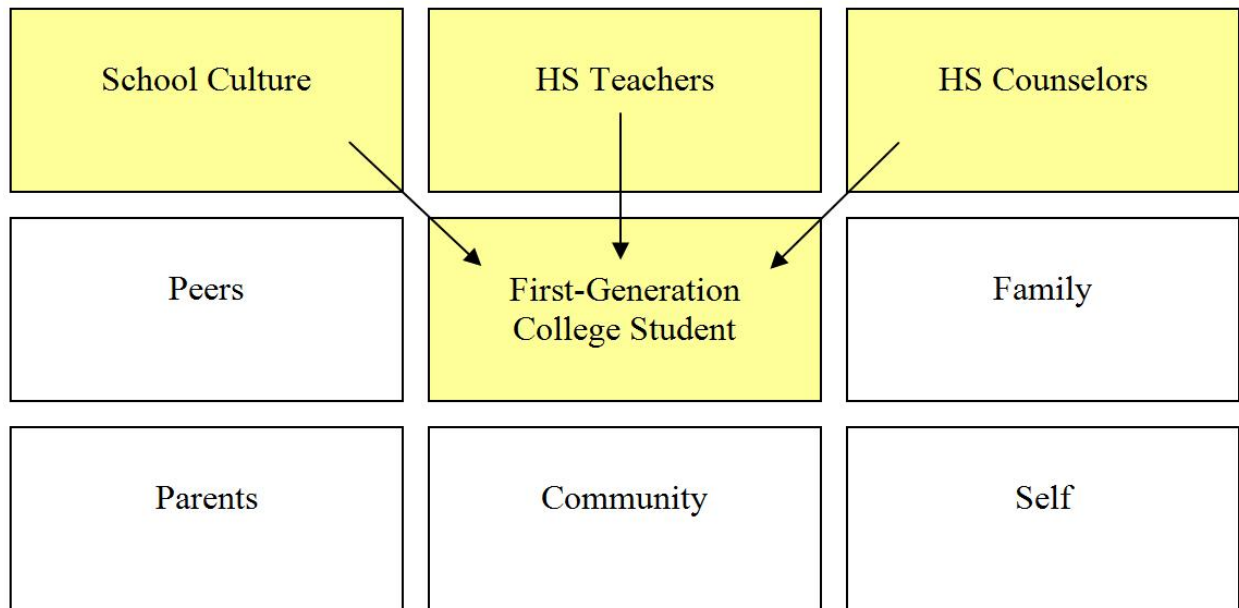
As I reflected on my high school's standardized achievement scores, it was dramatically noticeable that many low SES students were underperforming their peers. I am left to wonder how educational institutions can address the inadequate social capital among low SES students. Bastedo and Jaquette (2011) describe a capital deficiency among low income students stating that "affluent households with high levels of parental education have more human, social, and cultural capital to devote to education from the earliest ages" (p. 319). The insight gained through a narrative inquiry study of first-generation college students as adults could be transformative for current disadvantaged students.

3.0   CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature describes first-generation college students in need of acquiring social capital in order to pursue, attend and successfully graduate from college. Following a qualitative method of narrative inquiry, I convey the stories of a number of first-generation teachers as they describe their journey and ultimate transmission of significant cultural and social capital. The experience of being a teacher who came from a non-collegiate home will add a scope of knowledge that the current literature lacks. Looking through the lens of a first-generation college graduate teacher could result in educational reform that benefits students from low socioeconomic groups. By narrowing my research to first-person accounts of life-long educational journeys and the multitude of decision making processes that were necessary, I was able to reveal specific behavioral characteristics that enabled their success. Having worked in a public school setting for sixteen years, I have found many teachers to be child-centered, wanting to help students succeed within and beyond their classroom. Exploring narratives of first-generation college graduate teachers, I looked for self-reported social capital that transmitted values and promoted education, as well as a mind-set of the social capital that needs to be transmitted to children. Trying to understand this experience, I crafted the following research questions:

RQ1:   How did first-generation college graduate teachers acquire social capital throughout their lives that was needed to complete their college degree?

RQ2:   How do first-generation college graduate teachers transmit their own learned social capital to students?

Figure 8 Cyclical Model of Social Capital Transmission
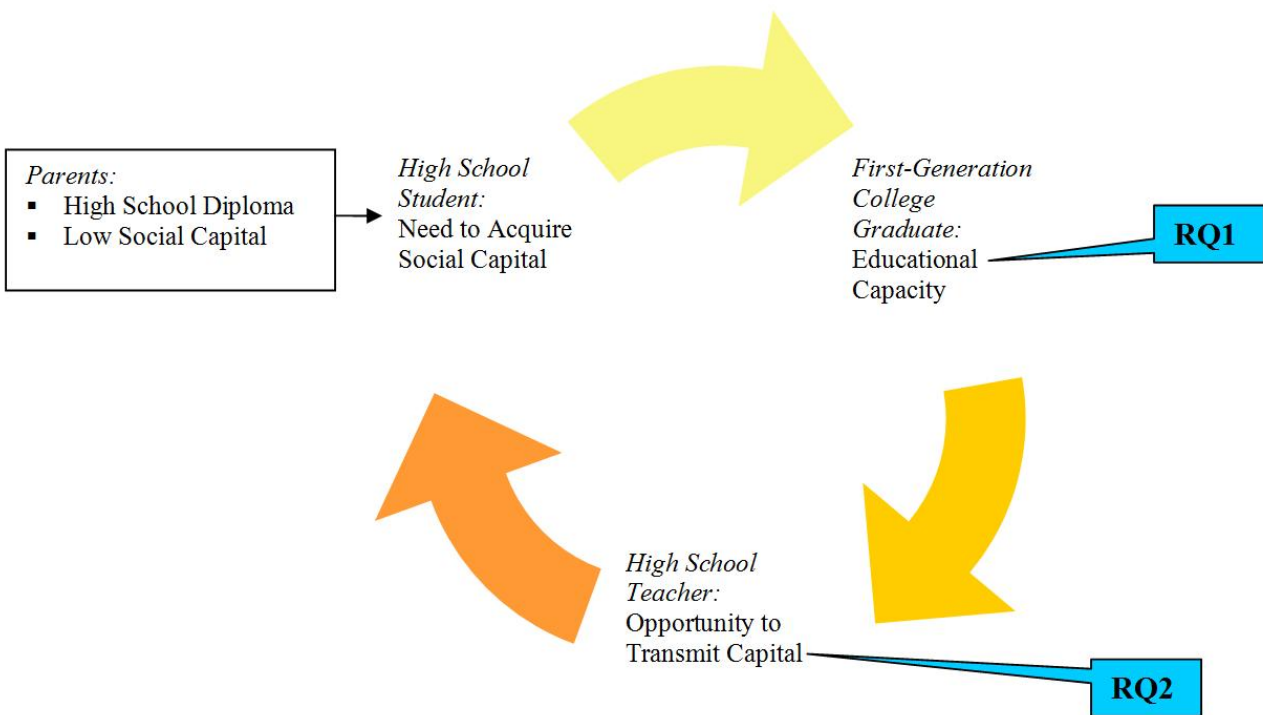
As illustrated in Figure 8, RQ1 was designed to draw out the experiences of first-generation college graduates that supported them on their journey towards a bachelor's degree. Somewhere along the way they learned valuable strategies to assist them in a previously unknown world. Without college degrees, their parents could not have provided the specific cultural or social capital related to college enrollment or completion. These FGCG were able to share the capital that they acquired from outside sources and relayed that which enabled greater success. RQ2 was designed to keep the research focused on the transmission of the acquired capital. I wanted to understand how, through the transmission of acquired capital to other first-generation college bound students, teachers may break the intergenerational status quo among low SES students. This cycle of social capital acquisition and deliberate transmission by FGCG teachers illustrates the possible transformative nature within education.

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Through personal interviews of teachers who experienced first-hand the journey from a non-collegiate home to a post-collegiate career, my research should provide beneficial insight for current FGCS. FGCG teachers have succeeded and are in a position to offer guidance to those with unsure footing. One such FGCG, Kenneth Oldfield (2007), describes his perspective and imparts advice to those interested in attempting the challenge. He asserts that, "Tales told by former poor and working-class first-generation college students can help today's newcomers survive and prosper" (p. 3). An experienced sage, Oldfield understands that FGCS will face obstacles both external and internal:

> No matter what distance they have physically traveled to their campus, college requires a cultural journey to a very different land than the one they knew as youngsters. For first-generation poor and working-class college students, surviving the social challenges of higher learning can be at least as demanding as achieving a high grade point average (Oldfield, 2007, p. 3).

Oldfield (2007) defines cultural capital as "the knowledge, skills, education, and other advantages a person has that make the educational system a comfortable, familiar environment in which he or she can succeed easily" (p. 2). Without this capital, FGCS may feel uncomfortable and disconnected from their surroundings. Capital is therefore a necessary qualitative characteristic that could interfere with a student's academic success despite their aptitude. Bourdieu (1986) explained that even when low SES students are qualified for admission to college, they often lack the cultural capital necessary to apply (p. 256). Oldfield points to the irony that those who could most benefit from college and its cultural access are the least likely to attend (p. 5). My research into the acquired capital that helped FGCG teachers attain a college degree, could be helpful for FGCS. Penrose (2002) extends this value-laden sentiment of understanding another person's journey. "From a research perspective, the experiences of first-

generation students shed light on the tacit knowledge and values shared by members of discourse communities and help begin to isolate variables that may affect the ease or difficulty of any student's adjustment to academic life" (p. 438).

Social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988) explains how personal networks and relationships benefit individuals, specifically, a student's academic outcome. There are many influences on FGCS that shape their educational capacity and ultimately their ability to achieve academic success. Social capital enables groups to prosper, specifically in "networks of like-minded individuals that further their purposes and provide a sense of cohesion for their members" (Maimer, 2003, p.46). "While there has been a large and varied amount of research on social capital and educational attainment, there is very little research on social capital transmission by pre-college programs" (Maimer, 2003, p.47). As suggested by the literature on social capital theory, FGCS who become teachers are positioned well to transmit social capital. They might have high levels of educational capacity as evidenced by their transition into college despite having non-college parents, completion of college against the odds of FGCS barriers, and career attainment in a field that by definition embodies education. A first-generation college teacher (FGCT) could be critical in transmitting social capital to students, helping them to gain access to post-secondary education. For other FGCS, a FGCT may be in a position to break down barriers for this subgroup of disadvantaged children. By transmitting social and cultural capital to their students, they could continue the cycle of social capital reproduction that began when they were in high school.

According to social comparison theory (SCT), individuals will look to people similar to themselves in personality, attitudes, and experiences for comparison and support during critical

times (Cohen & McKay, 1984, p. 257). High school students considering a college degree could look to the front of the classroom and rely on their teacher for advice. Social support helps students in times of stress and SCT suggests that stress-reducing effects will come from people perceived as having experienced similar stressors (p. 257). As FGCS face unknown experiences and feel a sense of frustration during indoctrination into a new world of education, they may be inclined to turn towards others who have made a similar journey before them - i.e. a FGCT in their high schools. Teachers can become part of a support system for FGCS. FGCS need to be shown the pathway to prepare for college, gain access, and successfully stay the course towards degree attainment. Social capital can therefore be described through analysis of FGCT as they interpret their own realization of educational capital. Their acquisition of capital along the way to their degree attainment and transmission towards other FGCS in their care could be pivotal in providing college access to new generations of students.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

This research study followed a qualitative approach of narrative inquiry. High school teachers with the life experience of being first-generation college graduates narrated their personal stories and the beneficial relationships with first-generation college bound students in their classroom (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). In contrast to a phenomenological approach that would focus on a comprehensive description of the teacher as a first-generation college graduate and the "essence of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13), I chose to focus on the social and cultural capital transmission from teachers who are first-generation college graduates to first-generation college bound students with storied accounts of the teachers' lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 4). By allowing them to tell their stories, I believe that I gained a better understanding of their

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life experiences. These experiences fall into a continuum (p.19) with opportunities for transference of learned skills to students currently living a similar journey. Choosing narrative inquiry over phenomenology kept my focus on the cycle of educational capacity development for the student as expressed in Figure 2 (Cyclical Model of Social Capital Transmission), rather than a detailed analysis focused solely on first-generation college graduates. Clandinin and Connelly refer to narrative inquiry as an expression of something happening over time (p. 29). Fundamentally, this study centered on the process of social and cultural capital transfer from teacher to student, rather than the holistic being of first-generation college students.

The central focus of this study was to build an understanding of this subgroup of teachers through the lens of a first-generation college graduate as a mentor and advocate for other first-generation college bound students. The demographics of the students at this field site indicated that a significant number of children may be first-generation college bound. Situated in a predominately blue collar, urban-fringe neighborhood with nearly 25% of its students receiving free or reduced-priced lunch, this school houses teachers who are critical in establishing a culture of educational importance and distributing essential social and cultural capital. Sampling of participants was not only quantitatively designed (see 3.3 Sampling ahead), but also qualitatively arranged. Over the past four years, personal interactions with each participant led me to better understand their frame of mind. Similarities among FGCS include low-income families, weaker academic skills in high school, lower degree aspirations, less involvement with peers and teachers, and less encouragement from parents to attend college (Terenzini et al., 1996, p. 8).

The teachers chosen to participate in this research were selected because of their potential contribution to this body of knowledge and a collective quintessential depiction of first-

generation college graduates as based in the literature. From 32 staff members who met the criteria of being first-generation college graduates with 5-15 years, a narrowing process was used to acquire a manageable number of participants. The list of potential participants was reviewed to include a balance of men and women, bachelor's and master's degrees, teaching experience, prior careers, and philosophy on education. Although other participants could have been chosen, the final five not only balanced the demographics desired, but also were known by me more personally. The later criterion was desired due to the sensitive nature of the interviews and the need for trust between principal investigator and participant.

As a narrative inquiry study, I needed to continually frame and reframe my research to stay centered on the teacher's life experience and their influence within the lives of high school students. Any results that involved the students were reported in terms of the teacher's perceived influence within that relationship, rather than direct accounts from the students. Because of this lack of interaction with children and my utilization of an open-ended interview method, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) qualified my research as minimal risk research with exemption from Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Research Subjects under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

3.3   SAMPLING

As a high school principal, I work with more than 180 staff in a public high school setting. Numerous anecdotal conversations over the past four years revealed the presence of teachers who are first-generation college graduates like myself. An informal survey at a staff meeting indicated that approximately half of the 135 teachers fit into the category of first-generation college graduate. That informal questioning was followed up with a more structured survey to

establish a pool of potential participants. From this cohort of public school teachers, six teachers were then invited to participate in personal interview sessions. One of the six declined due to other personal commitments. The remaining five interviews were then conducted at various locations established by the interviewee.

Through purposeful sampling, this research study analyzed data from public high school teachers with 5 to 15 years of teaching experience who are first-generation college graduates. Teachers as subjects of research are readily available and easily accessible within individual school systems. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) refer to this type of sample that exists in one location by default as "naturally bounded" (p.61). By using 5 to 15 years of teaching experience to narrow the criteria for selection, the subjects had graduated from college between 1997 and 2007. These years align directly with the majority of literature referenced in the study and allowed better comparison of the results. As well, I intentionally eliminated teachers with fewer than 5 years of experience and greater than 15 years of experience to reduce variables associated with inexperience or generational differences. Through a brief structured survey (Appendix A: Google Docs Form), I determined exactly how many faculty at my field site fit into the specific criteria of being a FGCG with mid-years of experience. A surprisingly large number of teachers (47%) indicated that they were FGCG. This subgroup was then narrowed further to exclude teachers with fewer than 5 years and greater than 15 years of teaching experience. From a sample population of 135 teachers, 119 respondents provided 32 teachers that met all of my established conditions. This naturally bounded pool of interviewees allowed for an adequate amount of final subjects to interview.

Teachers in this grouping (N=32) have non-college degreed parents. If an average college student graduates at approximately 21 years old, this purposeful sample would have been born between 1976 and 1986, placing their parent's birth approximately between 1940 and 1960. For these parents, not attending college would be more related to social or cultural capital, than for parents born in the earlier part of the 20th Century. College choice for those parents would have a significantly larger amount of variables including limited transportation, World War I, the Great Depression and World War II. Although narrative inquiry has by design a very specific sample group which may not be broad enough for generalizability of all first-generation college students, gaining an understanding of the life experiences of this group of first-generation college graduate teachers should allow for transferability to other secondary settings. Transferability is important to me as an educator who wants to help transform the educational system to better accommodate all children.

The five participants had individual characteristics that they shared with at least one other in the group. This overlapping of characteristics brought a sense a unity to the overall representation of my research participants. A web of overlaying FGCS characteristics made these five participants a varied representative for the narrative inquiry. Adam, Charles, Deborah, and Ethan self-reported membership in low SES families. Bethany was unique in her report of belonging to a family outside of the typical FGCS family status. Three participants had intact traditional families with a mother and father available during their degree attainment. Adam was part of a blended family and Deborah's father died before she completed her degree. Charles and Ethan lived on campus during college, while Adam, Bethany, and Deborah lived at home. Numerous relational patterns exist among the participants that created an overall balance in the narratives.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

In order to gain an understanding of first-generation college graduate teachers and accurately describe personal experiences by which they acquired social and cultural capital throughout their lives, I chose to interview the five subjects. Voluntary participants included three men and two women with varied backgrounds which created a broad scope of information. I conducted individual, semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) of these five teachers in one school setting. The format was designed to engage the teachers in conversation and have them "reconstruct and narrate a range of constitutive events" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17). By asking *how* they gained a college degree and not *why*, their social and cultural capital acquisition was placed "in the context of their life history" (p. 17). This strategy elicited process strategies that could ultimately be used by college bound students, rather than emotional responses that may not be generalized.

The initial survey of the Sherwood High School faculty was conducted using a Google Docs form. This provided quick identification of available first-generation college graduate teachers. Ongoing informal conversations and classroom observations as a school principal over the past four years at Sherwood High School allowed me to begin the interviews at a much deeper level of engagement with the teachers. The five semi-structured interviews were recorded with a Samsung Droid Charge phone voice recorder application and transcribed using GearPlayer 4 transcription software for playback.

My interview design included warm-up dialogue designed to start the conversation between myself and the participant, putting other distractions aside and focusing more intently on the interview. In this "Setting the Stage" section, teachers began a cognitive engagement relating to their educational journeys. Once engaged, the conversation moved into an affective

level of the "Narrative Inquiry" section. Included in the design were several prompts as a backup if the conversation stalled or veered off course from the intended research questions. This design for collecting personal narratives allowed me to gain a better understanding of a teacher's mindset and intentional transmission of their own learned social capital to students, while eliminating variables from differing cultural and demographic settings. Semi-structured interviews are a data collection method that supports the methodology of narrative inquiry - looking at teaching and learning from the educational life stories of first-generation college graduate teachers.

I designed the Narrative Interview Strategy tool (Appendix A) to guide the participant in telling their journey from social capital acquisition to transmission of their values and beliefs to high school students. Because of a high level of trust developed between me and these teachers over four years, the opportunity existed for deeper conversations than may have been possible with an outside researcher. I anticipated being able to engage with the final selection of five teachers on an affective level that would provide descriptive personal narratives.

The initial structured survey was used to screen the entire staff of 135 teachers for qualifying subjects with 5 to 15 years of teaching experience who are first-generation college graduates. Having worked closely with those 135 teachers, I developed relationships with them that allowed me to further select the six potential participants from that initial screen. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, informed of their rights as a research participant (Appendix B), and given time to ask clarifying questions. As the primary investigator, I conducted all interviews over four weeks and evaluated their responses.

Post-interview data was collected about sources of influence on first-generation college students. A blank copy of Figure 3 Sources of Influence on First-Generation College Students) was given to each participant to gather their perspective on personal influences. The literature points to specific sources of social and cultural capital acquisition for first-generation college bound high school students including their high school's academic culture (Hoffmann & Dufur, 2008; Penrose, 2002), teachers and counselors (Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Terenzini et al., 1996), peers (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lundberg, 2007), family (Hodge, 2009; Lask, 2008), parents (Austin, 2011; Moschetti & Hudley, 2008), community (Portes, 2000; Toutkoushian & Curtis (2005), and self (Bernard, 2006; Moschetti, 2008; Williams & Hellman, 2004). The data gathered from this method is discussed in 5.2 Sources of Influence.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Significant portions of each interview were transcribed into a narrative format and then coded (Mertens, 2010, p. 425) for emergent examples of acquisition and transmission of cultural and social capital. I did not predefine any codes or themes, but waited for an initial review of the data to allow common traits to emerge naturally. My interview design was intended to elicit personal experiences of first-generation college graduate teachers and how their relationships affect the transmission of capital. Life histories and patterns of capital acquisition among the participants were reviewed, as well as any common behavioral characteristics such as self-advocacy, perseverance and academic valuing. I not only concentrated on information that specifically addressed the research questions, but also noted data that could warrant further investigation in future research on first-generation college graduates or intervention strategies for students with limited social, cultural, or financial capital.

Transcripts of these personal narratives were initially read and organized based on the literature on first-generation college students that focused on four general areas: 1) the pre-college process during high school, 2) transition to college during the first year at a post-secondary institution, 3) persistence and the resultant attrition during college (Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996), and 4) post-college outcomes (Barrington, 2004; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Supporting narratives are presented in Chapter 5 with citations from the transcripts that illustrate these literature-based FGCS themes (5.4 Summary of Themes) and provide the reader with a deeper and personal understanding of the cycle of social capital acquisition and deliberate transmission by teachers. I began with a large Excel spreadsheet with side-by-side columns for comparison, but found this format to be too congested. I separated the individual columns into singular pages. This allowed me to print each participant's record and set multiple pages next to each other on my desk for comparison.

I then scrutinized the transcripts for traits which could benefit first-generation college students and therefore be transformative in their lives. Scanning the transcripts, I used multi-colored highlighters to represent common traits: academic preparedness (Chen et al., 2005), educational aspirations (DiPaula, 2010; Pike & Kuh, 2005), mentoring (Erickson et al., 2009), self-efficacy (DiPaula, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Penrose, 2002), self-regulatory behavior (Austin, 2011; Moschetti, 2008; Williams & Hellman, 2004), and tenacity (Grayson, 2011; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lask, 2008). Once the dialogue language was highlighted that related to those traits common to first-generation college students, the passages were read several more times to ensure thoroughness. Common traits which depict the journey of a FGCS to a FGCG are presented in Chapter 5 (Table 3 Common Traits Among Narratives), providing insight into the complex nature of secondary teachers who are first-generation college graduates.

3.6   CONSIDERATIONS

Having worked in public education for the past 16 years, both as a teacher and an administrator, I come to this research with extensive educational pedagogy as well as my own personal beliefs about teaching children. As a first-generation college graduate, I know first-hand the significance of acquiring social and cultural capital from multiple sources in order to achieve a college degree while facing the many obstacles described in the literature. I found similarities in the narratives from other FGCG, while pressing further into the capital transmission from teacher to student. I did, however, remain open-minded for alternative results. As a qualitative research design, other social constructs come out of my analysis that raise other educational design questions and the opportunity for extension research studies.

My own drive to succeed as a first-generation college student and rise above my station in life was the inspiration for my choice of a research study. My personal and professional journey has been a strong motivation to seek knowledge that could benefit others like me. This passion brought not only motivation to my research, but also a high level of empathy for its participants and the lives of low SES students that it could positively affect. To achieve an end product that can truly add value to the field of research and benefit children required constant reflection on the research questions and true meaning of the participant's answers. I continually reflected on my interpretations of the data to maintain research integrity and validity of my findings. Throughout the past ten years of my graduate studies and ongoing conversations with my academic and research advisors, I find that I cannot shed my FGCS status and am still acquiring social and cultural capital.

4.0   CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1   OVERVIEW

Following the qualitative method of narrative inquiry, the stories of first-generation college graduate teachers are conveyed as they describe their journey of acquisition and transmission of significant cultural and social capital. Narrations from five high school teachers with the life experience of being first-generation college graduates and the relationship to first-generation college bound students in their classrooms are told uninterrupted. Later discussion breaks down their stories and connects the pieces to current research. Initially, getting a mental picture of each teacher and their journey is essential to understanding their personal story.

Clandinin and Connelly refer to narrative inquiry as an expression of something happening over time (2000, p. 29). As these stories were gathered, I kept a focus on the cycle of educational capacity development for the teacher and the potential for transmission to current high school students (Figure 2 Cyclical Model of Social Capital Transmission). I continually framed and reframed my conversations to stay centered on the teacher's life experience and their influence within the lives of high school students. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) looked at narrative inquiry as best represented by personal anecdotes with detailed accounts of an individual's life (p. 2). I followed this methodology by providing the reader with organized stories that bring to life the journey of five first-generation college graduate teachers.

The narrative presentations begin with Adam, who conveys a detailed representation of a typical, hard-working, low SES, first-generation college student, as described in the literature. Bethany, Charles, and Ethan then provide supportive stories for the overall research questions, while their individual characteristics increase the potential for future readers to identify with

them. The narratives are brought to a close with Deborah. I believe that she elicits compassion and brings a sense of inspiration to FGCS with her account of an 18 year quest for a college degree. Tenacious and supportive of the underdog, Deborah's story makes possible the many hardships that a first-generation college bound student might encounter and need to overcome.

The following passages are educational life stories of first-generation college graduate teachers that establish a unique perspective on teaching and learning. Multiple hours of dialogue have been narrowed down to select portions that embody the various literature themes. The stories are personal. Every participant gave deep insight into their private lives so that others may learn. With discretion in mind, some names and locations have been changed.

4.2   NARRATIVES

4.2.1   Adam

Adam is a 32 year old, white male whose eyes always seem to connect with you even before he is within distance to offer his usual greeting, "Hey, how are you?" His sincerity waits for you to answer. Without a doubt, Adam finds relationships to be very important in his life. Not only is he truly interested in how others around him are doing, but he is also unafraid to step up and offer his assistance whenever needed. To this point, Adam volunteered his time for this interview during two of his preparation periods during the school day. "No problem... Whatever I can do to help out," he said.

Cognizant of his potential to be a role-model for his students, Adam sees it more as a responsibility. Without children of his own, he is very conscientiousness of the needs of the 100

or so students that filter daily through his classroom, as well as the 1,700 students that he encounters in the hallways. As the mathematics department chair for his high school, countless hours are spent researching and writing curriculum to better meet the needs of all students. As the conversation developed, I continually saw his eyes dart upward as he evoked memories of the children in his care. His pensive reflection is indicative of the importance he places on his craft of teaching and was offered to me throughout his story.

4.2.1.1 Pre-College Process

It started out with freshman year of high school knowing that I wanted to be a teacher. It was more or less, that's what I wanted to do. So, how then do I become a teacher? I can see thinking about how to go to college versus how do I get to a desired outcome. So, for me it was an outcome. I wanted to be a teacher so that required college.

It was also the philanthropic side. I wanted to do something with my life that was going to help others. Being involved that way was good. In hindsight, in looking back, it was also what career that required college did I see. I saw teachers. So when people say go to college, go to college, what else are you going to go to college to be? I see teachers, and those are the people who went to college. So, in my life, the people who went to college were teachers. The people who didn't go to college were construction workers, bakers, secretaries.

I think that going to college is more of an expectation for [MGCS]. It's their lifestyle. I think it when we look at breaking socioeconomic classes. If you look at all the research and what people say about that, 90% of the people that are of middle class stay middle class. 5% of people drop to lower class. 5% of the people go to upper class. I think some people that are middle class get lucky and make great money and don't go to college and they're your rappers and professional athletes and things like that. But I think that the majority of the time it's true, that you stay where you are. You don't generally jump. I think a lot of those kids see that "my parents drove me to school in a Mercedes. I want to drive my kids to school in a Mercedes."

Low SES Implications Within High School

The idea was always that I was going to go to college. My mom always said, you're going to go to college. And I wanted to go to college. It wasn't that she had to talk me into going to college. I remember my dad always said, use your brain

not your back because your back is going to wear out much quicker. My dad works construction, my stepdad works as a baker for a bread company. Both of their jobs were labor intensive. My mom was a secretary. So her job didn't require any kind of college or post-secondary training.

The money I got from working wasn't like just me going out wasting money. It was saving for college, saving for books and also helping out with family expenses. You know, if I wanted to drive, I had to put gas in the car. I had to pay for insurance. Normal stuff like that that I couldn't just have. So we were definitely not one of the "well off" families.

Acquisition of Social Capital

So then I had to think, how do you go to college? How does that actually happen? I remember it was along the lines of a guidance counselor saying you have to take the SAT test. You have to take the PSAT test. You have to do this. I don't remember things being really confusing until my senior year. And that's where not having people around that had experiential advice made it hard.

I grew up with my mom and my step dad, neither one of which were a college grad, nor is my biological father, who was also involved with my life, but I didn't live with him.

There were some teachers that I really did not enjoy, that I really did not like, and I said this is awful. And there were some teachers that I really enjoyed and said, wow, I could really do that.

To get in, it was like, so where do I get these applications? It was a lot of trips to a guidance counselor to get help.

My teachers talked to you about where you were going to go to school. They questioned, where are you going to school? And when you answered, I don't know, I really haven't thought about it, they would immediately jump in with, what do you mean you haven't thought about it? You have to start applying. You have to get somewhere. Now is the time.

It was an assumption that it was all happening. A lot of people assumed that it was all happening. I guess that's part of not having a home structure where that was a normal procedure. Those parents would be at home saying you have to do this now. For me, I was expected to know to do it. As far as my parents, it wasn't that they wouldn't be supportive, but they would be waiting for me to tell them what we needed to do, not me waiting for them to tell me to do it.

4.2.1.2 Transition to College

I didn't apply to anything early because I wasn't really familiar with the timeline of when that would happen. It was when I watched my friends that I realized, hmmmm, they are all applying to schools, some of them are telling me where they're going to school, some of them telling me where they're accepted, and I haven't really applied anywhere yet. It wasn't until the late Winter of my senior year that I really get rolling with college decisions and applications and things of that nature to determine where I was going to go.

I remember I applied at schools that were all pretty local and not that stringent to get into because everyone else talking was like, that's already done, you already missed that, you can't apply there anymore. That was a confusing part. That was a very confusing part. Am I messing up as far as getting there?

It was more or less me coming home and saying, Mom I need to do this. We need to do this and get this done. She also pushed it a little bit. What do we need to do? It was also difficult for her because, once again, it wasn't experiential. Everything was new. Turning in forms. Filling out forms. I remember it was always a struggle. Filling out a form meant sitting on a phone on hold with someone for forty-five minutes because you had to call FASFA and you had to figure out where does this number come from, how do we get this number? Things that I wouldn't know of as a 17 year old.

It wasn't hard for me to fill out forms. It wasn't hard for me to do transcript requests. None of that was challenging. It was knowing to do it, not actually doing it. It was understanding that I was behind because I didn't really feel like there was a clock on it. It was just another year of school and then summer was going to come.

I think the biggest poor decision I made about college was right at the start when I let other people - high school teachers, friends, parents - influence my decision about where to go to school. I was very indecisive about where I wanted to go. I made a decision to go to Edinboro and that did not last long. I dropped out in a week. When I was there I said, this was a bad decision. I don't like it here. I don't want to be here. This is a waste of my time. I remember it was the week before Labor Day. I stayed on the phone, did the application online, registered myself for CCAC, went to the registration office at Edinboro, withdrew from school, signed myself out, and once that was all done I called my mom and said you have to come get me. She asked why and I said because I dropped out of college. That was an interesting conversation. I said, I can't be here past Saturday because I'll be homeless.

She was very upset that I did that on my own. I said, I did everything without consulting you to let you know that I'm serious about my decision. I thought it

through. I already start classes Tuesday. I'm not dropping out of college to not go to college. I'm dropping out of this college because when I made the decision in April, I didn't want to go here. I let everyone talk me into it. I let everyone keep me talked into it through the summer and I knew it wasn't the right place for me, but I still did anyway because everyone else said so. I don't want to be here. I don't like it here. I want to be at home. I don't want to live on campus. So, I left and started CCAC then transferred to Pitt after two years.

I didn't tell my roommate I was leaving either. I didn't tell my dormmate that I was leaving school. He went to class, he came back, and there was no rug, TV, microwave, phone to call home - because that was my phone. I didn't care for him that much either, so I didn't really care to tell him.

Effects of Low SES on College Degree Attainment

Another thing that was confusing was the whole financial aid, scholarship, how are we going to pay for it. I think it was confusing both to me and my parents. How are we going to pay for school?

How do I find this information from my taxes to fill out this form? Where does this all come from? Do I need to fill this out? And then the surprise of once you're accepted and you pick a school, then all of a sudden here's a deposit. Everything seemed like it happened very fast for us.

I have cousins that did not and then cousins after me that did. Younger cousins that did go to college and cousins before me that didn't. One part of it was ability. I don't know if they had the ability to go to college. The other part is they would definitely have been in the same boat as me. Neither one of their parents, my aunt and uncle, were college graduates. Actually, one of them didn't even complete high school. One was an auto mechanic and one was whatever-part-time-job-I-can-find kind of person. I don't think my cousins knew any different. What I mean by ability is I don't know if they were smart, college kind of people. That and then drive. I don't know if they wanted to go to college. They were happy to be done with school, done with learning, get out into the real world.

We were definitely low income. my parents having the ability to afford college was a question mark even when I left. It was, we have the money for your first payment. How are we paying for the next payment? Don't worry, we'll figure it out. I got the full Stafford loans that I could get. I didn't get any scholarships, no academic money, no athletic money, no financial aid. The reason why I didn't get financial aid is because I worked, **I** had a job. So the money I had through **me** working made me not eligible for financial aid.

I thought that the academic counselor in charge of transferring students, um, didn't really know what she was doing. I thought that she was creating schedules for me that were not reasonable. The reason why I say they were not reasonable is

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because I worked while I was at school. So she would schedule me classes that would not allow for me to have a work schedule. So I had to stack my classes so that I could work at certain times. For example, my college schedule on a Monday was class 8:00 to 8:50, class 10:00 to 10:50, class 12:00 to 12:50, class 2:00 to 4:30, class 5:00 to 8:15. So that way I could get all my classes knocked out in one day and not have any classes on Tuesday or Thursday so I could work. I worked all day Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday. I also worked at night on Wednesday and Friday. That advisor would never really facilitate that. So I only had to deal with her for a year.

4.2.1.3 Persistence During College

I have a cousin that is the same age as me that went to college for a year or two and decided that he just wanted to be a construction worker. His dad worked for the post office and his mom was a homemaker. Never had a job. He was actually my high school's class valedictorian. Both his sister and himself. They had the ability. She went to school to be a lawyer, stopped at paralegal, and then just did that, and that was enough. And he totally dropped out and just did construction.

As far as my cousins that dropped out of school, maybe it was people not pushing them and maybe it was just them being lazy, but I don't know what makes me want to do it or do it well. It's just how I feel that it should be. Whether that was instilled with me by my parents and I still don't recognize it or it's just me. I don't want to do something to just get it done, I want to do it well. I don't want to not see something through to completion. I want to see it through to completion. It's part of my personality.

The decision to go to CCAC was out of necessity. How to get from Edinboro on? Then after the first semester at CCAC there was a period of do I transfer to Pitt now? At that point it was… well, you know what, I'm going to get rid of all these History of Western Civilization... US History... all these classes that aren't really part of my degree. I'm going to get those all out of the way at CCAC and then I'll take everything I need to at Pitt.

Effects of Social Capital

It was me. I wanted better than what my parents had even though I knew that they wanted more. I wanted to be able to have the ability to do more. My drive was for me and the rest of my life. I wanted to be successful. I wanted to be able to do things that I had the ability to do.

There was no advisor or counselor or person in college that I can recall that took me under their wing or sat there with me and said these are the things you need to do. It was my responsibility. I needed to research what I needed to do. Whether it's reading online, whether it's paying attention to emails that talk about

registration coming up, whether it's reading my undergraduate catalogue to see what my degree requirements were.

knowing that you were going to be stuck as a roommate with someone that you didn't really enjoy being around is a strong catalyst for not wanting to be there. Especially when you're at a place where you're not sure you want to be anyway. Having a roommate that would get you in trouble because of things they were doing when you didn't even want to associate with them was a catalyst,

I wanted to be home. My friends at home were still in that area and that's the area that I wanted to be in. It was partially that and just not wanted to live away. I wasn't one of those kids that says, I can't wait to get out of my house... I can't wait to go live somewhere. I'm moving across the country to go to college. I can't wait to be on my own. That was never a thing for me. I was never looking to get out of my house. I never thought, I can't wait until college starts. I did miss out on a lot that way though. I missed out on some of that cool college life atmosphere of being on campus.

The people I was friends with that were in college were at Pitt or CMU or Duquesne or local. So I kind of felt like when I made the decision to go to Edinboro, I was one of the only people that was going away.

Another thing I didn't know... you have to declare your major. What does that mean? I said I what I wanted to major in when I got here. So now I have to declare my major? When I declared my major, I got an academic advisor in the department. Since the professors were over crowded they had too many advisees. My academic advisor gave me six signed registration forms and told me that "that should do me". That was my advising session with him. So, then I had to figure out my math degree from that. The professor that was supposed to advise me was definitely a research guy, not really there to be a teacher. You could tell that he had to do advising, but he didn't want to, which is why he just gave me six signed registration forms and said "this should get you through to the end of your degree.

When I finished my classes at Pitt, I got a letter saying I wasn't going to graduate. I was then like, what do I do? You had to fill out a form for graduation, which I didn't know about. I thought it was just like high school, you just graduated. I thought that someone's looking and they know that you're done. So I didn't know that I had to apply to graduate. So in the "zero hour" I applied to graduate. Then after I graduated and to get accepted into grad school and all that stuff.. I find out that I actually didn't graduate. There was a problem with my course selection. When I figured out what classes that I needed to take, I had to have a "related area" for my degree which means I needed 12 credits in one field outside of mathematics. So I chose psychology thinking that would relate to teaching. So I took Intro to Psychology, Behavioral Psychology, Learning and Motivation Psychology and Educational Psychology. I got a letter from Pitt saying that Educational Psychology was not a "psychology" course. It was an "education"

course and it wasn't going to count towards psychology. So they were revoking my acceptance to grad school. They said, you didn't graduate. You'll have to go back for another semester and complete your bachelor's degree. So, then I had a meeting with the dean to prove that it was a psychology course. I had to show a syllabus, show the papers I wrote to prove that I actually did graduate. Who do I ask for help with that?

You know, my Mom saw the letter but didn't know how to help me. I thought, what do I do now? I was going to have to put my life on hold and accept that I was one of those people that didn't graduate in four years. You know, the typical person, like, it took me longer than four years because of the class wasn't offered or whatever. But I never had a problem with that. I had mapped my schedule out for two years. I knew some classes only ran every three semesters. It was really frustrating, feeling like I did all of the research, that I did everything I could, but then they kind of took that away from me. They said that if it was a "psychology" course, it would be called Psychology of Education, not Educational Psychology. I said, so I'm not graduating based on semantics? So then I went back with a course description from another school called The Psychology of Education which was the same course as Educational Psychology and then they said "okay, you're good".

4.2.1.4 Post-College Outcomes

I think that because of me not knowing, I'm more conscientious of other kids not knowing. Not knowing what to do next. I have a conversation with some kids about going to go to college and they look at me like I have three heads. College was never a thought in their mind.

Post-College Implications of Low SES

To me, wanting better than my parents had means that I didn't want to live pay check to pay check. I didn't want to sit around and talk about all these things that I really want to do but never could. I didn't want to see the struggle of, "I'm in a job because it's all I can do, and I really don't like it." I didn't want a job, I wanted a career. I think my parents had "jobs". I think my step dad, my dad and my mom had "jobs". Like, that's what they did. It wasn't what they wanted to do. It was just what they did. I wanted a career in something I wanted to do. I wanted better than them in that I wanted to have something that I enjoyed. I wanted to have something that could provide me the life that I wanted. Thinking about it now, teaching probably wasn't the most lucrative money supplying job that I could have, but a teacher made twice as much as parents made. So even though it's less then what other people are thinking about, it's still double of what I was considering was money.

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I'm thinking of specific kids that I know their parents didn't go to college and I know their parents don't have any desires or reasons why they want them to go to college. I have two kids in my head right now that I know their parents have specifically said to them, college isn't everything. You can do other things besides go to college. Its kids that are on the border line ability. Can they do college? Can they do something beyond high school? And just knowing that their parents don't know either. So I push that envelope even if it makes a parent mad. Sometimes I'm advising against what they're telling their own kid. I still want to create that option in their mind that "this is something I can explore".

I think sometimes it's appropriate that a kid doesn't go to college. I believe that sometimes we force kids to go to college or make them feel that that's their only venue for success. And then they usually end up being one year college students that end up $20,000 in debt. And then end up right where they would have been if they didn't go to go to college.

But, I just feel like you should let students see the options. College is an option. Some may know what they want to do. I want to do this technical training. I want to be an apprentice for the boiler makers. They have a plan for what they're going to do after high school. The kid that I think is really bright and could do much more than that. I would sit them down and say, listen, you know there are other things. Have you considered other options? Or is that the only option you're considering?

I want to teach students to struggle with support. I think that kids who aren't automatically thinking of going to college. Kids that may be on the fence. They have a choice. Where do I go? What do I do? I think you let them see how it is and how it could be and let them struggle over it, but provide them support. I think as far as teaching specific lessons or topics to kids about college, I think it comes more out of your personality than in your teaching. I think it's important to talk to kids about your journey or your struggle or what you did. I think whenever I tell them scary stories about professors not being willing to meet with you and tests making up 100% of your grade and all that. It's my way of preparing kids that don't have those conversations at home. Some teachers have those conversations with kids because they have the experience and know that is what kids need to know. I think I do it because some kids might not know that that's what's going to happen. That college can take on this shape and form. I want to let them know that these are things that they need to know. These are things that they will be responsible for. I don't know if you can teach that. I think it's just being a role model and a confidant. It's part of teaching. How do I become a resource for my students outside of my content area? You know, someone that they would trust and be around every day and often times more than any of their parents.

I wanted to be a teacher. I don't regret being a teacher. But I think, those were the people in my life that went to college, teachers. So anyone else around me in my life I wouldn't know what they do. I mean I don't think I knew what an engineer was until I was in college and talked to people who were studying engineering.

I have kids who come back from college and bring me their undergraduate catalogs. They ask me, what classes should I take? And is not always just a first-generation college kid. I help them figure out the things that I needed help with, but didn't know who to turn to. I understand that there are some kids out there that don't even know what to ask. I think it's just understanding that they exist and not just being oblivious to it.

Besides ability, it's also the amount of drive that's going to get a student there. It can't just be something that you feel you're entitled to because your parents were there. I think a kid whose parents were very successful cannot be successful based on how their drive is. They need to have their own determination. I also think that someone's whose parents weren't very successful can be successful. I don't think that they're correlated. I don't think it's a line in the sand, like a sentence, that predetermines this is the way it's going to be.

4.2.2   Bethany

The earliest of all interviews, Bethany is conditioned to get up before the sun and was not deterred from having a conversation about her life at 6:30am. This 30 year old, white female is no stranger to long days and hard work. Coming from a family with a dairy farm in Southwestern Pennsylvania, Bethany makes efficient use of her time to accomplish work at every turn. Even as we talked there were students streaming into her classroom before school in hopes of sneaking a few minutes of private instruction from her. "Bonjour, Mademoiselle. Can you come back a bit later?"

Bethany is a happy person and shares that warmth with the people around her. Her brilliant smile pairs well with her elegant demeanor. Teaching a World Language to secondary students may come as a challenge to some, but from Bethany it seems to be more of pleasant responsibility. Both of her parents wanted her to have a better life and felt that insisting on a

college education would support that. Her quest for a college degree was "not an option." She accepted that decree with ease - pressing on to attain her bachelor's degree and immediately complete a master's degree before beginning her teaching career.

4.2.2.1 Pre-College Process

> There was no real choice. It was "you're going to college."

> My mom went to college, but she didn't finish. Mom graduated high school and got a job, but started going to Pitt for nursing and. She went for two and half years. At that point, my grandmother wanted to go back to school for nursing. I think it was a double kind of thing… where she wanted to go back and my mom didn't really like touching dead bodies all that much. She couldn't do the body rack and the toe tag thing. It was like… well, either my mom went back, or my grandmother went and my mom stopped going. It was one of those weird situations, so mom stopped going and grandma went. My grandmother then graduated from college.

> My dad went to a technical and career school while in high school. He was in auto mechanics and he got a job right out of high school. He worked there for 25 years until he went to his current job.

> When I was in high school, I went to cheerleading practice. Believe it or not, I was a cheerleader. Then I came home and would do my chores, run the sweeper and then would sit down and do my work. That's just what you did. You got your work done. You had to get your work done before you had fun. It was important because you only got one free education. That's kind of my famous saying now. You only get to do it once, so don't screw it up. You just have to do it.

Low SES Implications Within High School

> I wouldn't consider myself in that category, not to be snotty, but we were always okay. I mean my dad had a good job. My mom had a good job. My mom actually started working a part time second job to pay for me to go to college. I only have like half of my grad school loans left. I pay a $100 a month in school loans. I'm a little spoiled. They were hard working so that... their theory was... they would work harder so that I could focus on my studies and didn't have to get a job during college. I babysat here and there. I worked in the summer for my own money. I'm pretty sure they paid for my car insurance until I got married, kind of thing, you know, only child syndrome… (laughs) .

I'm an only child. I have the best parents in the entire world. I know every kid probably says that but I really think I do. I currently live a mile away from them, if that says anything to you. I didn't go far. They were always very supportive. Education was always very important. I would come home from elementary school and do my homework first and everything else after. Like, school is first and if you don't get your homework done you don't do anything else. And then going through high school I was always pretty successful, I would say. They always encouraged me. Wherever you want to go, whatever you want to do.

I don't know how I figured out the application process. Guidance, I guess. I remember filling out the FASFA and doing all that stuff sitting at home. Sitting at the dining room table with my mom and dad. Like, alright, what do I have to put in here? What is this? They helped me through it.

I don't think my classmates influenced my choices. I have a very wide variety of friends. Which sounds weird, but they are all different kinds of people. Some went to college. Some didn't. Some went in some capacity. I sometimes don't follow the beaten path. Like, I don't really care what you're doing. This is what I'm doing.

I have an older cousin by nine years and a younger cousin by about seven years. My older cousin went to ICM School of Business for two years. Finished her associate's degree and then went to Robert Morris and got her bachelor's. My younger cousin went to the Mercy School of Nursing and did the two year program and is an RN currently. I don't know if college was an option for them. It wasn't an option for me. None of their parents went to college either in any capacity. My mom was the only one who went in some capacity.

4.2.2.2 Transition to College

I went to Pitt. That's where my grandma went. That's where my mom went. My grandmother's father also went there, so I have decent heritage at Pitt. I thought, it's close. I'm an only child. I don't know if I want to leave home. You know the country where I live.

I think people thought, well, you're pretty smart and you're good in these math and science courses and pharmacists have a good living and don't take home work and make good money. This sounds good. I think this is a couple of people thinking for me and making it sound good to me. Probably my parents and a guidance counselor. You know how high school seniors think. Like, okay.

They kind of planted the pharmacy idea in my head. And I thought, oh, that's a good idea. I'm good in science and math. I don't really like it all that much but I can do it! Oh my God, I hated it. Oh, it was terrible.

Effects of Low SES on College Degree Attainment

I remember my husband's uncle once said. He owns a trucking company. Very successful. More money than my husband and I will ever make. And we both make decent money. We do this thing at Christmas where we say what we're thankful for and what we hope the next year. When both of his kids were going to college he said, I hope for a better and easier life for my kids so they don't have to use their body as much and kill themselves working hard to be successful. They can use their mind and not break themselves down as much. I feel that's why my parents pushed me so hard so that I wouldn't have to work as hard as they did. I always had a good life. I never wanted for anything, but I think that's why I was pushed to do it. Because they worked this hard for me, I'm not going to slack off and not do well. I need to put everything into this. I don't know if multi-generation students would feel that same push and drive. They might think, well, they got through, so I'll get through.

4.2.2.3 Persistence During College

So, I stayed at home. I went to Pitt, started in pharmacy, and despised it. I kept saying, oh, I miss French, I love French, I wish I could take a French course, French, French, French. And I'm like, oh my God, Biology. I hate this! This is terrible! And I was that kid that had nothing ever lower than a B, ever, even in the hardest classes. So when I got a C- in biology as a freshman. That did not go over well with me. And my mom and dad both said, if you're not happy, change. This is torture to you. Why would you keep something that you know you don't like now, let alone you're not even in the school of pharmacy yet?

Ugh! I got a C-... a C minus! It's even worse! I remember thinking that I don't want to be a quitter. I don't want to change. I thought, people are going to think I'm a quitter! Just change for God's sake. So, I went and took the French placement test and being the good French nerd that I am, placed into my junior year after not having French for six months. So, I'm like, ha-ha, okay!

I had a 3.98 gpa and graduated summa cum laude from college. I worked hard, did well, and got the good grades. I don't know how I could have worked through college. I think my studies might have suffered.

Effects of Social Capital

The light went on! So, I started in French. It's going to sound nerdy but it like felt like home. You know when you're doing something that's right for you. It just... it

felt right. I loved it and kept going. I didn't go to France in high school because I was too afraid to fly. I still don't like to fly. I mean I do it, obviously, but it's not my favorite thing in the world. But it was a requirement for one of the certificates I was doing in college, so I had to go then. I went in the summer with a group from Pitt. We had a great time and, nerdily enough, that was the point at which I realized I wanted to do the same thing that my professor was doing and take kids there someday and have them experience this awesome culture and use the language in this thing they studied and it was really cool.

After I graduated college, my parents were like, okay, you're going to grad school now. I was planning on it, but my parents said, you're going to grad school because if you don't go now, you'll never go back. Which, I can see that. I got married relatively young at 24. I had Carson when I was 26 and a half, 27, something like that. So I can see that it's slightly impossible now. I mean I wouldn't want to take that time away from him when I'm already at work. So, I applied to the MAT program… got accepted… loved it… got through the year. I was hired here immediately after and I've been here since.

Let's see... I got married July 7th, 2007... so that means I moved out July 7th, 2007...

4.2.2.4 Post-College Outcomes

On the last trip I did to France, a student... we were literally, literally on the tour bus from the airport driving to our hotel. She was like, France really **is** real. Say what? Do you think I was lying to you? It was cool that I got to experience that.

We've had the "we're very proud of you" conversation. They said, we worked hard for you to get here and you worked hard for you to get here. For example, when I was a semi-finalist for teacher of the year last year, it was really cool because they were on cloud nine and telling everyone. I'm kind of the opposite and I'm like, shut up. Stop it. We don't have to yell this from the mountain top.

My grandfather, you know I lost both grandfathers last year, but the one I lost in February, we were incredible close. His mother passed away when he was 13. He had to drop out of school at grade 8 to stay home and take care of his brother and sister while his dad worked. He grew up just fine and was successful and had three kids and worked hard. So to tell him was extra special. He was in a nursing home on his death bed. I will always have the memory of him saying, I'm so proud of you. I never even got to finish high school. Your dad went to high school and is successful and works. Makes very good money. But look at you. Look at all you've done!

I feel like I had a lot of help growing up. There was someone always there for me, so I feel the need to do the same. I have a girl now who has a really sucky home life. She comes to me every day. She tells me these terrible stories of home that literally leave me in tears. I just don't understand how someone can do that to their child. I want to help her through it. I think I had someone and she doesn't. She can rely on me to be there for her. I can do that. I'm here. I can't take her places, but can buy her jeans at Christmas, because you don't have any. Or I can give her a Giant Eagle gift card because she doesn't have food at home. That was never a thought for me growing up. There was always food and clothes. I got a car when I turned 16. It might not have been a new car, but it was still mine. And there was enough money to go to France. I can't take her to France, but I can help her in other ways.

I share my experiences with the kids in a lot of ways. One example is Derrick. He has a full ride to Allegheny. Smart, great kid. I get these lengthy emails from Derrick about how much he hates Allegheny and how he, maybe I shouldn't divulge this much, but, he emailed me most recently and said he got to school last weekend, he comes home every weekend, and when he got back he sat in the car for an hour and a half and cried, because he does not like it there that much. I've talked to his mom. She's actually been here and talked to me. Like, oh my God, what do I do? He knows that there's no other option. I've told him, what are you going to do otherwise? You know that you have to go in this day and age. He's not a trade worker. That's not something that would be good for him. He's very academically-minded. So, we've had that discussion a lot that there's no other option. You need to figure out what the problem is and overcome it. If it means another school and losing all of the money, which seems insane to me, then that's what it means, but you have to do it. There's no other option.

Interventions for Social Capital Deficiency

I hate the Plan Test. Because when the kids get it back... I'll never forget this... like, four years ago a girl said, my profession's farmer! And someone said, you dummy. She's got cows. They have a farm. I looked at her and said, okay, so where does your food come from? That apple that you're eating, where did it come from? I'm pretty sure that you don't have and apple tree in your backyard, because they don't look that good from an apple tree. She was kind of shocked. It happens every year after the Plan Test. My profession is a mechanic! And I say, can you fix your car? No, you can't fix your car. Someone has to be able to. I think this comes into play because my husband is a mechanic and my dad's a mechanic.

I always say that my husband and I are very different people. In fact, I said to him not long ago, how the heck did we ever get together, because we are polar

opposites. He'll be like, you have two degrees and you can't do this. And I'll be like, you have a degree, I mean he went to college, and you can't do this. It's the same thing. Everybody's good in something different.

I don't think these kids get it. Sometimes they think that college is the only way, even if that's not what they're good at. There have to be people in the world who are good at other things or the world won't work. I have that conversation with kids all the time. [Husband has an associate's degree from University of Northwestern, Ohio. Bethany doesn't make a big out of the difference in college ranks… bachelors, associates, two years and dropping out. In fact she never said "dropped out" but rather "left college."]

Maybe it's the French socialist mindset of everyone working together to make the world work. But, it comes out every year in some way, shape, or form. It's my soapbox, I guess. Everybody has to do something. I can't wire houses, but somebody has to.

I have a student who is in my AP class right now. He chose to go to college very recently. But for a long time he was thinking about going to trade school. He was thinking that those were very viable professions and you still make money. He said that once in class and the rest of the kids were like, what do you mean? You can't do that! I said, why can't he? Why can't he do whatever he wants? If this is what he wants to do then somebody has to do it. I think you have to do what makes you happy in addition to what's going to help you survive for the rest of your life. Sure, staying home with my son would absolutely make me happy, but can we live the same life that we've lived now? Probably not. So, I think it has to be a good combination.

It depends on who you talk to... (laughter). My husband thinks my son should have a choice as to what he does. He feels that he should be able to the same thing that he did. If he wants to do a trade school, fine. For me, I don't know if it's the mom thing or what, but, I look at my son and the weird things that he can do already. Everyone thinks that their child is the best and the smartest and I get that. I try not to be that mom. But he could identify and produce every single letter of the alphabet at the age of two. He can count in French and English to fifteen. I can tell that he will be more academically minded than my husband and I think that if that's the case then he probably should do college. I think it will be the same as it was with my parents. This is what you need to do, if you can do it, you should do it. I can see if he's a good mix of my husband and I, there's no reason that he couldn't do something like electrical engineering. I'm not saying that I'm picking his path right now, but I mentally can think... alright, if you're academically good do something that applies to both sides of the fence. Or, heck, do French! He can do whatever he wants... unless it's Spanish... (laughter).

Teaching is very gratifying… even though high school students barely ever say thank you. I actually teach a preschool French class. I started in the summer. It is

a different world. The one girl comes in and sits on my lap and she gives me a kiss on the cheek. Now, her mom's there. At first I was like, oh my God this is illegal you need to get off my lap, and then I realized that the parents are there and this is preschool and this is how they act. I have a preschooler. So, high schoolers are not the same way.

The other day a student came in and said, I was in Nordstrom's and heard some people speaking French and I understood them. That's kind of cool. I thought, I helped you do that. Or when they come in and tell me that they got accepted to college and thank me for their letter of recommendation. I say, it wasn't my letter it was you. That's pretty cool. It's fulfilling in a weird way.

[What do kids need that you can give them?]

Stability. Somebody to rely on in some way. Just somebody that is there for them. You don't have to be the strongest French student. Half of the kids who came into the room this morning are not my kids this year. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing, but they know that when they leave me and go on to level three that they can come back and talk to me. They can come back and ask for help or just let me know that they miss me. I'm always here for them, even if it's at 6 o'clock in the morning... (laughter)

I give them a sort of friendship. For example, there was a girl who came and observed my class in December who was here during my first year of teaching. I typically teach kids for three years, which creates a bond. It's a constant in your life. She came back after teaching in inner city Philadelphia because she wanted to see how a suburban school works form the other side. She said she knew she could come and observe me. She knew that I wouldn't mind her coming into my classroom.

Go to work every day. I know that's something that you and I feel very strongly about. I feel that's something that's lacking. I don't know if it's a first-generation thing. You don't take days off. I don't take days off. I took my son's birthday off. I think that stems from my dad. He worked at a Ford dealership for 25 years. If he didn't go to work, he didn't get paid. Now he works as a foreman for a school bus garage and has sick days and vacation days just like us.

Be self-sufficient… Independent... Ask questions.

4.2.3   Charles

Although he had never seen my interview prompts, Charles' ease in answering lead me to believe

that he has often thought of his role in the lives of his students - both as a social studies teacher

and as a life mentor. Charles, a 30 year old, white male, arrived promptly for his interview at the end of the school day, still wearing a crisp oxford shirt and tie. His promptness and attire was definitely foreshadowing of his forthcoming disclosure of high professional standards, strong work ethic, and importance of setting a good example for students. He worked hard to get where he is at in life and doesn't want anyone to think he hasn't earned his way.

He was mentally prepared for the interview. From the initial casual conversation to the substantive discourse to the informal after-recording dialogue, the discussion flowed easily. Even after a long day of teaching, Charles stayed late to complete the interview - not completing a task is just not an option for Charles. He and I have had several impromptu conversations about the importance of education and teachers as influential factors in student development. The interview seems to have been a capstone to those prior conversations and was as important to Charles as it was for me.

4.2.3.1 Pre-College Process

> My dad is a carpenter. Self-employed. Very independent. I don't want to say to his detriment, but, almost to his detriment. My mom has been a food service worker her entire life. She started out basically as a line server at Allegheny College and she's now, I guess like a supervisor, for all intents and purposes. She just kind of worked her way up the ladder within the Allegheny College food service. Neither of which are college educated, obviously.
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> Both have high school diplomas but my dad was like a "D" student, and admittedly so. In fact I never knew that until I was in college that he was a "D" student and that was never really brought up. But they are both phenomenal at what they do in their own rights. My dad is an unbelievable finish carpenter. I have to get pictures of this house that he's working on. He's working on a 12,000 square foot mansion right now in the middle of nowhere, Meadville Pennsylvania, and it's unbelievable, this house that he's doing. And he is "Mr. To-the-T". It has to be perfect. You know, that's where I get all that kind of stuff from. That attention to detail is very important and that having a work ethic is really important. I get that from my dad. The laughing side of me, the enjoyable side of

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me, that's my mom… (laughs). That's where I got all of that stuff. She always found it kind of ridiculous that my dad worked so hard.

My mom has encouraged absolutely everything I've ever done. Everything! When dad said "do not play football in eighth grade", mom drove me to practice. When I was looking for a job and I wasn't sure of the job that I wanted to do, mom was the one who ended up encouraging me. Dad was wary. He didn't think I would focus on it. He didn't think I was serious about it and has really never thought I've been actually serious about anything… (laughs). Which, you know, continues.

Going into high school I had no aspirations of college. My goal was to become a police officer or maybe get involved with the law in some way. I didn't know how, but I wanted to do that, so I researched it. So I researched being a police officer and decided that that was something that I did not want to do.

Low SES Implications Within High School

My dad didn't want me to go to college and get into a situation that I couldn't dig my way out of and then be massively in debt and just screw my future up. So that was his big misgiving.

I had a paper route when I was 12. I was working on the golf course and getting the golf course fined by child services for having an under aged employee. I was working at McDonalds by the time I was 16. I was also working part time with my dad and I was doing all of that stuff.

Acquisition of Social Capital

Academic structure at home was seen as, there's the kitchen table, You sit down and you do your work. I don't remember my parents ever helping me past 5th grade with a math problem. My dad does math all day. Geometry was very easy for me. Algebra? I'm a miserable failure. Three times… (laughter). I don't remember them every helping me with it. It was kind of like, hey, you struggle through it. You do it on your own because we don't really know what's going on.

I can't remember who the guidance counselor was that sat down with me. Those poor thankless souls… (laughter). They're great people. I could never do that. Ya, I definitely remember a guidance counselor sat down and explained all that stuff to me. And then had me fill out like a billion and a half scholarship forms. Which I ended up getting three. It was definitely my junior year, I think the end of my junior year they had time slots that you could sign up if you wanted college advice. So I took one of them.

In my junior year of high school I had a history class with a guy who was not only my head football coach, but is also my life mentor, my teaching inspiration, all that kind of stuff. He's a phenomenal guy. He also happens to be the dad of one of

my best friends. He was just a really engaging teacher and found really unique ways to present lessons. He used to teach World War I using rap. Like, he used to rap it! Which was really cool to me and especially because we always bought him Wu Tang t-shirts and all this kind of craziness.

That was where I really began to get inspired. I didn't every really think that I had any talent for the academic world or thought that I could keep up with it until I was in his class. I took U.S. History II with him, which wasn't an AP course at the time. And I just smashed it! I did a great job and he said, hey you know, if you want, you can take the AP course. Well I'm not really considering college credits. "You probably should." And so I said Okay, I'll take it. So I signed on and took AP Euro and knocked the class out of the park and ended up doing okay. I think I got a 2 or a 3 on the AP test. I didn't get the credits but I got just a point underneath what you needed to get the credit for it. So whatever that is, I ended up getting it and was like, well, you know, maybe I can do this stuff, because I didn't even really study and I walked in and almost got college credit for taking this test. Okay, so that was real easy, so, here we go, we're going to try college.

4.2.3.2 Transition to College

I had applied to a number of schools in the Fall of my senior year and was really looking at that as the fall back plan.... College, college wasn't going to be the goal. I applied to Edinboro and Clarion. I got into both of those and I was like, I don't know if I want to go to Edinboro or Clarion. They didn't really seem attractive to me. Penn State, Behrend, didn't seem attractive to me because it was Erie. And Pitt, that's the "big city" so that's where I chose. I used it as an escape. I was so unsure of it, going into college, that I tried to sign up for the Air Force a couple of weeks before I left.

I end up, my first year, witnessing a murder the first two weeks of school, just outside of the local pizza shop. I call my mom and tell her about that and she said, well, we'll get you in Edinboro tomorrow. No big deal. I'll go up and I'll get the papers signed right now. I said no, I think I should stick it out, I think I should try it here, I think I should, you know, do all this stuff. I ended up going through that first year of school. Somehow stumbling through.

My dad has made me work construction with him every summer from the time I was 15 to the time I was 21. So, I'd go home and I would do just manual labor. I was doing manual labor with my dad all summer long. Ah, tense, to say the least. He has different ideas than I do. I am a teacher, he is not. He is an order giver. He's a dictator. And he doesn't like to take the time to explain anything. Um, I didn't do well with that and when I would explain to him, you're not doing anything to teach me this, that would turn into an even bigger argument. So I decided, well man, I don't know what I'm going to do here. I don't know if I can go back to school. I don't know if I can get the grades. I don't know what's going to end up happening. So I end up trying to apply for the Air Force again. And they

again told me that you are woefully overweight. You still can't go. Which was sad to me because this is 2002 at the time. 9-11 had just occurred. 9-11 occurred in September of my freshman year of college. Right after, my grandma dies and all that kind of stuff. Yeah, so, it was a pretty crazy time. I went back home, I just tried to get back into the Air Force, they said no, again and I realized, I've got two options. I could work construction with my dad for the rest of my life or I can go back to college and give it an honest try.

Effects of Low SES on College Degree Attainment

I tried to sign up for the Air Force and they told me I had to drop, like 50 pounds before I could go in. This is going to turn into like a sob story here. This gets really nasty. So I couldn't get in. We're now down to about five days before I move into college and my grandma dies. My grandma raised me. We were one of those classic, you know, working class families. Ah, you know, my grandparents really helped my parents afford to take care of me and she ends up dying. Now I'm not only leaving for college, but I'm now leaving my family. And my mom was just through the roof. She was so supportive of me to go to school. I was just a bad period of time.

4.2.3.3 Persistence During College

I end up going back to Pitt and it was like everything had changed. I moved out of the dorms and into an apartment building. I started using the library to study. If for nothing more than just going and sitting there and reading. I found a place that I could be comfortable with academically and I found a rhythm. I found that if I wrote my papers a certain way... by hand... take all the notes... go back through... write the first draft by hand... read through... cross out... do all that kind of stuff... by hand... then I could start typing. It was like this really maddening process and I've have an entire table to myself in the library just scattered with books and papers and all that kind of stuff. I began to realize that I could actually do this stuff.

In history class one day my professor did the story of wet rice cultivation, or a question of wet rice cultivation, which is just a lesson on Vietnam. Basically, he started it off with a couple of pictures of just rice fields… rice patties. What do you know about rice patties? He started going after people that he knew were targets in the class. He pointed to me and he says, you're the hillbilly from the sticks… What do you know about farming rice? I said, I don't know a thing about farming rice. He then went into this huge diatribe… If you don't know anything about rice, then how can you teach about the battle for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people? You got tanks rolling through their fields and destroying their crops. How can you teach about this if you don't understand rice? I was like, whoa, okay, hold on, this guy is great! I just bought into everything he had to say and was totally hooked from then on. Yeah, that was pretty much it. I decided right there that this is what I want to do.

I ended my first year of college with a 2.9, I think. I thought that was really good, because I guess, it's like a C average or whatever, and I was like, C average, worked in high school, it will work here! And, then I started comparing, literally, my grades with my friends and they were like, that's not very good, man. You should probably pick that up if you plan on staying here. That was when I realized I really had some choices to make. That was at the end of my freshman year and I went home to work with my dad for the summer.

So I decided I would give it a second shot and I had a conversation with my mom. And that was kind of the conversation, you know, give it a second try. If it doesn't work, we'll find something else for you.

I was undeclared my first year and a half. I declared my history major in my second semester of my sophomore year with the intent at that time of going to law school. I then decided if I'm going to do this I'm going to go all the way. And so I was really throwing this idea around. So that was pretty much the idea. I'm gonna go to law school. And I started looking around and everybody's going to law school. And I didn't want to go to law school. And I also had a conversation with a kid that I played football with's dad whose a big time attorney in Meadville at the time. I said, hey, I think I'm going to make the switch to law school after I finish Pitt. Do you have any suggestions for me? Places to look at? Anything like that? He says, I've got a suggestion for you. Look at this house. So he just told me to look at his house. So, I'm standing there and I was like, oh, it's a great house. And he's like, look at those cars. Those are great. Aren't they? And he's like, you've been to the lake house, right? I was like, oh, yeah, the lake house is great. He has a house on Conneaut Lake as well. He said, I got a family in there, too. I said, they're great, too. I was like, yeah, AJ is one of my best friends, you know, absolutely. Now it's getting a little weird. And he says, I don't see them at all. I have all this stuff because I don't have a family, because I don't ever get to see them. He's like, do you ever want to have a family? He's like, do you want to have a relationship with people or do you want things? Because you can have a lot of nice things as a lawyer, or you can look elsewhere and you can have a lot of the other stuff. And I said, oh, hmm, okay, well I got some stuff to think about then. So, it was pretty much right then and there when he threw out that law was dead as a door nail.

I went back home and I talked to Coach Hempfield and I said, hey, what am I going to do now? What do you think of your career? What do think of the choices that you made? So, I went back to him as a sophomore in college and said hey, what do you think of this? I'm lifting with his son all the time and we were very close and I said I'm really at a crossroads with things that I want to do. I think I might want to go to law school, but I'm not sure. I don't know what else to do with a history degree. I thought, I like teaching, I liked school, but I didn't focus on it that much. What are your thoughts on it? And at the time he said, you know, its a

grind. He's like, it's provided me with everything that I need in life and its come a long way. If you're going to do it, you have to be prepared for it to be far more grueling than it seems, if you want to do it right. So, I said, well doing things right, that's what I do. Yeah, I'll put the time and effort in. Come on, I'm my dad's son, you know, the work ethic was there. So I figured right then and there I'll give that a try. Which is interesting, because I was kind of on the fence as well.

4.2.3.4 Post-College Outcomes

The Fall before you schedule classes for the Spring semester of your senior year I went to the dean of the communications school and said, hey, I'm sorry. I really love communications but I think my opportunity will better with teaching. He was disappointed. He seemed really distraught and explained to me that you aren't like the other people that you see in the classes here. You have a gift for this. You will make money… you will find a job… you'll be okay. A lot of these people over here, they won't. I said, yeah, I understand that, but I don't know if it's really what I want to do… and I walked out of it. I kick myself a lot for that because I probably could be a pretty good announcer I think, don't you? I think I could. I ended up getting enrolled in my last semester as a senior at Pitt.

I did my mentorship with Tom Garrison. Three weeks after I was finished with my student teaching, I was called by Mr. Barron. He said, are you busy next fall? I said, not that I know of. "Would you like a job?" Excellent, yes! (laughs)

I have a sister who is two years younger than me… This will probably be interesting for you. My sister is the more academically motivated of the two of us. She was not pushed into work like I was though. She was kind of allowed to just do her own thing… in almost like a Jekyll and Hyde kind of way… where as I was the kid that was forced to work from the time I was 12. So, the work ethic was in me. My sister never really had any work ethic. She ended up going to the University of Finley to complete their pre-vet program. She wanted to be a veterinarian. She ended up not do well enough, or her credits got screwed up. Something happened and she couldn't get into vet school. That become a non-possibility, so then she ended up at Ohio State for graduate in the school of public health. She couldn't find any jobs in public health. She has since gone back to Columbus County Community College. Now she just received her vet tech certificate and is back here. She has her B.S. in veterinary science, she has her master's in public health and now a veterinary certificate. So she has a mountain of debt and is working a job where she has absolutely no way to pay for it.

Post-College Implications of Low SES

I had two majors that I was going for at the time. My history major was just kind of starting out and I had another major in communications that I had 18 or 24 credits in. And I was working with this major all the way through and I kept my history major too. I kept both majors all the way up until my senior year and then

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it got to a point where I had to make a decision and I ended up realizing that if I wanted to finish as a communications major I was going to have to stay another year in school. I had begun talking to people about Sherwood. I had begun talking with people about student teaching. I'd begun to realize that the job market was going to be open, that there was going to be a window of opportunity for a very short period of time. If I miss that window of opportunity, I might not get a job and I better jump on it.

Interventions for Social Capital Deficiency

My dad won't let me take the easy way. And when I decided I was going to get my teaching certificate, he was pretty bummed out and pretty upset. And basically told me, don't screw it up. If you're gonna do it, do it. I found myself in one of those conversations that you accidentally find yourself having with your dad, sitting in a bar that you didn't really wanna have. We had one of those conversations and he basically told me, don't screw it up. So, I've taken that with me and it fueled the fire. I decided that I didn't want to be the lazy people that I saw in front of me. And if I was going to be in front of a classroom, that is a performance venue, and I am going to perform. So, energy. The first thing that I try to show them is energy. That you have to be energetic with everything that you are doing. There are days that you are going to have a down day, but I model what I want them to be. If I want them to be talking to me all day long, well, I have to be talkative, too. And I have to have that upbeat energy.

I don't appreciate anything being handed to me ever. In fact, if something is handed to me, I will pretty much shun it from then on. That even comes with grades. I never wanted a grade handed to me. Are you kidding me? That's a paycheck down the road. I don't want a paycheck handed to me. I want to earn it. That's one of the things that I try to instill in the kids... definitely. Hey, this is your career. No, you being up late last night, too long, or whatever, doesn't cut it as an excuse. You need to actually do the work. There's the work ethic, again. Instilling a sense of work ethic in the kids. That's the biggest thing that I try to do. I try to show them that work can be fun. You can enjoy yourself with this stuff. It doesn't have to be all tortuous. Although I think sometimes I make it torturous on myself. But, I try to also show that to them.

Especially with the football players and especially with kids who are seniors and juniors, I know that they have lives outside of here and balance is important. Going back to my senior year of football... I was playing football. I was working 30 hours a week at McDonalds and I was still carrying a high B average in school. I mean, where was I doing my homework? Where was I sleeping? (laughter) I've learned to operate without much sleep. Balance. That's one of things that I try to push for the football players. If any one area of your life is causing you too much headache, or you feel like you can't do it, you've got to rebalance things, figure it back out, and take the time to do that. That's one of the things with Freshmen Seminar. That's where I get into a lot of this stuff. Scheduling time for yourself

and figuring all of that kind of stuff out and realizing that you do need a balance of work and life and school to have it make any sense.

Educationally I try to show kids that I do the work as much as possible, too. If I assign the kids an assignment, I try to make sure that they see that I have done it. As we are going over it, I'll say, ya, I was screwed up on this, too. Ya, I didn't like that question, either. Relating that to them so they see that I'm putting in the same amount of work as them. When we do Freshmen Seminar stuff, when we're showing study skills, I'm showing them my process of how I've gone through and processed everything and learned. That's really the biggest thing that I think I bring to the kids that have no real academic structure in their lives, the realization that I've gone through it, too. We can make it through this together. You just have to meet me half way. I'll give you the information. Just meet me half way for it.

I try to show students how they can take advantage of the situation best by themselves. They can personally do it without their parents help. I really feel like a lot of our kids just aren't getting parent help at home. There's the table… shut your mouth. Read your books. You know, it's not good. So I try to model that behavior.

In the Freshmen seminar class, that's one of the things that we go into. Maybe not the college application process, but at least sitting down and researching colleges. That's the big thing that we do. Researching programs, researching degrees, researching all that kind of stuff. Ah, that school that I really like doesn't even have my program. It's got a cool name, but that doesn't mean anything. And then we also go into the standards that you have to set for yourself in high school, the gpa that's required, all that kind of stuff. We go into all those requirements in Freshmen Seminar. I had nothing like that! Absolutely nothing. So, they are better set up than I was, I think.

I hate road blocks. I feel like it's the work ethic that I'm trying to show them that lets them kick the road blocks down. And that you can always find an answer to something. If nobody will give you the answer, just keep looking. Find another source. Just find the answer. I think that's what I teach them more than anything else. You can find an answer to anything. I think it just has to be modeling. That's what it comes down to. If we're trying to show these kids the way to get to places, I have to model it. It has to be me.

4.2.4   Ethan

Ethan is a 33 year old, white male whose typical greeting is "good morning, sir." Serving also as

a First Lieutenant in the Army Reserves, his daily job as an art teacher is somewhat of an

enigma. Ethan is a blend of adherence to standard operating procedures and creative free-thinking. He was brought up in a supportive family, yet one that did not fully appreciate the cultural aspects of art history. In truth, neither did Ethan until later in life. His appreciation for not only the arts, but also education, stem initially from capital transmitted within his high school gifted education classes. The Army was more of a means to an end, providing the financial support to achieve his desired degree.

Arriving for his interview in his usual punctual fashion, we sat down midday and got right to talking. This journey is grounded in practicality. From a young age, Ethan found ways to obtain a job and establish stability. Despite his desire to explore the world and encourage creativity among others, Ethan values financial security and maintains a strong religious core. Ethan is a highly-structured free-thinker. At times these concepts play against each other, but in the end they have created a well-balanced man.

4.2.4.1 Pre-College Process

> I was blessed to have both parents at home. I have a brother. I grew up in New Castle. It's a depreciated town to say the least. I grew up in one of the suburb schools in New Castle. I went to Union Area which was a really small school. It only had sixty in my senior class.

> It was established by my parents resolve, that education was important. It was prioritized in my life. So that I knew pursuing education past the high school level would be important. Mainly because it was derived by parental involvement. I can't speak enough for how much they pushed... helped me to become driven.

Low SES Implications Within High School

> Originally, my dad worked at Sharon Steel and after getting laid off, immediately started a business with his brother. They own a heating and cooling company that's rather successful now. My mom was a histologist in the lab at St. Francis Hospital. She had training from the hospital that was there. I guess it would be considered an associate's degree or something, a technician degree.

I began to research what means it would take for me to go to college. Where I should go? How I should go about this? And then I began to look at the financial matters on how to pursue that as well. I knew that would be something I had to consider.

Acquisition of Social Capital

I was really into sports. I played a lot of sports. I'll never forget the day that I wasn't allowed to play basketball my senior year because of a bad grade. A bad grade to my dad was a "D" that I got on a test, not on a progress report or anything. So he didn't allow me to play in a basketball game on a Tuesday. I was the captain of the team and I wasn't allowed to play. And that wasn't from the coach or from the school, that was from my dad. So I stood on the sideline. So that was a perfect example of how important grades were. We had a prioritized line. It was God, family, grades and that's where it went and from there.

I was blessed again in high school that I was in our Gifted program. In that I was given an apprenticeship near the end my senior year where I worked with the Hoyt Art Institute in New Castle. So I did a job shadowing. I knew what I wanted to do and I knew what it would take. So I started checking into the measures it would take to become that person. I wanted to be an art teacher. I wanted go that route. I looked at architecture and just an artist and art education and I really liked history. I really had a passion for art so I wanted to figure where I could do that the best. I realized that education is also where I wanted to go.

My gifted teacher helped a lot. I tried to talk to her. I said what about art history? I really have a propensity for both history and art and she said that would be great. It's nice that you have that but it usually leads to you being a docent or you're going to continue in college and then teach college. With just art history you're rather limited. With education, you could be a practicing professional who could continue producing arts. You could study art history continually and enable others people to study it and you have a persona for education, but you enjoy talking to people and working with people. So between her and my art teacher, they helped mold me or at least guide me in that path.

4.2.4.2 Transition to College

My parents never made it an absolute that you had to go to college. They're always in pursuit of wisdom.

My brother... he went to college for a semester and then he worked for the heating/cooling company with my dad. So it wasn't his thing and he's never looked down on or he's not a disappointment, he's still you know, intelligent. His wisdom is ascertained in a different manner.

I couldn't believe how many different facets of art that I didn't know about. And just the... the open mindedness... that came through the beginning phases of college and the appreciation from going there immediately after being in the Army. It changes your perspective of being a freshman in college when you've done your short stint.

When I was eighteen I was a very literal thinker, very literal. I lived in a small town environment, Western Pennsyl-tucky. You drew what you saw, what was in front of you. You were recording history through a visual language and that was pretty much still very literal. My art teacher did her best in high school to break me from that. I try to model that as much as I can now because I remember that being one of my largest hurdles. In college, that expansiveness, that existential nature, the breaking of the product and learning more about the process helps a lot in changing your mind of art as a culture, art as a theory and art as a practice. So you begin to leave that art is just a visual language of a literal statement to art as a concept and that gives you a much broader picture. And I think only through experience and continuous experiences can you grow into that.

Effects of Low SES on College Degree Attainment

I knew the affordability of college would always be a struggle. So, I went to the Army first to help me pay for college. After I graduated from Union High School, I was accepted at Edinboro and then went to the Army after my first semester. I realized the costs, how they would accrue, and went to the Army. I did a split option training so I finished basic training, came back to Edinboro and went away again the next summer to finish my Advanced Infantry Training which was in my field of study, which in turn, extended my period of training a lot more than most.

I got accepted at Syracuse. I was accepted at Bowling Green and a couple of different colleges that I looked into for art. But Edinboro was financially where I could go, where I could afford. I looked into state schools where my financial restrictions put me that were the best for art, and especially artist majors in my field.

4.2.4.3 Persistence During College

It took me five years to finish my bachelor's degree. I could have finished it quicker, but I ended up getting two minors, one in history and one in art history. So since the military helped pay for it, I didn't have to extend myself financially. I thought the opportunity to have an education was profound so I took advantage of it.

My parents encouraged me to follow my dreams. I mean, being an art teacher in a blue collar family is not really the pinnacle of success. But they're proud of what I've done. I pursued it in a different manner anyway.

In my family, it's still... you earn your respect through calluses on your hands. That's still there. I still have that in me. My diligence and my work ethic are still established. But I also have the other side. And I think I have to say that's from my mother who encouraged that. She's very artistically oriented, mainly in her crafts and in some of the facets that she did.

We were taught to be well-rounded and to have multiple differences. Nothing that you can gather from education, whether it be in a cultural kind of environment like art or English or music, is a bad thing to acquire. All these things make you a more well-rounded person.

4.2.4.4 Post-College Outcomes

After graduating from college in 2003, I began looking for a job. I put my application in a ton of different schools in the Beaver County area... in the Allegheny area... Lawrence County area. I wasn't limited or afraid of moving. It just happened to be that Western Pennsylvania at that time was hiring a significant amount of teachers. That kind of timing helped a lot. I had a pretty good resume. I was both a practicing professional and producing art as well as teaching and assembling and managing art. I'd worked at different camps. I'd worked as a Therapeutic Staff Support and I worked as a wrap around teacher with special needs kids. With the military background, I had a plethora of different opportunities to build a resume. I was pretty confident when I went out searching and I was hired right away in the summer at Rochester Elementary School in Beaver County

I began working initially in middle school but the elementary school teacher that was there left immediately, so I ended up taking K through 8. I taught there for two years, then came to Sherwood. I kept my options open at Rochester. I mean I enjoyed it very much but I always kept my options open. You never know how things will change in the world. I came to Sherwood in the following year from 2005 until now. I have ten years of teaching now.

Post-College Implications of Low SES

I think that you can't put a value on education, no matter how you get it. How you get it is a very individualized method. Certain students need to continue and go on

to college, but not every student. Those students who want to go to college by all means should have the opportunity. Some need to figure it out and grow up at different times and realize that maybe college isn't for them. Maybe an apprenticeship with a carpenter is more for them, but they need to figure it out and understand and find that for themselves.

I don't feel as a teacher that I should dictate when you need to grow up or when you need to realize yourself. That introspective nature is something that's inside of every person. They need to find that in time. Now you can be guided and shaped and molded, but sometimes you may not realize that right away. Even if you got a little bit of college and you go back to being a carpenter, so be it. That education is boundless. You'll be a more well-rounded person and a higher educated person, someone who can benefit from those aspects that you learned in college and put them into your life, not just your job. As for college being the only way, it's definitely not the only way in my mind. I think wisdom is a lot different than education. I value wisdom far beyond just education. I think that things you learn from life and learn from your own, your own desire to continue your learning and continue your growth, are much higher esteemed to me than the paper on the wall that says you graduated from college.

I looked into a master's degree. If it is in the future it will be mandated for me. The Army, I believe, mandates your master's degree if you get to be a Colonel. At that point I'll consider it. I love education. I really value it. I would love to get a masters degree. Time and money wouldn't really line it up at this time in my life.

Interventions for Social Capital Deficiency

[So what do you bring to your classroom? What do you bring to kids?]

I think in a couple different aspects, one of them would be a diverse experience. I lived in Australia for a while because of rugby. I took a short stint away from the Army and I lived in Australia. So I have that under my belt, travel. I went the first time to Australia in the summer because I just got out of the Army 2004. I had fulfilled my first six years and I wanted a break. So I moved to Australia for the entire summer and then came back and taught again at Rochester and then in between, the next year would be right before I came to Sherwood, I lived there again. So there was twice that I lived my entire summers in Australia. It gave me an opportunity for experience in that facet.

I think some of the things that I bring to the class room are how to creatively structure your time management skills. How to continue being creative without losing some of your structure. It's a delicate balance in the arts where you still produce in a timely manner while still being creative and allowing the freedom of expression to come through. It's always a struggle. I mean, do you want to restrain each other with time and stuff? It doesn't allow the creative process to

flow, but you still have a certain due date and you have to have and meet those. Those are things that I try and bring. Also, I believe that I'm educationally practical for these students, especially having a creative understanding but also an academic understanding where I'm not only an art teacher. I feel that I'm diverse enough in other aspects of education. I'm pretty well spoken. I can write well. The only thing I struggle with is math. History... I can tie a lot of the arts and a lot of creative aspects and creative avenues into a lot of social studies in different ways. I really believe that I'm creative enough to help students use the creative process and to embolden them to believe that the creative process can be used not only in art class, but problem solving in all avenues of education and outside of education.

Do I want my son to pursue education? Absolutely. Do I want him to get the best of what the world has to offer? Yes. It's that's through college, so be it. How he goes about and where his path lies is definitely going to be on his shoulders. I don't want to push him into college. If he so chooses to go to college, then he can. I just want him to be an honorable person. I want him to be a steadfast, honorable person with integrity and diligence in the ability to appreciate what he has and where he's come from. And he can make those sound decisions when he gets to that point. As long as his moral and ethical character is just. That's what I desire the most. That's probably what every parent desires.

[In your opinion, how do you think multi-generation college graduates would answer the same question, about encouraging children to go to college?]

More than likely, from a outside perspective, I would believe that they would say that college was almost a mandate. If they were open-minded, most of them would understand though that in this day and age, as we see our students continue through the cycle and push or be pushed into college, that not everyone belongs in college. Not everyone needs college to be successful and not everyone should go immediately to college. Maybe even if they are second or third generation. Maybe they'd want to track their kids to college. But the means of education doesn't have to have the word college attached to it for me. I think that second generation would though.

I want students to remember that the world is a dynamic place. We're in a constant state of change and the word "college" at this moment may not have the same exact meaning in the future. So as things change, I'm not sure that the path that is now will be the same path that will be traveled by the time my son gets to that age. Maybe there will be a mandate that you have to serve two years in some kind of public service and that you'll have free college and then everybody will continue in that educational factor.

4.2.5 Deborah

With teaching as a second career, Deborah is the oldest of participants in my study. A 60 year old, white female, she has a motherly demeanor about her. It's as though she carries as many worries in her mind as she carries papers in her strolling briefcase. Her quickened pace throughout the building suggests that her time is filled with important matters and she needs to address them without squander. Although hurried in nature, teaching social studies to her students is a top priority and she gives much attention to their overall success.

The longest transcription of my narrative inquiries, Deborah offered a journey of perseverance spanning over her entire lifetime. Born into a family living in subsidized housing, her education began there. Life-long struggles ensued due to early entry into kindergarten at 4 years old and carried over through the 19 years from her high school graduation to attainment of a bachelor's degree when she was 36 years old. Her story was from her memory as well as that of her family's. Deborah had already talked this through with her family and several anecdotes were suggested by them to tell me in our upcoming conversation. A self-described "underdog", her personal story is shared not only with me, but also with her students to be held as an example of how determination can pay off even in the face of life's many struggles.

4.2.5.1 Pre-College Process

> My parents were both blue collar workers. My mother, she really didn't graduate high school. I guess she took the GED and raised a family, because that's what you did. When she did go back to work, she went back when I was in second grade. She worked as a secretary, office manager kind of thing. My father was an iron worker and remained an iron worker for a lot of years. In the interim, he got on the city fire department. So, he was a city fireman. In his off days, he would do construction.

I had an older brother and an older sister. My sister went from high school to work. My brother went from high school to the military. I was the baby.

In first grade, something happened to me that was very unfair. And that was that I was four years old, wasn't going to be five years old until December 31st, and my mother sent me to first grade without kindergarten. So, I struggled my entire education trying to keep up with all of the rest of the kids. The nuns used to smack my hands with rulers and say, you'll never be anything, so marry a good man, and you'll have a good life. So much for my self-esteem. They should see me now. That was the start of my education.

I took the business track because, when I graduated high school in 1970, girls did one of three things; they became a secretary, they became a nurse or they became a teacher. And that was it. So I took the business track thinking that I would go right into the work world. I would take all my classes in the morning so I could leave my afternoons free for the gymnasium. That was okay with the counselors at that time.

Low SES Implications Within High School

I didn't come from a very wealthy family. I came from actually a pretty poor family. I was raised in subsidized housing. So, it was different. We lived in subsidized housing until I was in ninth grade. In ninth grade my parents bought their first home.

Acquisition of Social Capital

I was too young to be starting first grade. I didn't have the background that I should have had, being expected to know and do the things I did. I do remember second grade. I had a wonderful nun who helped me a lot. And my third grade teacher helped me a lot. But after that, I was on my own.

4.2.5.2 Transition to College

In high school, I have to say this, I was not a stellar student. I was a "C" student in the City of Pittsburgh South Hills High School, graduating class of 1970. That makes me 60 years old. I was a gymnast and I dove on the diving team, and I played softball. I was an athlete.

My brother went to CCAC after he came out of the military and took some classes. I believe he got an associate's degree. He does well for himself. He's project manager. He worked his tail off to get to where he got. He did a lot of drafting and so forth. But, what we chose was okay. Like being in the first grade at 4 years old, my parents I guess, didn't take a big interest in our education. Education was important, but it wasn't. "C's" were okay. You were doing well if

you came home with a "C". You were passing your classes. I did go to summer school and believe it or not, for social studies.

I did homework, but my classes were easier classes. I didn't take the academic challenging classes. I didn't take a foreign language. I didn't take algebra. I took business math. I took choir. I took the things that were not as challenging so that I could spend more time doing what I loved doing. I took shorthand. I took typing. I took book keeping and accounting. I took business math, and earth space science. I didn't take biology. I didn't take things that were challenging. I didn't think I needed to. The academic track was for those who wanted to go to college.

When I graduated high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do... absolutely none. We had this group of friends that we went on vacation with. They were my mother's friends from when she was in elementary school. She has known them since eighth grade and she calls them her "club girls". They are the dearest friends. Many of us graduated the same year or someone graduated the year before or someone graduated a year after. We went to the beach in Ocean City Maryland. It was August of 1970 and everyone was talking about who was going to what school. Susan was going to Penn State and Leo was going to West Virginia and Nancy was going to IUP. "What are you doing Deborah?" It was August, "I don't know, I don't know."

I was close to my father and I could talk to him. He was a very understanding person. Very intelligent! He's self-taught in a lot of ways. He was a hard worker as far as physically, but my father was also an artist. You should see some of his work. It is absolutely phenomenal. He died in 1974 and his work. He was so far ahead of his time. He took classes at Carnegie Mellon. There was education there for what you loved. I said to Daddy, I said, "I want to go to college. I want to be a gym teacher."

I never took the SATs. I didn't need to take the SATs. I was going into the business world. I never took the SATs, so what college was going to have me? Even in 1970 you needed to take those tests to get into college. So, he said to me, "I have an idea. Let's go to a private college and see what they'll say." So we went to Robert Morris and we interviewed. My father and I went down. I don't know where my mom was. My father and I went down and they interviewed me and they said, you have to understand, we're going to accept you, we're going to accept you as a student who is going to prepare for college, nothing except your English class will count towards your graduation. And I said, okay. So I had to take Spanish, and I had to take Algebra and I had to take all these kinds of classes that I should have taken in high school, but didn't. Hindsight is 20-20. You look back and say, why didn't I?

When I was working in East Liberty, we had a lot of truant kids. This is where my education comes in. We had a lot of truant students. Kids who would walk in the front door and out the back door from Arsenal Middle School. Not even a high

school, Arsenal Middle School. They'd walk in the front and out the back. The poor moms would come in and they'd say, what am I gonna do? He won't listen to me. She won't listen to me. They don't go to school. I can't pay these fines. We had created a work release program where these kids would actually come in and work in the courts with me. We started this work program where they would work off their fines. Of course, who was in charge of them but the secretary! Right? So, I started working with all of these kids and I thought to myself, I need to keep these criminals off the street in a different way. I can do this. It was wonderful. We would do their homework first and I'd sit down and I would explain things. No, I was not a teacher. I had no background in education at that point in time at all. But I would sit down and get them started on their homework. I would ask them questions and help them. I thought I'm keep these criminals off the street in a different way. I'm going to teach them. I decided to stay with my Legal Studies degree because I was so close to the end at this point. Since I did not take any electives, all my pre-requisites for the school of education were my electives.

Effects of Low SES on College Degree Attainment

I worked for the health department for a couple of years. A placement opened up in the courts, so I applied for the position. It was an administrative assistant to the magistrate in Bellevue. I got the job! I was so proud of myself. Now, I didn't have a car. I couldn't afford one. I was paying for my college myself and trying not to take loans. That's part of the reason why it was one course at a time as well, because of finances.

I was taking two busses every day to get from my house in Mt. Washington to get to Bellevue. I took two buses every day and sometimes, and this is the honest to goodness truth, sometimes I didn't know how I was going to eat. I'm serious, I did not know, I mean because every penny I had was going to my education. I had to buy books myself. I had to do it all myself. I knew I couldn't come out with loans. That's where my sister came into play. She used to come over and look in my refrigerator. She had keys to the apartment. She lived in Mt. Washington as well. She was my go between incidentally. From when I got divorced, I stayed with her for two months until I could get myself on my feet. She would come over and she'd look at my fridge and she'd just slip some stuff in the refrigerator.

In 1979, I was in a very serious automobile accident. At that point, my poor sister was taken away from me. My sister was killed. I moved back into, my mother owns a duplex, and I moved into her second floor apartment. I was a mess for a while. From that accident, from them paying my hospital bills, since I had hospitalization, and they paid hospital back to me, I was able to buy a car. So I was able to get to East Liberty without taking a bus, yeah!

4.2.5.3 Persistence During College

The first year I went to Robert Morris I was very frustrated, very frustrated. Because I didn't know how to study. The classes I took in high school... you looked in the book, you found the answer and that was it. There was no critical thinking. There was no kind of, um, debate. It was yes or no, true or false and a, b, c, d. It wasn't challenging. So, when I got into these challenging courses, and math is not my forte, I really had problems.

I got a summer job working in the county treasurer's office. I started dating this fellow and I thought I was making the most money in the whole wide world. I made $257.00 a month. $257.00 in a month. I thought I was rich.

Because of my frustrations, I decided not to go back to school. I decided to stay at work. So I thought, I was trained for this. This is what I went to school for. I was in the business world. And I'm not going to lie about this, it was a political position. My uncle was a board chairman and he got this job for me. This is how things were in those days. Well, I mean they still are, but it was more so back then. I worked that summer and then I was hired full time. So I didn't go back to school.

And after three years, the county treasurer's office had a political cut back and guess who was one of the first ones to go? I thought I was wonderful, but... In the meantime I had gotten married. I was married at 19. I did not have a driver's license, because this man didn't think that women needed a driver's licenses. He was a pretty controlling person, if you can imagine that, me! I was married for three and a half years and that marriage fell apart. But in the meantime my father passed away. My support system. My dad was only 49 when he died.

So, anyhow, after daddy died, after I lost my job, and after I decided that I shouldn't be married, I decided to go back to school. The first thing I did was get a driver's license. I was out on my own, so I supported myself at that point in time. I got a job with the county health department. I went back to work full time, I had to, I was in my own apartment. My father, my support system, was gone. So, I was there to support myself. I was back into the work force and started back to school. One class every semester. Right back to Robert Morris. Because it was my security blanket. It was my security school. I mean I knew I could get back in there. I started, then my classes started counting. I would take my one, little one class at a time. It took me over 18 years to get my four year degree.

My ideas of becoming a physical education teacher had changed. I transferred from Robert Morris into the night school at Pitt. I just felt that they had more to offer me. At that point in time, I took all of my core classes first. That was important for me to do. I took all of the things needed to have before I could declare a major. Then when I got into my major, I took all of those core classes

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first. I took no electives. I did that because I felt like I needed to have that background. I needed an academic background.

I found a real interest in the court system... in our legal system... our justice system. I now know what I want to do. I want to go to law school. I thought, I want to be a lawyer. I want to keep all of those criminals off the street. I worked for him for four years and then a different position opened up in the courts. It was another magisterial district office.

By this time it was 1980 when I found my love and I knew that's what I wanted to do. I declared a major. My major was legal studies. I was in Pitt's evening program and it was for people that went to school only at night or on Saturdays. I still just did one class a semester.

My husband is a patient, patient man. When we were in our apartment, he would be in the living room. He'd put the television on or be doing this and doing that. I would close the bedroom door and I would go in there and study and do my work. There were times when there were things we had to do with other couples and I had to send him by himself because I had papers due or I had this to do, or I had that to do.

I worked a full time job, all the way through, worked a full time job until I had Emily. I had Emily in 1983 and I went back to work for two months and I knew I needed to be home. But I continued to go to school. So from 1983 to 1989... You're going to laugh at this one. With my son Paul I was so pregnant I couldn't sit in the chairs forward, I had to sit sideways in the chairs. I actually finished in August of '89. That was my last class. I didn't walk until June of '90. But I finished in August of '89 and he was born September 3rd. Yeah, I would have to sit sideways in the chairs. Paul is the one who reminded me to tell you about that. He said because that's a hoot!

Effects of Social Capital

One of the things I did, which was a mistake, but my parents didn't say anything about it, was I joined a sorority. It was a mistake, but it wasn't a mistake. Because it was a service sorority and so we did a lot of good things. It took time away from what I needed to be doing. At that time, no one could tell me that. I was eighteen and I could conquer the world. Now, I can look back and can say that. Then, I would not have said that. Actually, I was getting tutored from a young man. He wasn't a young man, but an older fellow, eight years older than I. I was eighteen so he was twenty six. He was tutoring me in algebra and math. And the next thing you know we started dating. School ended for that year and I did okay. I got "C's". I didn't burn them up, but I didn't fail. I wasn't on academic probation or anything like that. It was still very frustrating.

I got married for a second time to my husband of 30 years. And I met him actually at the magistrate's office collecting his bad checks for him. He had a college education and is a very, very intelligent man. He is just a wonderful person. He really is. Very encouraging. Came from a very educated family. His mother was a school teacher way back in the day when women didn't get a college education. His sister was a school teacher and he had another school teacher sister, but that was not what influenced me. What influenced me were those kids. They were just the best. They would call me on the phone, Ms. Deborah, Ms. Deborah, I got an "A" on my test today! Look what you did for me! I said, no no, I didn't do that, you did that for you. I would always encourage them that way. Let them know that they were the ones who did that, that they were the ones who got those grades, that things were turning around for them. They would call me from the principal's office. It was wonderful. So satisfying, it really was. Especially kids who were struggling financially. A lot of them came from single parent families. They were really the kids who needed support. That's what turned me around and turned me to education. It was the kids who I saw and I felt, yeah I guess I made a difference but, I just was helping them stay off the streets.

But I'm going to be perfectly honest with you, I still didn't know how to study right at that point in my life. Because, I don't mean to say this in disrespect to any school but the University of Pittsburgh was so huge, so huge, that you went and you did it. One of the big things I can say that the University of Pittsburgh did for me was sent me, my first year there, they sent me to the writing workshop. I mean because I was a very poor writer. When you don't read, you don't write. The less you write, the worse you write. The first thing they did was send me to the writing workshop. That really, really helped me.

4.2.5.4 Post-College Outcomes

So I thought that I would sub for a year and get my foot in the door somewhere. That year lasted seven. Substituting day to day, long term, permanent, whatever I could find.

During those seven years of subbing, I went back for my master's degree. I chose Duquesne University. I was a nervous wreck deciding how to do it because I thought, Duquesne, I'd never get into Duquesne. But my husband encouraged me. He said you don't know if you can get into Duquesne unless you try. I hadn't taken the GREs. I hadn't taken anything. Duquesne University being again, a private school, accepted me. They accepted me on my interview. Which blows me out of the water. My master's degree took me less than a year and a half.

And I didn't work every day, you know with the kids I couldn't. In my masters degree I got one "B". Everything else was an "A". It was the only time I've ever gotten "As" ever. I finally learned how to study. That's what Duquesne taught me.

It taught me how to study. It was like, I was almost 40 years old and it was like, wow! The light bulb went on. It took me that long.

Post-College Implications of Low SES

I taught for a year in Catholic school. I couldn't afford to stay there. Paul was just two months old when I got hired. I replaced a teacher that actually hit a kid. And she was a nun! Imagine such a thing. My husband was self-employed so we needed benefits. So I had the benefits and I would have to get, they paid for mine but not my family's. So I would have to get money from my husband to go to work because I didn't make enough money. Gave my mom $20.00 a week to watch my two children. I decided that I could not afford to stay there.

I worked my butt off to get everything I got. No one did it for me. No one. My mom loaned me a few dollars and I paid her back so that I could get that masters program as fast as I could.

[You must be very proud to have been able to buy an apartment in New York City for your kids?]

Well they did put a little bit of money into it, not a whole lot. My husband and I did not touch our retirement money, because we know better than that. We took basically our savings and put 30% down on an apartment. A two bedroom apartment in New York goes for $500,000 and then it had to be renovated. Our thought is this, and this is a mom and dad thing, they're very safe. They have a door man. They're in an apartment that is one block from Times Square. She walks a block to work one way, he walks two blocks another way. We were paying $2,900.00 a month for rent. Our mortgage is $3,200.00 a month. And after we renovated it, the value went up, way up. It's probably around 750 now. We're excited about it because it gives them a start. They can have this apartment and we know where that money went to and it went to good use. They're very appreciative. We are proud of it. I mean and it's because we care.

Interventions for Social Capital Deficiency

I'm there for the underdogs. When I see kids struggling, I'll sort of take them quietly aside and I'll work with them and I'll say, let me explain this. Let's understand this. What don't you get about this? What can we do? I guess that's me because I was the underdog. I know what if feels like. I was the underdog all my life, educationally. I know what it feels like. I did not get my first "A" until I was in my certificate program. I worked my tail off.

I don't want to say that I leave the kids who are brighter to find things on their own. I think what I try to do with the kids who have a harder time is question them and let them help resolve their own problems. I help them find the answers.

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I think that's really important. They need to know how to do that, because I didn't. It's important.

Now my daughter, I begged her to get a master's degree. I begged her. Mom, I know what I'm doing. She's done well for herself. Emily is a publicist for Broadway shows. Her degree is in musical theater. Again, I tell everybody this that I would never encourage my child to be a musical theater person. I would tell them to go academics. I wanted Emily to become a math teacher. Emily, that's what you need to do, your brilliant in math and your so talented, why, why are you wasting your time? I'm not wasting my time, I'm doing what I love. I said I know you love it Emily, but I knew she didn't quite have the talent that Paul had to put her on Broadway. Although, she graduated from Point Park, I mean and they have a good musical theater program. I said, Em, you know what this life is like? You need to be a teacher. Mom! You think everybody should be a teacher because you're a teacher. I said, it's a great profession and you'll have a wonderful retirement. It's awesome. It's very rewarding. Mom! Don't!

She did four unpaid internships in New York City. Can you imagine that? Four unpaid internships, one of them she was Valerie Harper's personal assistant. Valerie Harper was just diagnosed with brain cancer yesterday. She was her personnel assistant. That was one of her unpaid internships. But she said to me, think of it as graduate school. It doesn't work that way in New York mom. In New York, it's experience. I said, alright Emily. I'm not going to argue with you.

You know what, everybody is not college material, but at least in my core classes, in my government classes, they better be because they're honors kids. And I say, you know, it's okay not to go to college. I have a son that didn't go to college. Which drives me nuts. He went to the school of hard knocks. But, I had to change my thought because of what his profession is.

I take my kids, I'll look at them and I'll tell them, I tell them from day one, you know what, you're in my class, you become my child. Guess what, my kids are in New York, so I have to focus on you. I was never easy on my own two children and I'm not going to be easy on you. If they don't understand something, I'll sit down with them. But I think what I do, I try to bring the best out in all of them.

5.0   CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1   ANALYSIS

According to Pascarella et al. (2004), 34% of students entering 4-year colleges in 1995-96 were first-generation students (p. 249). Acknowledging a greater attrition rate among this subgroup than multi-generational college students rates (Ishitani, 2003), fewer than 34% of those students would have graduated from college in 1999 and currently be in the workforce today, 14 years later. Applying that data to this study, I found a disproportionate number of first-generation college graduates working as teachers within Sherwood High School. My structured survey results indicated that a remarkable 46% of the faculty were first-generation college graduates. Although further investigation is warranted to explain the deviation, this result allowed me to examine my research questions among 32 potential participants at this high school. As well, 41% of the faculty is between years 6 and 15 of their teaching career, which corresponds with the literature review demographics. The literature provides interpretations from data collected in the late 90s and speaks directly to a significant portion of teachers at Sherwood High School, opening up more opportunities for research of first-generation college graduates at this field site.

First-generation college students are disadvantaged by lacking social capital, specifically an understanding of the "culture of higher education and its role in personal development and socioeconomic attainment" (Pascarella et al., 2004, p. 252). All of my research participants expressed this sentiment in their own words:

> Adam: "It was me. I wanted better than what my parents had. I wanted to be able to have the ability to do more. My drive was for me and the rest of my life."

Bethany: "I feel that's why my parents pushed me so hard so that I wouldn't have to work as hard as they did."

Charles: "It was kind of like, hey, you struggle through it, you do it on your own, because we don't really know what's going on."

Deborah: "I struggled my entire education trying to keep up with all of the rest of the kids."

Ethan: "I knew pursuing education past the high school level would be important."

Although I found that these first-generation college graduates did value a college education, I overestimated the significance that they would place on it. The emerging data in this study indicates that first-generation college graduates find educational value equally among life experiences as from a college degree. Adam states, "It doesn't just have to be book smarts. It's not just stuff that happens in the school house. Education is everywhere." I found an unexpected valuing of knowledge from these participants from sources outside of formal education, which in essence devalues a formal college degree. The first-generation college graduates in this study did not endorse a college degree as significantly as I expected. According to Ethan, "As for college being the only way, it's definitely not the only way in my mind. I think wisdom is a lot different than education. I value wisdom far beyond just education." Deborah emphasize the point with, "You know, it's okay not to go to college. I have a son that didn't go to college. He went to the school of hard knocks."
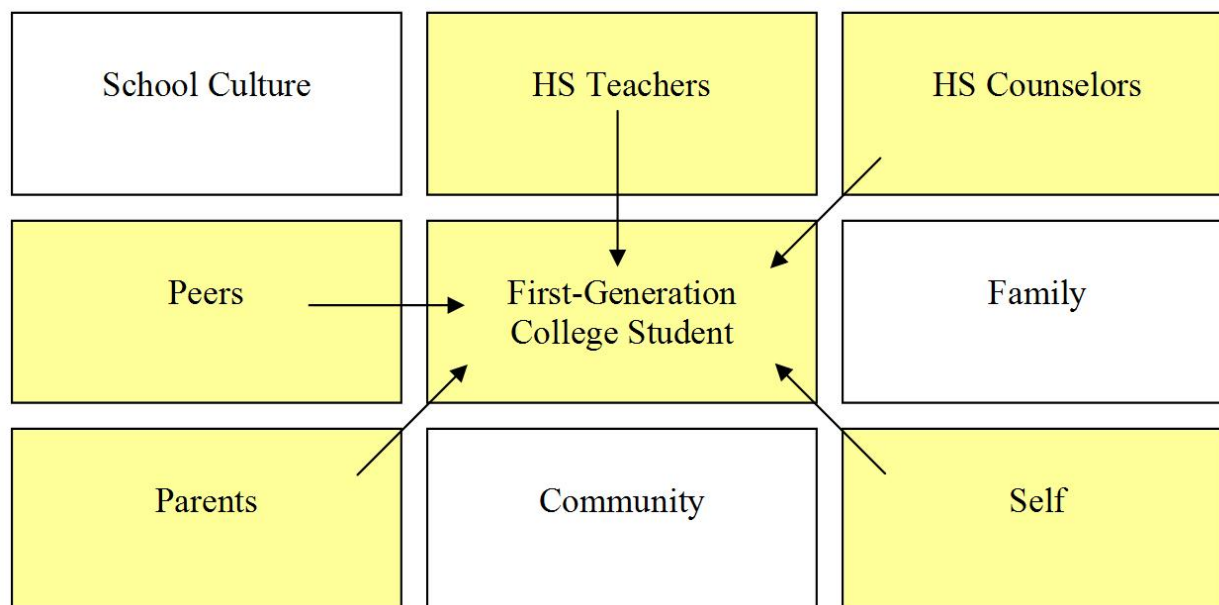
5.2   SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

The literature suggested several sources of social and cultural capital for FGCS (Figure 6 Sources of Social and Cultural Capital). Each source has a unique amount of capacity and influence upon a college bound student. Not only does a source need to have knowledge of the

college process, but also a high level of influence on the student. Although all sources have some degree of influence on FGCS, institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) possess a higher amount of cultural capital pertaining to college degree acquisition (Pascarella et al., 2004). I predicted that those sources would be cited by my participants as being significant in their acquisition of key skills and information needed to support their journey into college.

Although the participants did indicate that institutional agents were significant in helping them make knowledgeable decisions about college, they all expressed a high level of self-advocacy and family-centered motivation. Adams top four cited sources of social capital influences were 1) self, 2) self, 3) mother, and 4) teachers. This combination of internal and external sources reveals a higher complimentary balance of social capital acquisition (Figure 9 Sources of Social Capital Influence) than anticipated. The other participants provided a cross section of sources including parents and school.
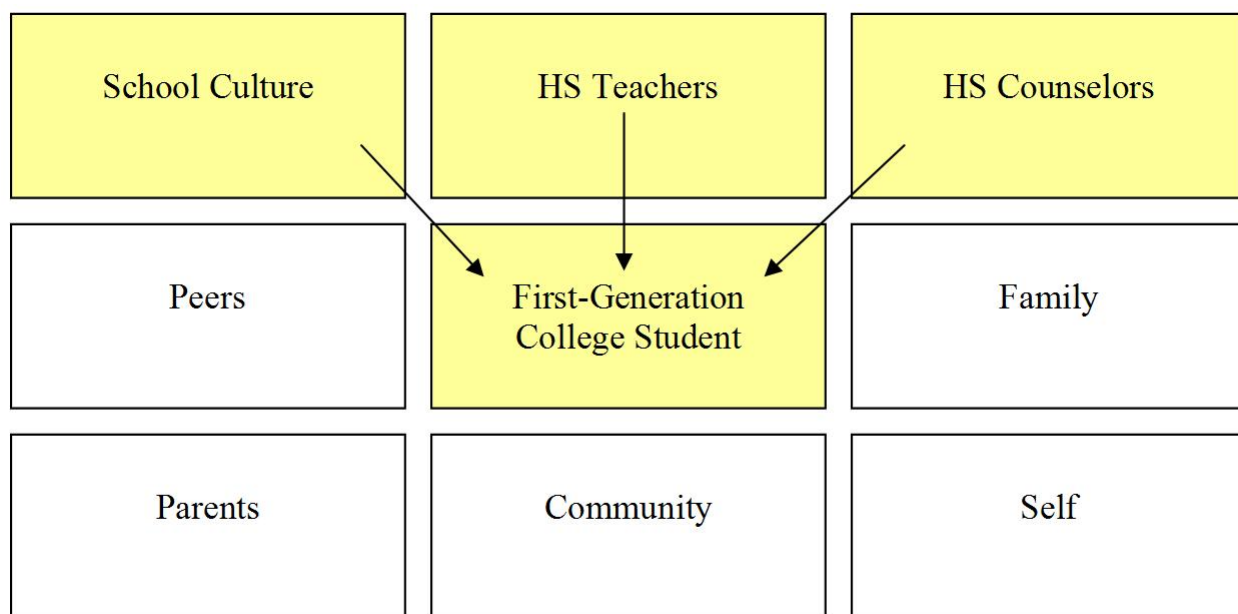
Figure 9 Sources of Social Capital Influence

There does remain a substitutional shift (Figure 5 School-Family Loci of Influence) towards a high amount of school influence towards the acquisition of cultural capital (Figure 10

Sources of Cultural Capital Influence). Although motivation came from personal and family sources, fact-oriented information about the college process came solely from institutional agents. Charles expressed the most detailed documentation of those sources and was even able to recall multiple individual names rather than the generic term *teacher*. This finding is consistent with the research from Horn and Nunez (2000) suggesting that low SES and FGCS have less access to family capital and may need more sources of information about college to come from the school setting (p. 29). They will be more dependent on institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) within the school to assist them with academic planning for college (p. 29).

Figure 10 Sources of Cultural Capital Influence

School Culture	HS Teachers	HS Counselors
Peers	First-Generation College Student	Family
Parents	Community	Self

Initial areas of inquiry, social capital transmission and first-generation college graduates, were defined within the literature review and helped to generate several research questions. The initial research proposal was focused on teachers who experience the phenomenon of being a first-generation college graduate and narrating their experience as a classroom teacher. The central focus of this study was to build a better understanding of this subgroup and determine

areas of expansion or improvement from the emerging data (Mertens, 2010, p. 250). The research questions provided a framework for investigating the concept of educational capacity as it is developed by first-generation college graduate teachers (Figure 11 Educational Capacity Development), the simultaneous transmission of social and cultural capital to their students, and the programmatic response by educational institutions to address the inadequate social capital among low SES students. All five interviews were reviewed for common traits of cultural and social capital acquisition and transmission.

Figure 11 Educational Capacity Development
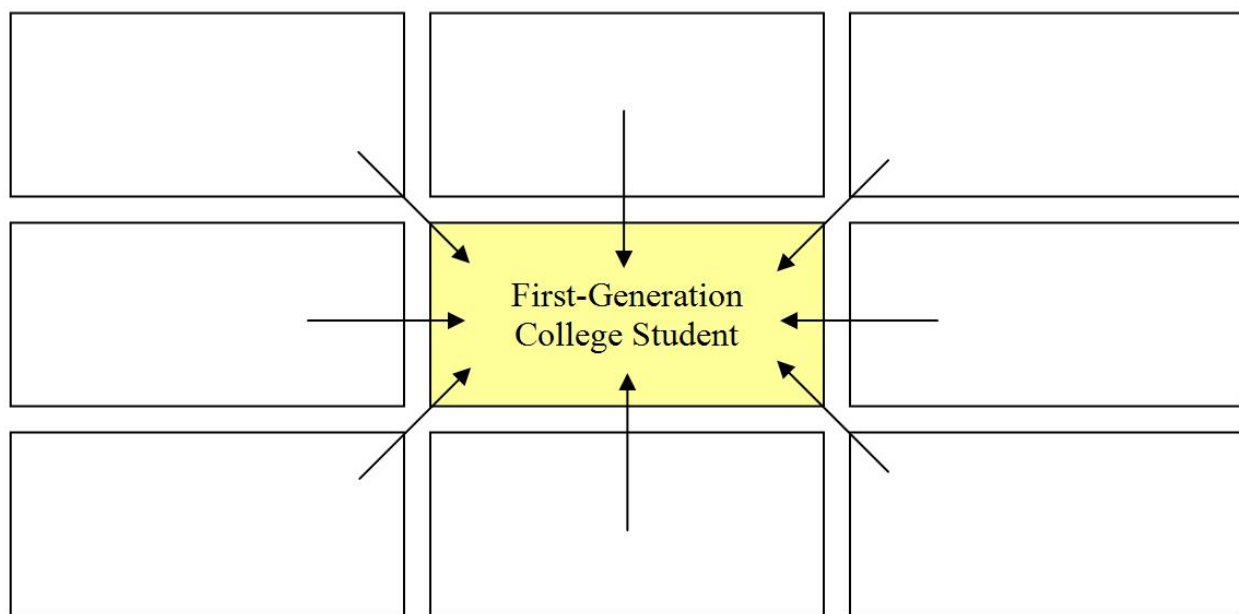
5.3   COMMON TRAITS

Several common traits emerged that give perspective to the phenomena of first-generation college graduate teachers and the social and cultural capital that is transmitted to their students (Table 3 Common Traits Among Narratives). With the literature on first-generation college students in mind, I found the narratives to include descriptions of academic preparedness

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(Chen et al., 2005), educational aspirations (DiPaula, 2010; Pike & Kuh, 2005), mentoring (Erickson et al., 2009), self-efficacy (DiPaula, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Penrose, 2002), self-regulatory behavior (Austin, 2011; Moschetti, 2008; Williams & Hellman, 2004), and tenacity (Grayson, 2011; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lask, 2008).

Research shows that increased networking improves social capital and ultimately improves school attendance (Drewry, 2007). The School-Family Loci of Influence (Figure 3) implies that if one area of influence is inadequate, then compensation must occur in another area to maintain equilibrium. Horn and Nunez (2000) suggest that low SES and FGCS have less access to family social capital and may need more sources of information about college to come from the school setting (p. 29). They will be more dependent on institutional agents (Stanton-Salazar, 1997) within the school to assist them with academic planning for college (p. 29). "Communication with institutional agents and greater variety of agents... were related to higher college GPA for both first-generation and non-first-generation students. These findings are consistent with the literature showing that social capital is linked to academic performance" (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008, p. 29). Adam and Bethany describe a former students coming back for assistance in college planning, much like Charles went back as a sophomore in college to elicit guidance from his social studies teacher. Charles acknowledges, "I really began to get inspired. I didn't every really think that I had any talent for the academic world or thought that I could keep up with it until I was in his class."

These participants described the exchange of cultural and social capital by way of student-teacher relationships as significant to the learning process.

> Adam: "I have kids who come back from college and bring me their undergraduate catalogs. They ask me, what classes should I take?"

Bethany: "I get these lengthy emails from Derrick." "I've talked to his mom. She's actually been here and talked to me."

Charles: "I went back home and I talked to Coach Hempfield." "I went back to him as a sophomore in college and said hey, what do you think of this?"

Deborah: "I'm there for the underdogs. When I see kids struggling, I'll sort of take them quietly aside and I'll work with them."

Ethan: "My gifted teacher helped a lot." "Between her and my art teacher, they helped mold me or at least guide me in that path."

The narratives revealed that these participants had high levels of tenacity and descriptive recall on achieving success through self-regulatory behaviors, but educational aspirations seemed lower than expected. Further, academic value was characterized more by college being a utility for job attainment, rather than simply the acquisition of knowledge. Although all five participants described knowledge in more universal terms that were not exclusive to a college degree, Ethan was the biggest proponent of universal knowledge. "How you get it is a very individualized method. Certain students need to continue and go on to college, but not every student." Ethan continues as he talks about aspirations for his young son, "I don't want to push him into college. If he so chooses to go to college, then he can. I just want him to be an honorable person."

Table 3 Common Traits Among Narratives

	Adam	Bethany	Charles	Deborah	Evan
Background	"My dad works construction, my stepdad works as a baker for a bread company." "Both of their jobs were labor intensive." "My mom was a secretary." "We were definitely low income. My parents having the ability to afford college was a question mark even when I left. It was, we have the money for your first payment. How are we paying for the next payment? Don't worry, we'll figure it out." "I **worked** while I was at school." "To me, wanting better than my parents had means that I **didn't** want to live pay check to pay check."	"My dad went to a technical and career school while in high school. He was in auto mechanics and he got a job right out of high school." "I wouldn't consider myself in that category, not to be snotty, but we were always okay. I mean my dad had a good job. My mom had a good job." "My mom actually started working a part time second job to pay for me to go to college."	"My dad is a carpenter - self-employed." "My mom has been a food service worker her entire life." "I had a paper route when I was 12. I was working on the golf course and getting the golf course fined by child services for having an under aged employee." "I was working at McDonalds by the time I was 16. I was also working part time with my dad "My dad has **made** me work construction with him every summer from the time I was 15."	"She worked as a secretary, office manager kind of thing." "My father was an iron worker." "In the interim, he got on the city fire department." "I came from actually a pretty poor family." "I was raised in subsidized housing."	"My dad worked at Sharon Steel and after getting laid off, immediately started a business with his brother. They own a heating and cooling company." "My mom was a histologist in the lab." "I knew the affordability of college would always be a struggle. So, I went to the Army first to help me pay for college." "Edinboro was financially where I could go, where I could afford."

	Adam	Bethany	Charles	Deborah	Evan
Academic Preparedness (Chen et al., 2005)	"It was when I watched my friends that I realized, hmmmm, they are all applying to schools, some of them are telling me where they're going to school, some of them telling me where they're accepted," "I don't remember things being really confusing until my senior year. And that's where not having people around that had experiential advice made it hard."	"I don't know how I figured out the application process. Guidance, I guess."	"I definitely remember a guidance counselor sat down and explained all that stuff to me." "I ended my first year of college with a 2.9, I think. I thought that was really good, because I guess, it's like a C average or whatever, and I was like, C average, worked in high school, it will work here!"	"I was four years old and my mother sent me to first grade without kindergarten. So, I struggled my entire education trying to keep up with all of the rest of the kids."	"When I was eighteen I was a very literal thinker, very literal. I lived in a small town environment, Western Pennsyl-tucky." "Nothing that you can gather from education, whether it be in a cultural kind of environment like art or English or music, is a bad thing to acquire. All these things make you a more well-rounded person."
Educational Aspirations (DiPaula, 2010; Pike & Kuh, 2005)	"I think sometimes it's appropriate that a kid doesn't go to college." "I believe that sometimes we force kids to go to college or make them feel that that's their only venue for success." "College is a learning institution, an academic place, where you go to learn, where you go to better yourself. It's your land of opportunity."	"Sometimes they think that college is the only way, even if that's not what they're good at." "There have to be people in the world who are good at other things or the world won't work." "Everybody has to do something. I can't wire houses, but somebody has to."	"I realized, I've got two options. I could work construction with my dad for the rest of my life or I can go back to college and give it an honest try."	"You know, it's okay not to go to college. I have a son that didn't go to college. He went to the school of hard knocks. But, I had to change my thought because of what his profession is."	"As for college being the only way, it's definitely not the only way in my mind. I think wisdom is a lot different than education. I value wisdom far beyond just education." "How you get it is a very individualized method. Certain students need to continue and go on to college, but not every student."

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	Adam	Bethany	Charles	Deborah	Evan
Mentoring (Erickson et al., 2009)	"I have kids who come back from college and bring me their undergraduate catalogs. They ask me, what classes should I take?" "It was an assumption that it was all happening. A lot of people assumed that it was all happening. I guess that's part of not having a home structure where that was a normal procedure."	"That's kind of my famous saying now. You only get to do it once, so don't screw it up. You just have to do it." "I get these lengthy emails from Derrick." "I've talked to his mom. She's actually been here and talked to me."	"I went back home and I talked to Coach Hempfield." "I went back to him as a sophomore in college and said hey, what do you think of this?" "It was kind of like, hey, you struggle through it, you do it on your own, because we don't really know what's going on."	"I'm there for the underdogs. When I see kids struggling, I'll sort of take them quietly aside and I'll work with them." "I was the underdog all my life, educationally. I know what it feels like."	"My parents encouraged me to follow my dreams. I mean, being an art teacher in a blue collar family is not really the pinnacle of success. But they're proud of what I've done." "I don't want to push him into college. If he so chooses to go to college, then he can. I just want him to be an honorable person."
Self-efficacy Self-perception Self-esteem (DiPaula, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Penrose, 2002)	"Those were the people in my life that went to college, **teachers**. So anyone else around me in my life I wouldn't know what they do. I mean I don't think I knew what an engineer **was** until I was **in** college and talked to people who were studying engineering." "I wanted to be a teacher so that required college."	"They kind of planted the pharmacy idea in my head. And I thought, oh, that's a good idea…" "There was no real choice. It was, you're going to college."	"Going into high school I had **no** aspirations of college." "I really began to get inspired. I **didn't** every **really** think that I had any talent for the academic world or thought that I could keep up with it until I was in his class."	"The first year I went to Robert Morris I was **very** frustrated, very frustrated. Because I didn't know how to study." "I took the business track thinking that I would go right into the work world." "I said to daddy, I said, I want to go to college. I want to be a gym teacher."	"My gifted teacher helped a lot." "Between her and my art teacher, they helped mold me or at least guide me in that path." "I knew pursuing education past the high school level would be important."

	Adam	Bethany	Charles	Deborah	Evan
Self-advocacy Self-discipline Self-effort Self-motivation Self-regulatory (Moschetti, 2008; Williams & Hellman, 2004)	"It was more or less me coming home and saying Mom I need to do this. We need to do this and get this done." "For me, I was expected to know to do it. As far as my parents, it wasn't that they wouldn't be supportive, but they would be waiting for me to tell them what we needed to do." "I stayed on the phone, did the application online, registered myself for CCAC, went to the registration office at Edinboro, withdrew from school, signed myself out, and once that was all done I called my mom and said you have to come get me." "It was my responsibility. I needed to research what I needed to do."	"I sometimes don't follow the beaten path. Like, I don't really care what you're doing… this is what I'm doing." "Be self-sufficient… Independent... Ask questions." "I came home and would do my chores, run the sweeper and then would sit down and do my work. That's just what you did. You got your work done. You had to get your work done before you had fun." "It was important because you only got one free education. That's kind of my famous saying now. You only get to do it once, so don't screw it up. You just have to do it."	"If any one area of your life is causing you too much headache, or you feel like you can't do it, you've got to rebalance things. Figure it back out and take the time to do that." "I try to show students how they can take advantage of the situation best by themselves. They can personally do it without their parents help." "I moved out of the dorms and into an apartment building. I started using the library to study. If for nothing more than just going and sitting there and reading. I found a place that I could be comfortable with academically and I found a rhythm."	"After daddy died, after I lost my job, and after I decided that I shouldn't be married, I decided to go back to school. The first thing I did was get a driver's license." "I was out on my own, so I supported myself at that point in time." "I went back to work full time, I had to, I was in my own apartment. My father, my support system, was gone. So, I was there to support myself. I was back into the work force and started back to school. One class every semester." "I would close the bedroom door and I would go in there and study and do my work. There were times when there were things we had to do with other couples and I had to send him by himself because I had papers due	"I began to research what means it would take for me to go to college. Where I should go? How I should go about this?" "My parents encouraged me to follow my dreams. I mean, being an art teacher in a blue collar family is not really the pinnacle of success. But they're proud of what I've done. I pursued it in a different manner."

	Adam	Bethany	Charles	Deborah	Evan
Engagement Persistence Resilience Tenacity (Grayson, 2011; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004)	"I remember my dad always said, use your brain not your back because your back is going to wear out much quicker." "I don't know what makes me want to do it or do it well. It's just how I feel that it should be." "It was me. I wanted better than what my parents had. I wanted to be able to have the ability to do more. My drive was for me and the rest of my life." "Besides ability, it's also the amount of drive that's going to get a student there. It can't just be something that you feel you're entitled to because your parents were there."	"I feel that's why my parents pushed me so hard so that I wouldn't have to work as hard as they did." "That's just what you did. You got your work done. You had to get your work done before you had fun." "I had a 3.98 and graduated summa cum laude from college. I worked hard, did well, and got the good grades." "I remember thinking that I don't want to be a quitter. I don't want to change. I thought, people are going to think I'm a quitter!"	"I was the kid that was forced to work from the time I was 12. So, the work ethic was in me." "I decided that I didn't want to be the lazy people that I saw in front of me. And if I was going to be in front of a classroom, that is a performance venue, and I am going to perform." "You can always find an answer to something. If nobody will give you the answer, just keep looking. Find another source."	"I worked a full time job, all the way through, worked a full time job until I had Emily." "With my son Paul I was so pregnant I couldn't sit in the chairs forward, I had to sit sideways in the chairs." "I worked my butt off to get everything I got. No one did it for me. No one." "I would take my one little class at a time. It took me over 18 years to get my four year degree."	"In my family, you earn your respect through calluses on your hands. That's still there. I still have that in me." "My diligence and my work ethic are still established."

5.4   SUMMARY OF THEMES

Pascarella et al. (2004), studied how educational experiences could enhance social capital, both cognitive and psychosocial, and how these experiences helped make up for deficits in social capital among first-generation students (p. 250). If "the college experience itself provides a vehicle for acquiring additional cultural/social capital" (p. 252), then the secondary classroom could be a setting for a student's acquisition of social capital. Prior literature on first-generation college students focused primarily on three general areas: 1) the pre-college process during high school, 2) transition to college during the first year at a post-secondary institution, and 3) persistence and the resultant attrition during college (Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996). This study supports the literature and adds a new post-college perspective from first-generation college graduates. The five teachers in this study provided personal narratives that not only support the prior research, but also adds to the small body of literature on post-college outcomes. A detailed discussion follows that elaborates on their acquisition of social capital and the importance of its transmission to high school students.

A study by Rendon refers to various validating experiences between students and teachers in college that promote educational value (as cited in Terenzini et al., 1996). Each teacher in this study was able to cite specific incidents of social capital transference, typically through some unofficial mentoring capacity. Rendon emphasized the need for teachers to actively make contact with first-generation students to guide them towards acquiring the necessary social capital. As well, persistence was delineated as an important social capital

behavior for first-generation college students that defined their success or attrition in the college world (Terenzini et al., 1996). Among the participants in this study, mentoring and persistence stood out as a key indicators of their success.

The *Early Childhood Longitudinal Study* by the US Department of Education in 2002 provided a rich source of data to explore relationships among socioeconomic status, social capital and student achievement. Bernard (2006) used data from that study to argue that a positive correlation exists between SES and social-emotional characteristics, which ultimately accounted for variance in academic achievement. Four of the five participants in this study indicated that they needed to work while in college to meet the burden of tuition. Each of their families was self-described as low SES and lacking the ability to assist in paying for college. This is consistent with Walpole's (2007) report that 78% of first-generation college students are low SES students as well (p. 35). Terenzini et al. (1996), was clear in describing family characteristics, including a parent's education level, and more specifically their socioeconomic status, that have a significant effect on student persistence and college degree completion. Even with the data stacked against them, all five participants in this study completed a bachelor's degree and three hold a master's degree.

5.4.1   Pre-College Process

Family characteristics, including parent's education level, and more specifically socioeconomic status, are related to student persistence and college degree completion (Terenzini et al., 1996). Adam recalls his father's advice to "use your brain not your back because your back is going to wear out much quicker. My dad works construction, my stepdad works as a baker for a bread company. Both of their jobs were labor intensive." The imagery of manual labor was carried

throughout each narrative giving us constant reinforcement of economic and working class status. Common to all participants were parents rooted in blue collar jobs like construction, carpentry, farming, food service, homemaker, mechanic, and steel worker. Although Bethany describes her family as "always okay," her mom started working a second job to help pay for her to go to college. In contrast, Deborah knew that she didn't come from a wealthy family. "I came from actually a pretty poor family. I was raised in subsidized housing. So, it was different."

Bourdieu (1986) explained that even when low SES students are qualified for admission to college, they often lack the cultural capital necessary to apply (p. 256). Participants articulated their station in life and some of the struggles that resulted. Charles remembered his parents saying, "you do it on your own because we don't really know what's going on."

> Adam: "Everything was new. Turning in forms. Filling out forms. I remember it was always a struggle. Filling out a form meant sitting on a phone on hold with someone for forty-five minutes because you had to call FASFA and you had to figure out where does this number come from, how do we get this number? Things that I wouldn't know of as a 17 year old."

> Charles: My mom has encouraged absolutely everything I've ever done. Everything! My dad didn't want me to go to college and get into a situation that I couldn't dig my way out of and then be massively in debt and just screw my future up.

> Deborah: "My parents were both blue collar workers. My mother, she really didn't graduate high school. I guess she took the GED and raised a family, because that's what you did." "I took the business track because, when I graduated high school in 1970, girls did one of three things; they became a secretary, they became a nurse or they became a teacher."

The MetLife Survey of the American Teachers (2002) revealed a direct correlation between low SES students and school factors such as poor grades, lower self-esteem, lower school satisfaction, lower student-teacher connectedness, lower participation in activities and sports, and higher thoughts of dropping out of high school (p. 191). Adam and Charles were the

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most vocal about the amount of work they had to do along their journey. The money that Adam acquired from working was saved for college, books and helping his family out with expenses. From the time that he was 12 years old, Charles worked multiple jobs. He had a paper route, worked on a golf course, at McDonalds and was also working part time with his dad. "We were one of those classic, you know, working class families." By the time Ethan was in high school, he "began to research what means it would take for me to go to college. Where I should go? How I should go about this? And then I began to look at the financial matters on how to pursue that as well. I knew that would be something I had to consider."

Financial constraints coupled with low academic achievement created a barrier to college access. In spite of those negative findings, Frempong et al. (2012) did find that students who attend schools with positive student-teacher relationship and a high priority on academic achievement were more likely to go to college (p. 30). Unique among the teachers in this study, Deborah took a very long time to complete her bachelor's degree. "I went back to work full time, I had to, I was in my own apartment. My father, my support system, was gone." Throughout her journey she found people along the way who supported her academic quest. "My husband encouraged me. He said you don't know if you can get into [college] unless you try." Ethan's father expressed through his actions how important education was. "I'll never forget the day that I wasn't allowed to play basketball my senior year because of a bad grade. A bad grade to my dad was a "D" that I got on a test. So he didn't allow me to play in a basketball game on a Tuesday. I was the captain of the team and I wasn't allowed to play. And that wasn't from the coach or from the school that was from my dad. So I stood on the sideline." Prioritizing grades over sports was a hard lesson for Ethan, but he values that decision to this day.

5.4.2   Transition to College

Although struggles are felt by most students entering college, this experience may be heightened for FGCS due to the major differences between home and school's academic culture (Penrose, 2002, p. 442). Apprehension was at the forefront of Charles' mind. "I was so unsure of it, going into college, that I tried to sign up for the Air Force a couple of weeks before I left." Planning to go into the workforce straight out of high school, Deborah was academically behind when she got to college. "I had to take Spanish, and I had to take Algebra and I had to take all these kinds of classes that I should have taken in high school, but didn't. Hindsight is 20-20. You look back and say, why didn't I?" Besides that quantity difference, Ethan was able to describe a variation in quality. "I couldn't believe how many different facets of art that I didn't know about. And just the... the open mindedness... that came through the beginning phases of college."

Having avoided the academic track, Deborah didn't take high school courses that were challenging. "I didn't think I needed to. The academic track was for those who wanted to go to college." "I never took the SATs. I didn't need to take the SATs. I was going into the business world." Upon entering college, FGCS have issues like these stacked against them - bringing lower high school grade point averages and lower SAT scores - resulting in increased academic problems and greater attrition rates (Ishitani, 2003). Once in college, they are often hindered with lower self-esteem, lower self-efficacy, lower family income, longer completion time, less family encouragement to attend college, lower social integration. lower post-secondary aspirations, and lower persistence toward degree completion (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004, p. 486). After his freshmen year in college, Charles went back home and tried to get into the Air Force. After they said no, for a second time, he realized that he had two options. "I could work construction with my dad

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for the rest of my life or I can go back to college and give it an honest try." Even in the same family, siblings of non-collegiate parents can travel different paths. His sister "has her B.S. in veterinary science, she has her master's in public health and now a veterinary certificate. So she has a mountain of debt and is working a job where she has absolutely no way to pay for it."

Although Mitchell (2007) reports that half of FGCS start their journey at a community college (p. 29), only one of my participants, Adam, started at a community college. "I don't want to be here. I don't like it here. I want to be at home. I don't want to live on campus. So, I left and started CCAC then transferred to Pitt after two years." Although Bethany went to a larger university, she made it a point to live at home. "I thought, it's close. I'm an only child. I don't know if I want to leave home."

Moschetti (2008) found that FGCS demonstrated increased success through self-effort, self-motivation, or self-discipline (p. 77). "For many first-generation college students, the responsibility for understanding the game of higher education and negotiating its path is one they shoulder primarily on their own" (Lundberg, 2007, p. 8).

> Adam: "It was my responsibility. I needed to research what I needed to do." "It was me. I wanted better than what my parents had even though I knew that they wanted more. I wanted to be able to have the ability to do more. My drive was for me and the rest of my life. I wanted to be successful. I wanted to be able to do things that I had the ability to do. "
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> Bethany: "I sometimes don't follow the beaten path. Like, I don't really care what you're doing… this is what I'm doing." "Be self-sufficient… Independent... Ask questions." "That's just what you did. You got your work done. You had to get your work done before you had fun."
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> Deborah: "I went back to work full time, I had to, I was in my own apartment. My father, my support system, was gone. So, I was there to support myself. I was back into the work force and started back to school. One class every semester."

Low SES students have less financial capital and therefore are more sensitive to college tuition and their need for financial aid. They students tend to focus more on working and earning money and consider the economic returns to their educational attainment (Walpole, 2007, p. 31). Aligned with this finding, Adam expressed that his family was "definitely low income." Even as he left for college, his parents ability to afford the tuition was questionable. They had the money for the first payment, but they were unsure how they would pay for the next. Deborah's degree would take years to complete due to her personal finances. "I didn't have a car. I couldn't afford one. I was paying for my college myself and trying not to take loans. That's part of the reason why it was one course at a time as well, because of finances." And then Ethan shopped around to find a more affordable tuition rate. "I was accepted at Bowling Green and a couple of different colleges that I looked into for art. But Edinboro was financially where I could go, where I could afford. I looked into state schools where my financial restrictions put me that were the best for art"

5.4.3   Persistence During College

FGCS have lower college persistence rates than MGCS with 58% of FGCS persisting in college compared to 77% of MGCS (Hodge, 2009, p. 1). Although participants in this study were chosen because they were able to complete a bachelor's degree, some have family members who were not as persistent. "I have a cousin that is the same age as me," disclosed Adam, "that went to college for a year or two and decided that he just wanted to be a construction worker." Another cousin "went to school to be a lawyer, stopped at paralegal, and then just did that, and that was enough." Hodge (2009) reports that FGCS tend to enter college with lower social capital - a key factor that can improve a student's persistence in college - than MGCS (p. 1). More than half of

the FGCS who drop out do so in their first year (p. 2). Ishitani found that first-generation college students were 71% more likely to drop out of college during their first year of school than were MGCS. Ethan's brother only went to college for a semester before dropping out. He ended up back at home working for his dad's heating and cooling company.

Expanded by Pascarella et al. (2004), employment, often a necessity of low SES students, has a negative impact on academic success by reducing time connected with the school's culture (p. 279). Having left Edinboro to return home after the first week of his freshmen year, Adam described in detail the necessity to work while in college. "I worked while I was at school.... So I had to stack my classes so that I could work at certain times... that way I could get all my classes knocked out in one day and not have any classes on Tuesday or Thursday so I could work. I worked all day Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday. I also worked at night on Wednesday and Friday." Understanding how it would have affected her studies, Bethany described her philosophy. "I worked hard, did well, and got the good grades. I don't know how I could have worked through college. I think my studies might have suffered."

None of the students studied by Drewry et al. (2010), had relationships with family members who had the capacity to assist them in their educational pursuits (p. 515). This description parallels Coleman's (1988) social vs. human capital theory. Although students had access to family relationships, i.e. social capital, those family members lacked the capacity to share pertinent skills needed to be successful in school, i.e. human capital. Adam saw this lack of capital in his home. "It was more or less me coming home and saying, Mom I need to do this. We need to do this and get this done. She also pushed it a little bit. What do we need to do? It was also difficult for her because, once again, it wasn't experiential." And Bethany was able to

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see that her parents were physically there for moral support, even if they had limited cultural capital to give. "I remember filling out the FASFA and doing all that stuff sitting at home. Sitting at the dining room table with my mom and dad. Like, alright, what do I have to put in here? What is this? They helped me through it."

5.4.4 Post-College Outcomes

If parents transmit messages about college to their children prior to attending college (Williams, 2010), then high school teachers could also be a source of social capital transmission for their students. A recurring message among the narratives was that these first-generation college graduate teachers had something to share and that they were passionate about getting their message across. They had a distinct awareness of the transmission of social capital to the first-generation college bound students in their care.

> Adam: "I think that because of me not knowing, I'm more conscientious of other kids not knowing. Not knowing what to do next. I have a conversation with some kids about going to go to college and they look at me like I have three heads. College was never a thought in their mind."

> Bethany: "I don't think these kids get it. Sometimes they think that college is the only way, even if that's not what they're good at. There have to be people in the world who are good at other things or the world won't work. I have that conversation with kids all the time."

> Charles: "I don't appreciate anything being handed to me ever. In fact, if something is handed to me, I will pretty much shun it from then on. That even comes with grades. I never wanted a grade handed to me. Are you kidding me? That's a paycheck down the road. I don't want a paycheck handed to me. I want to earn it. That's one of the things that I try to instill in the kids"

> Deborah: "I'm there for the underdogs. When I see kids struggling, I'll sort of take them quietly aside and I'll work with them and I'll say, let me explain this. Let's understand this." "I tell them from day one, you know what, you're in my class, you become my child."

Ethan: "If they were open-minded, most of them would understand though that in this day and age, as we see our students continue through the cycle and push or be pushed into college, that not everyone belongs in college. Not everyone needs college to be successful and not everyone should go immediately to college."

Since colleges attract students from a multitude of communities with both high and low SES, they have a wide array of social classes coming together in one location (p. 147). If colleges do not address this aspect of a student's environment, the student may begin to feel isolated and have increased levels of stress (p. 148). Under these conditions, "institutionalized classism" can occur because of educational structures, policies, and procedures that affect students differently based on their social class background (p. 150). In an effort to reduce such inequality, Adam relayed a story about how he handles parents who lack cultural and social capital. "I know their parents didn't go to college and I know their parents don't have any desires or reasons why they want them to go to college. I have two kids in my head right now that I know their parents have specifically said to them, college isn't everything. You can do other things besides go to college. Its kids that are on the border line ability. Can they do college? Can they do something beyond high school? And just knowing that their parents don't know either. So I push that envelope even if it makes a parent mad. Sometimes I'm advising against what they're telling their own kid. I still want to create that option in their mind that this is something I can explore."

Teachers can have a profound impact in the presence of deficient adolescent social capital (Figure 5 School-Family Loci of Influence). High school curricula can't prevent years of insufficient adolescent development of social capital, but transmission of capital by teachers would create an intervention through substitute social capital. Educators can compensate for "deficiencies in family-based social capital" (Hoffmann & Dufur, 2008, p.33) by providing high-

quality school environments with a curriculum influenced by important 21st century social capital.

> Adam: "I have kids who come back from college and bring me their undergraduate catalogs. They ask me, what classes should I take? And is not always just a first-generation college kid. I help them figure out the things that I needed help with, but didn't know who to turn to. I understand that there are some kids out there that don't even know what to ask. I think it's just understanding that they exist and not just being oblivious to it."
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> Bethany: "Maybe it's the French socialist mindset of everyone working together to make the world work. But, it comes out every year in some way, shape, or form. It's my soapbox, I guess. Everybody has to do something. I can't wire houses, but somebody has to."
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> Charles: "In the Freshmen seminar class, that's one of the things that we go into. Maybe not the college application process, but at least sitting down and researching colleges. That's the big thing that we do. Researching programs, researching degrees, researching all that kind of stuff."

Much like Bourdieu (1986), Espinoza (2011) supports the concept of school systems perpetuating social class structure across generations. Teachers have the transformative power to break this cycle by acting as a resource to provide college-specific knowledge and transmit key dispositions about obtaining a college degree. Bourdieu (1986) refers to such cultural disposition, attitudes, and beliefs as habitus (p. 255). Efforts are clearly being made by these first-generation college graduates to break the cycle of intergenerational status quo. When both of Bethany's cousins were going to college her uncle said, "I hope for a better and easier life for my kids so they don't have to use their body as much and kill themselves working hard to be successful. They can use their mind and not break themselves down as much." Bethany recognized that her parents pushed her to obtain a college degree so that she wouldn't have to work as physically hard as they did. Adam's self-reflection brought us to this. "It was me. I wanted better than what

my parents had. I wanted to be able to have the ability to do more. My drive was for me and the rest of my life."

6.0   CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1   BEARING ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS

School systems may not be able to provide specific curriculum on intrinsic qualities such as educational aspirations (DiPaula, 2010; Pike & Kuh, 2005), self-efficacy (DiPaula, 2010; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Penrose, 2002), and tenacity (Grayson, 2011; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Lask, 2008), but they certainly can improve academic preparedness (Chen et al., 2005), design mentoring programs (Erickson et al., 2009), and utilize lesson plan design that promotes self-regulatory behavior (Austin, 2011; Moschetti, 2008; Williams & Hellman, 2004). A school system can work in tandem with a child's family (compliment) or operate as more of a direct instructor (substitute). Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) report that "if adolescents are exposed to a better school environment, their involvement in delinquent behavior may be mitigated even in the presence of family-based risk factors" (p.30). Schools can have a profound impact in the presence of deficient adolescent social and cultural capital (Figure 5 School-Family Loci of Influence). High school curricula can't prevent years of insufficient adolescent development of capital, so its direct instruction would be in the realm of intervention through substitute social capital. A complementary process may have a synergistic effect that is greater than either part alone; however, a school system would have greater control over a substitutive process. Schools can compensate for "deficiencies in family-based social capital" (p.33) by providing high-quality school environments with a curriculum influenced by important 21st century social capital.

As illustrated in Figure 8, RQ1 (How did first-generation college graduate teachers acquire social capital throughout their lives that was needed to complete their college degree?) was designed to draw out the experiences of first-generation college graduates that supported

them on their journey towards a bachelor's degree. Somewhere along the way they learned valuable strategies to assist them in a previously unknown world. Without college degrees, their parents could not have provided the specific cultural or social capital related to college enrollment or completion. These first-generation college graduates were able to share the capital that they acquired from outside sources and relayed that which enabled greater success.

RQ2 (How do first-generation college graduate teachers transmit their own learned social capital to students?) was designed to keep the research focused on the transmission of the acquired capital. I wanted to understand how, through the transmission of acquired capital to other first-generation college bound students, teachers may break the intergenerational status quo among low SES students. This cycle of social capital acquisition and deliberate transmission by FGCG teachers illustrates the possible transformative nature within education.

6.2   IMPLICATIONS

6.2.1   Theoretical

When students come into a school system, they bring a specific skill set, both academic and social. Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) determined that school social capital plays an important role in adolescent development when it complements family social capital. Adam spoke about the school's culture that assumed students were going to college. "My teachers talked to you about where you were going to go to school. They questioned, where are you going to school? And when you answered, I don't know, I really haven't thought about it, they would immediately jump in with, what do you mean you haven't thought about it? You have to start applying. You have to get somewhere. Now is the time." He went on to clarify that this culture was different than his home environment. "A lot of people assumed that it was all happening. I guess that's part

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of not having a home structure where that was a normal procedure." Charles cited a specific teacher that shared social and cultural capital with him. "In my junior year of high school I had a history class with a guy who was not only my head football coach, but is also my life mentor, my teaching inspiration." "That was where I really began to get inspired. I didn't every really think that I had any talent for the academic world or thought that I could keep up with it until I was in his class."

Lohfink and Paulsen did not find that pre-college variables, such as high school course work or entrance scores, were related to institutional retention of FGCS from their first to second year (p. 422). It was a conscious effort for Charles to return to Edinboro for a second year. "So I decided I would give it a second shot and I had a conversation with my mom. And that was kind of the conversation, you know, give it a second try. If it doesn't work, we'll find something else for you." Since FGCS are at risk for low persistence in college (Choy, 2001; Engle & O'Brien, 2007; Ishitani, 2003; Moschetti & Hudley, 2008; Nuñez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pike et al., 2005; Terenzini et al., 1996), they may take longer to complete their degrees. Deborah's persistence was remarkable. "I would take my one little class at a time. It took me over 18 years to get my four year degree."

Since disparities become cumulative throughout a child's education, finding the critical points of intervention are essential for public education reform (Crosnoe & Schneider, 2010). Toutkoushian and Curtis (2005) describe these school-based influences as process factors. Adam feels an obligation to substitute for a family's deficient capital. "It's my way of preparing kids that don't have those conversations at home. Some teachers have those conversations with kids because they have the experience and know that is what kids need to know. I think I do it

because some kids might not know that that's what's going to happen. That college can take on this shape and form. I want to let them know that these are things that they need to know." "I think it just has to be modeling," says Charles. "That's what it comes down to. If we're trying to show these kids the way to get to places, I have to model it. It has to be me."

The Lee and Burkam (2003) study provided "empirical evidence that schools can exert important organizational effects on students' decisions to drop out or stay in school, above and beyond their individual behaviors and backgrounds" (p.384). They determined that, "students are less likely to drop out of high schools where relationships between teachers and students are more positive" (p.385). Bethany tries to provide that relationship to her students. She gives them a sense of stability. "Somebody to rely on in some way. Just somebody that is there for them. You don't have to be the strongest French student. Half of the kids who came into the room this morning are not my kids this year. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing, but they know that when they leave me and go on to level three that they can come back and talk to me. They can come back and ask for help." Without direct and targeted interventions, Espinoza (2011) suggests that working-class students will end up as working-class adults (p. 17).

6.2.2   Practical

To become transformative in nature, these teachers will need to transmit social and cultural capital in their classrooms. Transmission of this capital will be critical for first-generation college students who report lower levels of self-regulation than multi-generation college students and therefore benefit from learning environments that promote self-regulation - a key component in social cognitive theory (Williams & Hellman, 2004, p. 78). In his classroom, Charles tries to show students how they can "take advantage of the situation best by themselves. They can

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personally do it without their parents help." He actively works at modeling behaviors that brought him success. "You can always find an answer to something. If nobody will give you the answer, just keep looking. Find another source."

With prior research focused primarily on the pre-college process, transition to college and persistence during college (Ishitani, 2003; Pascarella et al., 2004; Terenzini et al., 1996), research was needed in the area of post-college outcomes for first-generation college graduates. This study adds to that body of knowledge and opens a venue for further research into teachers as transmitters of social capital. The story of Adam's cousins who entered a four-year college but did not complete that degree validates the statistics from Terenzini et al. (1996), on attrition. Adam graduated high school at the same time as his cousins, yet, even with their valedictorian status, one became a paralegal and the other dropped out of college completely. "That's just the way it was. It was okay." What were the defining characteristics that enabled Adam to persevere? Chain sampling could be used to conduct follow up interviews with him and his cousins to follow that lead.

Hoffmann and Dufur (2008) went on to report that "if adolescents are exposed to a better school environment, their involvement in delinquent behavior may be mitigated even in the presence of family-based risk factors" (p.30). The Lee and Burkam (2003) study provided "empirical evidence that schools can exert important organizational effects on students' decisions to drop out or stay in school, above and beyond their individual behaviors and backgrounds" (p.384). With such definitive data on the positive effects of school-based social capital transmission, extending this study to develop primary prevention and secondary intervention programs would be helpful. Social capital has been defined as a source of control. When children

lack specific social-emotional factors, barriers to their education arise. Goddard (2003) explained that institutional social capital may offset dysfunctional family capital. Therefore, the disparity of institutional social capital among students could propagate that dysfunction and result in de facto oppression of low SES children. Following the assertion of Pascarella et al. (2004) that "social capital is a form of capital that resides in relationships among individuals that facilitate transaction and the transmission of different resources" (p. 252), furtherance of this study would help identify the essential social capital transmitted by teachers to all students. Once identified, high school curriculum could be directly infused with direct and indirect instructional delivery of those qualities.

6.2.3 Future Research

I sought to better understand the phenomenon of first-generation college graduates in order to influence future audiences, specifically teachers. My research is now part of the Cyclical Model of Social Capital Transmission (Figure 2) whereby influencing the teachers who influence students. This study ultimately reinforces the altruistic and academic value perspective of first-generation college graduates and their transmission of social and cultural capital to high school students.

With only five participants, all of whom were first-generation college graduates, this study is limited in its perspective. Although the narratives reveal a transmission of social capital by these participants, it is not clear if teachers are naturally driven to deliver such messages or if first-generation college graduates have more dominant qualities acting as the catalyst. Much like the findings of Goddard (2003) that stress the positive impact on high-stakes state-mandated assessments in schools characterized by high levels of social capital (p.69), it is imperative that

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we find sources of social capital transmission and promote it within our school systems. Future research could center on overall teacher transmission of capital with inclusive narratives from multi-generational college graduates.

Even though the study was limited in scope, resonance to the literature was found in many areas. Pleas for social equity were clearly heard from Ethan. "I give students the opportunity to try their best no matter who their family was or who their family wasn't. I make activities so it's a level playing field so that all students will have the opportunity to succeed." His attempts to provide opportunities of social mobility are echoed by Crosnoe and Schneider (2010) who looked at interventions in high school as means to reduce socioeconomic disparities. They observed students with low SES who were able to achieve high math outcomes, indicating the presence of beneficial social capital. They concluded that, "increasing the flow of such social capital to low SES students... may be one way to reduce socioeconomic disparities in the general student population" (p.84).

Schools are an industrialized model from the early 20th century when the family nucleus was more intact and civic responsibility was at the forefront. Educators were caught in the middle of world wars, civil rights demonstrations and global pressures to have school systems address multiple social issues. As part of the 21st century, school districts will be called upon to deliver curriculum to the millennial child (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Therefore, it might be beneficial to compare and contrast mentoring programs and curriculum design in schools of varying levels of academic success. As stated by Pascarella et al. (2004), first-generation college students "benefit more from their academic experiences than other students because these experiences act in a compensatory manner" building upon their "stock of cultural capital" (p.

280). Public school systems need to respond in kind by providing a learning culture rich in the cultural and social capital that can facilitate success for first-generation college bound students in college and beyond.

APPENDIX A

NARRATIVE INTERVIEW STRATEGY

Interviewee_____ **Date**_____ **Time**_____

RQ1:	**What social capital did first-generation college graduate teachers acquire throughout their lives that was needed to complete their college degree?**
RQ2:	**How do first-generation college graduate teachers transmit their own learned social capital to students?**

Setting the Stage

As a first-generation college graduate, you have a unique story to tell. Statistics show that people like yourself are less likely to go to college and more likely to drop out of college than those from families with college degrees. Your personal experiences that enabled your success could help another first-generation student currently in high school to prepare for college and successfully persist towards a bachelor's degree. Attached is a copy of a consent form that further outlines the parameters of my doctoral research study. If you are interested in sharing your journey from high school to college to teacher, I would like to set up a time to talk with you. Thank you for considering my request.

Narrative Inquiry

As a first-generation college graduate, you have had a unique and personal journey from high school to where you are now.

     How did you decide to go to college?
     What obstacles did you face?
     How did you figure out what to do?

Start your story from high school and tell it through today as a teacher with any connections to your classroom.

Prompts

    ☐ As a first-generation college graduate, what motivated you to succeed?

    ☐ What value do you place on a college education?

    ☐ What did a college education mean to your family?

    ☐ How has a college education helped you personally?

    ☐ How does your personal life experience enter into the classroom?

    ☐ What can you offer your students that they might not get at home?

    ☐ What life lessons do you think are important to pass on to your students?

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE AS A RESPONDENT IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: Education Capacity Development: The Journey of Five First-generation College Graduate Teachers Through Acquisition of Social and Cultural Capital and Transmission Towards Their High School Students

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Why is this research being done?
You are being asked to participate in a research study to better understand how first-generation college graduate teachers transmit social and cultural capital to students in a high school setting.

Who is being asked to take part in this research study?
You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a public school teacher with 5 to 15 years of teaching experience and you are the first or only person in your immediate family to attain a bachelor's degree.

What procedures will be performed for research purposes?
If you decide to take part in this research study, you will be interviewed by the principle investigator. The interviewer will ask about your views of first-generation college graduates, your insight as a member of this group, effects of this on your instructional delivery, and your view of education as it relates to you and your students. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes to complete. To help more accurately capture your views, your responses will be digitally recorded. In order to more accurately talk about your instructional practices, you may also be asked to be observed during classroom time. The observation would be recorded in the form of field notes. It is at your discretion to share any type of teaching resources or curriculum material that would support your approach to teaching and enhance the interview process.

What are the possible risks and discomforts of this research study?
You will have minimal risk within this study. The potential risk would be breach of confidentiality, however, I am following strict protocol set by the University of Pittsburgh's Institutional Review Board to protect your privacy.

What are possible benefits from taking part in this study?
You will likely receive no direct benefit from taking part in this research study. You will be provided with the results of the research and may find that information insightful about your instruction and yourself.

Are there any costs to me as part of this research study?
There are no costs to you for participating in this study, nor is there any compensation.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?
Any information about you obtained from this research will be kept as confidential as possible. All records related to your involvement in this research study will be stored in a locked file cabinet. Your identity and place of employment on these records will be indicated by a pseudonym rather than by actual names, and the information linking these will be kept separate from the research records. You will not be identified by name in any publication of the research results unless you sign a separate consent form giving your permission. The investigator may continue to use, for the purposes described above, identifiable information related to your participation in this research study for a minimum of five years after final reporting or publication of the project. Any digital recordings or observational notes recorded of you during this research study will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

Page 1 of 2   Participant's initials: _____

Is my participation in this research study voluntary?
Your participation in this research study, to include the use and disclosure of your identifiable information for the purposes described above, is completely voluntary. You may withdraw, at any time, your consent for participation in this research study, to include the use of your identifiable information for the purposes described above. Your decision to withdraw your consent for participation in this research study will have no effect on your current or future relationship with the University of Pittsburgh or your school district. To formally withdraw your consent for participation in this research study you should provide a written and dated notice of this decision to the principal investigator of this research study at the address listed on the first page of this form.

****

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

The above information has been explained to me and all of my current questions have been answered. I understand that I am encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of this study, and that such future questions will be answered by a qualified individual or by the investigator listed on the first page of this consent document at the telephone number given. I understand that I may always request that my questions, concerns or complaints be addressed by a listed investigator.

I understand that I may contact the Human Subjects Protection Advocate of the IRB Office, University of Pittsburgh (1-866-212-2668) to discuss problems, concerns, and questions; obtain information; offer input; or discuss situations that have occurred during my participation.

By signing this form, I agree to participate in this research study. A copy of this consent form will be given to me.

_____   _____   _____
Participant's Signature   Printed Name of Participant   Date

CERTIFICATION of INFORMED CONSENT

I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study to the above-named individual, and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of study participation. Any questions the individual have about this study have been answered, and we will always be available to address future questions as they arise.

_____   _____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent   Role in Research Study

_____   _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

APPENDIX C

SOURCES OF INFLUENCE ON FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

As a first-generation college graduate, you had a unique and personal journey from high school to where you are now. We talked about how you decided to go to college and the obstacles you faced. You mentioned that you acquired key skills and information along the way that helped you figure out what and how to do it. In the boxes below, name the people or things that were the most influential in your journey. Number the sources from most influential (#1) to least (#8).

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