Investigating Student Voice: Embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory In An

Economics Teacher's Classroom

by

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List of Abbreviations

EDH   Economic Development High

NAEP   National Assessment of Educational Progress

SES   Social Economic Status

SRA   Science Research Associates

Abstract

Students on the margins voices are oftentimes missing from instructional design. Based on a review of the literature, there are limited data available to explain the effects of valuing students' voices in economics instruction. As a case study that is undergirded in auto-ethnography and participatory action research, this project investigated the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins? Situated in a Mid-western urban school district where students were experiencing challenges that were influenced by their *habitus*, the project also investigated how the application of critical pedagogy influenced students' agency in the classroom. An analysis of the results suggest that students' voices and agency were influenced by four primary factors: (1) my caring disposition's influence on student engagement; (2) my ability to listen and respond to the students' concerns; (3) my actions in assisting the study participants with addressing their self identified basic and physiological needs; and (4) my ability to engage the students in critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures.

Key terms: student supports, building relationships, agency, student agency, and student voice

Chapter 1: Introduction and Purpose of Study

Students' voices or their abilities to articulate their thoughts in the primary and secondary educational levels are usually limited to responding to teacher-led discussions/lectures. In communities where students have experienced historical disenfranchisement and where the gap in achievement is wide, voice is oftentimes muted (Kozol, 2005a, 2005b). Prompted by parents, educators, concerned citizens, employers, and civic organizations, legislators on the federal and state levels throughout the United States have passed laws and enacted various policies to address the achievement gap. While well intended, these laws and policies are missing the mark, because the achievement gap between Whites in comparison to African Americans and Hispanics persists (National Center for Education Statics, 2013). The following critical narrative was developed to provide an example of students on the margins whose voices are silenced in the classroom. It will also shed light on the long-term impact that the negation of voice had on my personal and academic development. In order to protect the anonymity of the individuals and institutions in this study, pseudonyms were assigned[1].

Critical Narrative: A Standpoint Perspective on My Connections to the Study

As a former student and resident of the community that this study was situated in, I am quite familiar with the effects that Haberman's (2010) pedagogy of poverty has had on the development of the voice of students on the margins. In the mid 1970's, I attended two elementary schools in the City of Hope, which is situated in a manufacturing urban center in the

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[1] Although the names have changed, I have preserved the gender identification and generalized data to maintain the anonymity of the students, their families, community, and school.

Midwest. From kindergarten through the second grade, I attended Main Elementary and was excited about school because learning was fun and engaging. Although the school was in a high poverty community and the average class size was 25 to 30, I can only recall two teachers who were very engaging and encouraging, Ms. Venberger (kindergarten) and Mr. Hunter (first and second grade). Both Ms. Venberger and Mr. Hunter allowed us to investigate and make personal connections with the instruction. They were not only dedicated to nurturing our curiosity in school, but they also worked with our families to ensure that learning was reinforced at home. Based on these early learning experiences, my expectation was that school would always be a great place to explore and grow. I recall learning the entire multiplication table and being excited because I read all of the stories in Science Research Associates (SRA) reading box by the end of the first grade. However, due to population shifts Main Elementary School closed at the end of my second grade year and we had to go to other schools in the area. Since my mother was a long-term resident who was familiar with the schools in the area, she decided to move one block over so that my sisters and I could attend a "high quality" neighborhood school that was being marketed as a place with smaller classrooms and skilled teachers. As a result of families who responded to marketing, when I attended Anders Elementary that fall the class sizes averaged 30 to 42 students and my third grade teacher did not appear to care about teaching students from the community.

Unlike my teachers at Main Elementary, my third grade teacher (Mrs. Szott) did not engage us in dialogue and expressed on several occasions, through her actions and statements that she did not believe in our abilities. Likened to Haberman's (2010) pedagogy of poverty, Mrs. Szott gave us information and instructions, monitored seatwork, reviewed assignments, gave tests, assigned homework, reviewed homework, marked papers, and punished

noncompliance. More importantly, she even went as far as telling us "Black kids could not learn as well as Whites." Based on her statement I remarked, "then if you feel that way why aren't you teaching White kids." She immediately sent me to the principal's office for disrupting her class.

On the day that I returned to school Mrs. Szott met with my mother and me to discuss my behavior in her class. My mother asked Mrs. Szott whether she stated that "Black kids could not learn as well as Whites" and she replied "yes." In responding to Mrs. Szott's comment, my mother stated, "Mrs. Szott your job is to teach Truman and Truman your job is to learn. Truman if you want to defend people, go to school and become a lawyer." Mrs. Szott's practices and my mother's response to our meeting with Mrs. Szott reinforced the idiom "children are to be seen and not heard." I will always remember this day because it served as the first day that I was punished for speaking up and marked the starting point of my disengagement and feelings of disempowerment in education.

Similar to many students who are in the margins, I was taught not to engage in two-way dialogue with teachers and that teachers were the holders of knowledge. Therefore, my job was to learn what teachers had to offer by being a passive participant in my educational experience. Mrs. Szott's statement and my mother's response squashed my voice. Compliance with school rules and the banking concept of education stripped my agency (Freire, 1970, 1973). For me, the application of the idiom "children are to be seen and not heard" in curriculum and instruction became the norm by which education was facilitated throughout my primary and secondary educational career. Thus, like other students on the margins, my experiences at Anders Elementary reinforced the hegemonic structures and negated the relevance of my voice in the development and delivery of curriculum and instruction.

Call for Broader Discussions in Classrooms

Even as "the disappearance of work in many inner-city neighborhoods is partly related to the nationwide decline in the fortunes of low-skilled workers," (Wilson, 1996, p. 54) this decline is exacerbated by a myriad of social factors, e.g., race, corporate disinvestment in central cities, and education (human capital investment). While each factor is equally important in addressing the redevelopment of impoverished urban communities, the human capital investment argument is considered a key determinant in the attainment of individual and communal success (Freire, 1973).

There is a general agreement that there is a correlation between employment and an individual's educational level (Cantu, 2003). Research on earnings potential between 1991 and 2001 provides evidence that suggest individuals who only had less than some high school education earned approximately $60,000 per year less than individuals holding professional degrees and certifications (Cantu, 2003). During the same time period it was reported, "the unemployment rates of someone without a high school diploma are almost twice as high as someone with a high school diploma" (Cantu, 2003, p. 1). When comparing the 2011 unemployment rate to educational attainment data that were reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), Table 1 provides additional data to suggest that not only is there a significant gap in median annual earnings between the two populations, but that the unemployment levels are disproportionately higher for individuals with less than a high school diploma than those holding professional degrees.

Table 1

Educational Attainment, Unemployment, and Earnings

Unemployment rate in 2011 (Percent)	Education attained	Median weekly earnings in 2011 (Dollars)	Median yearly earnings in 2011 (Dollars)
2.5	Doctoral degree	$1,551	$80,652
2.4	Professional degree	$1,665	$86,580
3.6	Master's degree	$1,263	$65,676
4.9	Bachelor's degree	$1,053	$54,756
6.8	Associate degree	$768	$39,936
8.7	Some college, no degree	$719	$37,388
9.4	High-school diploma	$638	$33,176
14.1	Less than a high school diploma	$451	$23,452

Note. The data were obtained from "Educational Attainment, Unemployment, and Earnings" by Bureau of Labor Statics 2013.

Conversely, when considering underrepresented populations such as African Americans, the unemployment rates for those with less than a high school diploma are disproportionately higher. In comparison to their White, Asian, and Hispanic counterparts who experienced 7.3 percent, 6.3 percent and 11.0 percent unemployment in 2013, respectively, African Americans experienced higher rates of unemployment (14.1 percent) (Bureau of Labor Statics, 2013).

In review of these data, Wilson (1996) argues that because students on the margins are more likely to have less than a high-school diploma, be low wage earners, and have higher levels of unemployment "we must break the cycle of joblessness and improve the youngsters preparation" (p. 238) for successful entry into high wage jobs. Encouraging students to discuss how unemployment and issues that are not expressed in curriculum and instruction influence their development can potentially aid in identifying the needs and goals of students' on the margins needs and matching the students' needs and goals to the aims of employers. Moreover, by intentionally embedding Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework and discourse related to

hegemonic structures into instruction (Anyon, 1981; Latham & Ernst, 2006), educators have a greater potential of empowering students on the margins to increase their capacity to participate in the workforce (Hemmings, 1999; Morgan & Streb, 2001). Moreover, implanting discourse related to hegemonic structures into instruction can lead to students increasing their voices on social, political, and economic concerns in their community.

Extending the Discussion in the Classroom

While the intended curriculum is often articulated, the hidden curriculum is more likely to be unspoken in low-SES and working class communities (Hemmings, 1999; Anyon 1981). More specifically, where the intended curriculum may address teaching students civics, language, or mainstream goals and objectives, the challenges that affect students on the margins such as race, corporate disinvestment, high unemployment, and low earning potential are often overlooked in the instructional framework in public schools in urban communities (Cornbleth, 1984). Since the messages associated with these conversations are not traditionally conveyed in a school's curriculum, children in the margins are more likely to internalize these concerns and be more skeptical about their participation in classroom activities (Thornberg & Elvstrand, 2012; Anyon, 1981). Moreover, because the hidden curriculum oftentimes reinforces the "implicit social lessons, which perpetuate inequalities," (Hemmings, 1999, p. 1) it is important for students to have a platform to process how these issues affect their development. While issues such as race, corporate disinvestment, high unemployment, and low earning potential are absent in curriculum and instruction, students in low-SES communities have developed informal networks to discuss their concerns in their peer groups (Hemmings, 1999).

Given the emphasis on creating a workforce, urban schools would seem to be using a social efficiency theory in education, i.e., providing support for the human capital argument, with

schools primarily functioning as stewards of society's investment in humans (Schiro, 2008). As stewards, one of the functions of schools is to prepare students for work (Askew, 2008; Gillis, Perkins, Roemer & Snodgrass, 1987; Peterson, 2009; Wilson, 1996). Driven by external environmental factors, schools respond to policy, employers, parents and other societal voices in determining the types of human capital experiences students receive (Bourdieu, 1984). While these stakeholders' opinions are valued in developing curriculum and instruction, I would contend that concerns associated with student development that are not reflected in curriculum and instruction warrant schools moving from a social efficiency model to a social reconstructionist framework (Schiro, 2008, 2013). In doing so, I would also suggest that when working with students on the margins that teachers consider intentionally promoting dialogue that encourages students to make connections to their lived experiences and the curriculum, empowers students' voices on these issues in their classroom instruction leads to increased agency (Thornberg, 2010). In an effort to investigate this topic through a social reconstructionist lens, this study will provide the framework for:

1. Uncovering the concerns that impede student development;

2. Garnering an understanding of how a teacher's actions of intentionally embedding the systems that are identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems theory into instruction influences student voice, empowerment, and engagement; and,

3. Understanding how instruction that promotes discussions that uncover hegemony and the hidden curriculum of workforce development affects student engagement, empowerment, and voice.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to document and analyze how students at Economic Development High (EDH) respond to my intentionally uncovering hegemonic structures through my instructional practices in economics. EDH is a high school which is situated in a high poverty urban community in the Midwest where students on the margins experience various challenges due in part to their environment and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984.) The subject of economics was selected because, as a social science, its aims are to understand the interactions between students' *habitus* and the various agents (systems) that influence their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). By studying economics, learners can acquire a "means of communication among people, incorporating a basic vocabulary or logic that is so frequently encountered" (Stigler, 1983 p. 61). Additionally, acquisition of economic literacy may serve as a tool to assist students with understanding how they are directly and indirectly affected by world events (Walstad & Rebeck, 2001). Moreover, "Economic literacy improves the competence of each individual for making personal and social decisions about the multitude of economic issues that will be encountered over a lifetime" (Walstad, 1998, p. 1) and can provide students with the knowledge necessary for understanding the world. Economics impacts everyone, "Even young children are capable of learning basic economic concepts that help them understand the world" (Walstad 2005, p. 2). While economics education can provide youth with the skills that are core for success in life, as a language of power, providing students on the margins economics instruction can empower them with the skills necessary for increasing their social capital, thus, transforming lives (Delpit 1988; Mezirow, 1991, 1981; Walstad & Rebeck, 2000). Furthermore, since economic literacy is necessary for balancing a checkbook or engaging in basic financial transactions, "waiting until students are in university to teach economics is a matter of "too little and too late" (Walstad,

2005, p. 2). Thus, with the intention of addressing the concerns of economic literacy in a low-SES community, the aim of this study was to investigate how my economics instruction influenced student engagement, empowerment, and voice. I used Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework as a primary means for exposing hegemony. In doing so, I documented the students' classroom interactions as well as their reactions to my pedagogy. Additionally, I documented my perspectives of the students' responses to the changes in my practices. Finally, I analyzed the students' perspectives to determine how my practices in embedding Bronfenbrenner's (2005) Ecological Systems framework into economics instruction influenced student engagement, empowerment, and voice.

A Standpoint Perspective on Economics Instruction

During my undergraduate years at Urban Mission University, my initial major was marketing, because I wanted to be a marketing and advertisement executive like the character Darrin Stephens on the 1960s' – 70's television show *Bewitched*. As an African American male, this was unique perspective because my experiences were totally disassociated from the images of Darrin Stephens' character on television. Unlike Darrin, I did not live in an affluent homogenous suburban community where all of the neighbors were White. Moreover, unlike the television depiction of Darrin's community the women in my community were not homemakers and single females headed many of the households. Coming from a blue-collar family, although I did not possess the language of power or the social capital to address the hegemonic structures that influenced my development, I had high aspirations that I could achieve the American dream that was depicted on *Bewitched*.

In working to achieve the American dream, I started my academic career taking two courses in the fall of 1988, one in sociology and the other in English. I maintained employment

at two part time jobs while in school and lived in a modest apartment just north of Urban Mission University. As I progressed through the prerequisites for my intended major, I was excited with being the first in my family to attend a university. Although I was happy to be at Urban Mission University, I was also nervous because I had a difficult time following the lectures. My challenges with the lectures were due to my inability to make any practical connections with the course content. Coupled with my inability to make content connections I was also challenged because graduate students taught most of our lower division courses and teaching assistants who spoke English as a second language with heavy dialects, which made it difficult to understand the lectures and connect them to the readings.

One of my most challenging courses at Urban Mission University was microeconomics. Like many of the African American students from low-SES communities, I did not fare well in the course. My poor study habits along with my lack of understanding of the content and its practical application inhibited my success in microeconomics. It should not go without saying that my study habits were partially a result of my negative experiences in Mrs. Szott's third grade class. Based on this experience, I internalized Mrs. Szott's perceptions of me, thus adopting the values and beliefs associated with individuals who lack social and cultural capital. More specifically, the general discussion in the student union among the African American students was that economics, as well as business law, were "weeder courses" that were put into place to reduce our admissions into the School of Business. Based on our anecdotal data, most of us decided to take the courses at the local community college and transfer them into Urban Mission University.

In consideration of my goals to gain admission to the school of business and my failing grade in microeconomics at Urban Mission University, I enrolled at Mosaic Community College

to take both microeconomics and business law. In taking the courses at Mosaic Community College, I gained a greater appreciation for the learning process. For the first time in my higher educational career I was taking classes with professors who looked like me, shared my lived experiences, and obtained the professional success and credentialing necessary for increasing their social capital in the community and region. Both instructors held terminal degrees, PhD for Professor Taylor, and Juris Doctorate for Professor Strong. They were very active in the community and worked with the students to develop strategies for learning that connected the theoretical constructs associated with instruction to the real-world/practical experiences of the students. Being familiar with the various systems that influence development, both Taylor and Strong empowered students with the language to maneuver through these systems. In the case of Taylor, students were exposed to practitioners in the field of economics who provided ways to connect economic terminology to their everyday lives. Strong took students on tours of the courthouse and her law practice so that they could identify with the terms and concepts discussed in her course. I believe that Taylor and Strong's passion for teaching and empowering their students were key success in the classroom. While rooted in the cooperative learning philosophy, I would contend that because they gave students an opportunity to develop and exhibit voice, both professors' practices were steeped in the tenets of critical pedagogy. In both classes, students were given an opportunity to participate in discussions and develop projects that provided evidence that students were able to connect the course content to their projects. In the case of Taylor, the lectures and class projects provided us with the opportunities to make practical connections between the content in the economics curriculum and our lived experiences. These practices provided students with the skills to become agents of change, thus, placing them in a better position to dismantle the hegemonic structures that inhibit voice.

Similarly, Strong taught us how to exercise voice through the development of contract notes and the synthesis of case studies. Moreover, the skills we gained in the areas of laws, torts, and contracts were important to or personal and academic development. The application of the knowledge gained empowered students with the language of power that was necessary being agents of change and active participants in the business community.

The experiences in Taylor and Strong's classes served as another turning point in my academic career, because they helped shape my professional, social, and academic philosophies, which are all connected to social justice ideology. While the grades of an A in microeconomics and B in business law were incentives for continuing my educational endeavors, the experiences in professors Taylor and Strong's courses were the catalyst for my selecting the major of economics when I returned to Urban Mission University. More importantly, because Taylor and Strong's practices were rooted in a social reconstructionist framework, when I returned to Urban Mission University I was at odds with the scholar academic ideology that my mentor and the faculty at Urban Mission University championed. This internal conflict was partially resolved when I (a) gained access to the language of power and (b) began to access and operate in the social and economic structures that were not traditionally available to me prior to my experiences in Taylor and Strong's courses.

In order to provide an examination of the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins, Chapter 2 offers an overview of the theoretical framework that guided this study. In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the case study methods that were employed. Chapter 4 presents the findings and an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 concludes with a discussion on the emerging themes, the significance of this research to teachers

who work with students on the margins, the limitations of this study, areas to explore in future research, and a critical narrative to explain the lessons that I learned from the students in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

An examination of various databases and primary sources suggests that there is a need to examine how teaching practices in low SES communities influence student voice, engagement, and perceptions of empowerment in economics instruction. While the literature provides ample treatment of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) theory, data on how a teacher can use the framework for the purposes of increasing voice in economics instruction are missing. In consideration of voice as it is reflected in the literature, Bronfenbrenner's theory will serve as the primary theory for exploring the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins? Several themes emerged from the literature:

1. There are multiple systems and factors that influence student development and performance;

2. Instructional practices influence student development and achievement; and,

3. Engaging student voice is important in meeting educational goals.

Ideologies related to the social systems, social and cultural capital, student voice, instructional practices, and curriculum and instruction serve as the theoretical underpinnings that best address the aforementioned themes.

Theoretical Perspective: Systems Analysis

In an attempt to identify the determinants that influence student development[2], much of the scholarship has focused on environmental factors such as, social systems, social conditions, and the economic position of families as to why student development is limited in low SES communities (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Big Think [BT], 2010). The literature suggests that ecological and social systems influence individuals learning and engagement in social structures (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), there are five spheres of influence (systems) in child development: (a) microsystem, (b) mesosystem, (c) exosystem, (d) macrosystem, and (e) chronosystem. As an extension of Vygotsky's social-cultural theory (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996), Bronfenbrenner's (2005), a systems framework puts forward the argument that as social agents of the broader culture, school leaders should examine and develop appropriate instructional methods to address the needs of students as well as society. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) systems theory presupposes that educators create processes and systems by which to collect and assess data relative to the following systems (Faculty Webber State University, 2011):

- *Microsystem* – Family, peers, school, and neighborhood;

- *Mesosystem* – The relationship between family's interaction with schools, schools to the community, and family to peers;

- *Exosystem* – External activities that influence a child's development, e.g., parent's jobs, governmental policies, social changes, and economic conditions;

- *Macrosystem* – The broader communities culture, views, and norms; and,

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[2] Bronfenbrenner framework asserts student development (academic and social) is influenced by environmental factors, which include the family, neighborhood, and classroom.

- *Chronosystem* – Events that occur over a lifetime at critical periods of development.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) argues that because students develop based on the aforementioned systems, greater attention should be given to understanding how students maneuver and negotiate through these systems as a means of attaining educational goals.
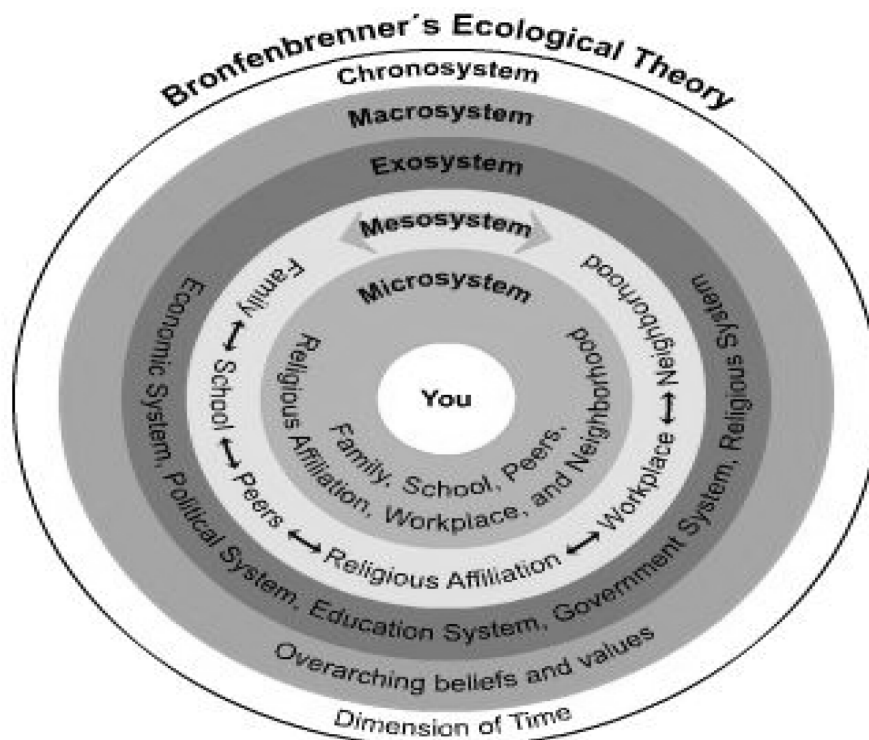
Figure 1. *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. This figure suggests that the environment is a primary influencer human developmental behavior.* Adapted from "The Ecological Perspective of Development" by Faculty, 2011, Weber State University.

The ecological systems theory is the foundation for the National Head Start program. The National Head Start program was created to address the social and economic disparities that negatively influence the development of youth in high poverty and/or low SES communities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, 2012). As a multi-tiered approach toward addressing child development, the primary thesis of the ecological systems theory is that early intervention for children from low SES communities can improve academic achievement.

Carrying out early intervention requires teachers being familiar with students' lived experiences. In being cognizant of students and their family needs, the theory postulates that educators aid them in securing the supports necessary for addressing concerns as they arise. As the primary point of contact, teachers conduct regular formal and informal assessments of each child and their family's needs. Assessment measures include observations and direct assessment of student performance and needs as well as identification of family progress and challenges (Administration for Children and Families, 2006). Based on Head Start's application of Bronfenbrenner's theory, Table 2 reflects potential observed occurrences and some intentional actions teachers may take when embedding the systems that are identified in Bronfenbrenner's theory in instruction.

Table 2

Embedding Systems In Instruction

Systems	Observed Concern	Intentional Actions
Microsystem	Bullying	Teacher diffuses situation, conference with parent, and connects with family service worker to develop intervention
		Teacher changes lesson plan to discuss concern
Mesosystem	Lack of parental involvement /support	Teacher works with parent and family service worker to develop a family partnership agreement
		Teacher develops lessons to include parents in instruction
Exosystem	Parent is underemployed	Teacher works with parent, family service worker, and community partners to secure employment
		Teacher develops instruction centered on employment
Macrosystem	Childhood obesity	Teacher develops instruction to educate students and families on healthy living
Chronosystem	Child losses parent	Teacher arranges counseling services and mental health supports

Note. Based on communication with A. Peavy (personal communication May 1, 2012).

As a multilayer approach towards positively influencing student development, adapting the systems identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) model into K-12 instructional setting may offer insight into how teachers may increase their ability to deliver beneficial instruction. An example of embedding the systems into a K-12 setting can be viewed in Ludwig & Bassi (1999). In their study, Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework is introduced through the "value added approach" model that "use[s] test scores from previous periods as control variables" while testing the effects of how environmental systems such as family and community, influenced student achievement and student choice (Ludwig & Bassi, 1999, p. 386-388). Similar to Bronfenbrenner's (2005) assertions, the research suggests that there is a strong correlation between student voice and choice to the external environmental factors identified in Bronfenbrenner's macro, meso, and micro systems/spheres (Ludwig & Bassi, 1999). Additionally, studies suggest that there is significant correlation between the *macro*, *meso* and *micro* systems/spheres and student development (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996; Hanushek, 1997; Miller, 2002). Although there are studies that identify a connection between Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework and student achievement, my analysis of the literature reveals that it does not take into account how either students' voice or choice influence instruction. Thus, I believe that the expansion of Bronfenbrenner's model could include an analysis of how the various systems affect student voice and choice (engagement, and empowerment) in instruction because the expanded model could serve as a tool for determining the best methods for addressing students' goals while working to meet institutional instructional aims (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996; Hanushek, 1997; Ludwig & Bassi, 1999; Miller, 2002).

Social & Cultural Capital and *Habitus*

Based on the research on race relations on college campuses, the data revealed that

students expressed a sense of powerlessness (social and cultural capital) in the classroom

(Russell & Russell, 1992; hooks, 1994). For many African American students "the classroom is a

battlefield . . . they face problems that have been intensified by the challenges of institutionalized

bigotry and racism . . . for them, our classrooms are the nursery of the society" (Russell &

Russell, 1992, segment 1). African Americans are not alone in these experiences. Students on the

margins experience similar disconnections from society because they lack social and cultural

capital (Dumais, 2002). As evidenced by Dumais' (2002) research,

> Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and cultural capital posits that the
>
> culture of the dominant class is transmitted and rewarded by the educational
>
> system . . . the acquisition of cultural capital and consequent access to academic
>
> rewards depend on the cultural capital passed down by family, which, in turn, is
>
> largely dependent of class. (p. 44)

In the case of students from low SES communities, the lack of social and cultural capital

magnifies the issues of bigotry and racism (Dumais, 2002; Giroux, 1983b; hooks, 1994).

Moreover, because students from low SES communities have limited capital they oftentimes

receive instruction that does not aid them in addressing the concerns associated with student

achievement (McKinley, 2010; Noguera, 2007).

Gaining access to resources (capital) is often determined by one's position in society. In

the case of youth and families from low SES communities, access to high quality educational

services may be limited due in part to socially defined parameters such as social and cultural

capital. According to Bourdieu (1990, 1984), social capital is defined as the value of social

networks that are determined by social norms and standards. Conversely, having social and cultural capital are assets that enable individuals and communities to be mobile in social, political, and economic settings. Historically there has been limited value placed on individuals and families from low SES communities. As a result, their social and cultural capitals are factors that aid in perpetuating the class inequalities and symbolic domination that are associated with critical race discourse (Sayer, 2011).

In urban centers where there are high concentrations of individuals and families from low SES, there are students who enter college without the necessary supports for maneuvering through the academic maze. Coming from a community where participation in critical discourse is not encouraged, students on the margins internalize the discourse of the oppressor (Freire, 1970). Thus, further reducing their agency and full participation in social, economic, and political decisions that affect educational services delivered to their community (Herzberg, 2006). Inadequate education results in diminished participation in the economic, social, and political life (Hauser, 2000; Kane & Rouse, 1999).

These challenges are rooted in the inequities that exist in primary and secondary public education due in part to limited resources and antiquated teaching practices (Anyon, 1997; Hauser, 2000; Kozol, 2005b; Kubow & Fossum, 2007). Equally assertive on this matter, teachers in poorer communities oftentimes adopt Haberman's (2010) pedagogy of poverty, thus, further exacerbating the inequities and limiting their students' access to critical discourse and learning (Koehler & Mishra, 2008; Kozol, 2005a). Unbeknownst to students in high poverty communities, upon transitioning to higher education, in many instances they enter community college at a deficit (Elliott, 1994). Most students from low SES communities are required to take remedial courses not only at community colleges but also at four-year institutions.

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In response to Haberman's (2010) pedagogy of poverty ideology, the research posits that in order for educators to dismiss the pedagogy in ideology and practice, they must actively embrace new practices that engage students from an interdisciplinary active learning perspective. These practices should incorporate strategies that promote critical analysis and social justice to address concerns specific to Bronfenbrenner's (2005) exosystem, e.g., academic service learning, learning communities, experiential learning, and cooperative learning (Bacon, 2002; Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Cantor, 1997; Dorado & Giles, Jr., 2004; Kinnevy & Boddie, 2001; Maier & Keenan, 1994; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Schroder, 2010; Tinto, 2003). I believe that these practices coupled with the instructor's personal and professional background (Siegfried & Fels, 1979) and students' prior knowledge (Anderson, Benjamin, & Fuss, 1994) may shed light on instructional practices of teachers who work with students from low SES communities, in general, and student achievement in introductory economics course, specifically.

Why Should We Use Systems?

Understanding how systems influence student development is paramount to addressing student engagement and empowerment in instruction. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems theory is one of many ideologies on systems that educators consider when developing instruction. In analyzing Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, Watcher (2003) presents a case for understanding how systems influence individual's needs at each level of Maslow's (1943) theory. The case suggests that the external systems, such as economic, social, cultural, and political forces, influence human development. More importantly, the research reveals that the individuals' continuum of life experiences and values coupled with the value of that community's or country's place on each level of Maslow's (1943) framework dictates how people interact and develop (Browne, 2001; Watcher, 2003).

In an examination of how systems influence an individual's ability to act (agency), personal agency is neither autonomous nor mechanical (Bandura, 1989). While agency does consist of individual preference and internal events, one's ability to act is oftentimes reinforced by interaction of casual structures (environmental determinants) both internal and external (Bandura, 1989). Understanding systems and how they influence student voice is important because environmental conditions and agents that reside within systems produce different *habitus*.

Habitus is defined as "the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgments and the system of classification" (Bourdieu 1984, p. 170). The idea of *habitus* presupposes that "different conditions of existence produce different *habitus*" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). In producing a systematic response, which develops and reinforces perceptions and practices objectively and subjectively, the class that an individual is born into oftentimes defines their social order in the world. Because the class that an individual is born into oftentimes influences social positioning, understanding how *habitus* shapes individuals values and beliefs may offer insight into ways in which to increase voice in curriculum and instruction. In the case of students who come from communities where they have experienced institutional and systemic marginalization, investigating the construct of *habitus* may also increase our understanding of how student agency influences curriculum and instruction.

Critical Consciousness, *Habitus* and Student Development

Students from low SES communities have adapted to their marginalized status by operating with a double consciousness whereby they continuously work to reconcile their experiences as Americans. One such example of the double consciousness is represented in DuBois (1989). According to DuBois (1989), "Negros or Africans in America" are always

attempting to resolve the conflict associated with their existence in America as individuals and as a group. Individually, there are African Americans who have achieved much since the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1965. Although successful, they are constantly reminded of their social position by the negative images and prejudices that are portrayed in the media about the group. Said images often influence African American's individual and collective identifies (DuBois, 1989). In drawing on the experiences of the African Americans, individuals and groups who share similar marginalized experiences are adversely affected socially, politically, and economically by the re-enforcement of the negative images of their groups presented in the media (Kvaraceus, Gibson, Patterson, Seasholes, & Grambs, 1965; Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1983b, 1992).

There are many layers of the environment that affect the development of students on the margins (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Noguera, 1996). Factors outside of the student, such as media, family, peers, class, teachers, society, and time fuel student development, shape the students' experiences, and influence their engagement, feelings of empowerment, and voice in the classroom. In the case of students on the margins from poor and working class families, I believe that not being able to talk about the bourgeois biases in instruction and curriculum "particularly as they relate to the epistemological perspectives" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 138) often leaves students feeling even more marginalized, voiceless, disempowered, and disengaged in the classroom.

The research on critical pedagogy offers two lenses by which to view Students' on the margins perceptions of capital and agency in curriculum and instruction. From the objective perspective, the research argues that students will interact with others and see themselves as objects. In doing so, stratification such as by class, race, and gender influences their agency and

voice in the classroom (Freire, 1973; Bourdieu, 1984; Giroux, 1983b). In viewing agency from a subjective standpoint, students internalize their thoughts around their actual and desired stations, thus their individual voices are lost due in part to *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1984; Freire, 1973, 1970). In combating *habitus*, these social systems must be met with resistance. Hence, based on the research related to agency, teachers must challenge the status quo by empowering those with limited social capital with the skills to exercise voice (Bourdieu, 1984; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983a). Empowering students to participate in two-way dialogue related to their lived experiences is one instructional strategy that can provide students with the opportunity to connect classroom instruction to their personal experiences (Delpit, 2006; Freire, 1973; Hay, 2009; McKinley, 2010; Norwood, 2010). The application of two-way dialogue in the classroom not only honors students' lived experiences, but also encourages and supports the agency of students who are dealing with the dual consciousness (Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1983b; Noguera, 2007).

Teacher's Actions

Intentional interactions are actions in the classroom that take place based on a teacher's reflective inquiry into her/his pedagogy (Fletcher, 2005; Tugui, 2012). In carrying out these actions, teachers should engage students in the collection, processing, and the analysis of data relative to their classroom practices. Teachers can better assess how their practices influence students' development by conducting self-reflective inquiry analyses of their instructional practices (Tugui, 2012). By conducting self-reflective inquiry analysis on a regular basis, teachers are better poised to (a) ascertain what environmental factors are impacting their students' performance and (b) develop and engage meaningful intentional interactions with their students (Canada, 1998; Fletcher, 2003). In the case of this study, I have framed the student and

teacher interaction in such a manner whereby I deliberately identify and respond to the various environmental forces that Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems theory contends influences student development. While student voice is absent in Head Start's application of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework, Head Start's process of continuous formal and informal assessments could aid students in developing strategies to reduce the negative effects of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. By intentionally observing students and engaging them in meaningful dialogue relative to the environmental factors that influence student development, teachers can begin to identify the barriers to success (Fletcher, 2003). Moreover, by instructing from the heart (Noddings, 2006), teachers can develop reflective instructional practices that empower students to (a) "take responsibility for their own learning" (Apps, 1996, p. 17) and (b) develop strategies for addressing student identified issues related to their *habitus* (Delpit, 2006).

Teaching Pedagogy and Reflective Inquiry: Making the Case

Students from low SES communities continue to experience challenges with successfully completing introductory economics courses at higher education institutions (Kane & Rouse, 1999). While learning communities were identified as a means for addressing academic deficits in core areas such as math and critical thinking/discourse, emerging data on the importance of gaining Students' on the margins perspectives, offers positive insight into how to reduce the achievement gap. One primary theme that surfaced in the literature was that teachers' professional development and preservice teachers' education and practices in K-12 and higher education influence student achievement in economics instruction. More particularly, learner-centered practices that encourage student voice such as cooperative learning and academic

service learning were identified as ways to address deficits in economics instruction among students in the margin (Maier & Keenan, 1994).

Teachers who actively use student voice to inform their pedagogy should facilitate intentional and meaningful interactions in their instructional practices (Fletcher, 2005; Lodge, 2005; McKinley, 2010). Based on the literature in carrying out intentional and meaningful interactions students in partnership with teachers develop strategies to mitigate the negative factors to success (Gardner & Crockwell, 2006). Thus, said interaction can lead to increases in student ownership (empowerment) in their academic success (Fletcher, 2003, 2005; Lodge, 2005).

Meaningful and intentional dialogue in the urban schools is limited in schools servicing students from low-SES communities. Based on passing conversations with students at local high schools, there seems to be a general belief that educational leaders and teachers practice the adages "father knows best" or "adults know best" in their dealings with students. Educators' actions that are rooted in these adages are not only practicing the pedagogy of poverty (Haberman, 2010), but are also rendering students powerless and voiceless in instruction. To counter the pedagogy of poverty, "students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in mainstream American life, not by being forced to follow, inane decontextualized sub-skills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors" (Delpit 1988, p. 296).

Employing student voice is not only beneficial to classroom instruction, but also to school reform. In review of the literature, engaging students in the educational reform dialogue can lead to some rich and unique approaches towards addressing the achievement gap (Cornelius, 2008). Research on the effects that student voice has on instruction presents a compelling argument for giving greater consideration towards garnering students' input in school

reforms (Cornelius, 2008; Jonassen, 1999; Levin, 2000; Mitra, 2004, 2010). Based on the research conducted in schools, engaging students in reform efforts increases their commitment to the change and generates valuable new perspectives on learning, especially when working with students from different generations, social, and economic backgrounds (Levin, 2000).

The Purpose of Student Voice

Voice is the ability to articulate or express an opinion on a given subject (Freire, 1970). Voice is important because it aids in dispelling the culture of power. Historically, adults and social institutions have had greater voice in the decisions that affect youth in low SES communities (Delpit, 1988). The social positioning of K-12 students who live in the margins negates or limits agency or their ability to influence change (Bourdieu, 1984; Ratner, 2000). Empowering student voice requires encouraging students to identify the various structures and agents that affect their existence (Giroux, 1983a; Noguera, 2007). More importantly, I believe that engaging student voice and perceptions is paramount to students' overall success beyond the classroom and to the development and delivery of relevant curriculum and instruction (Eisner, 1967; Freire, 1970; Fried & Sanchez, 1997; Giroux, 1983a; Janesick, 1991; Nakkula & Ravitch, 1998; Shaunessy & McHatton, 2009).

Encouraging Voice

When voices are muted, the literature posits that the rules and norms of the society, the dominant discourse, and hegemonic views of adults in and outside of their communities diminishes the students' abilities to successfully articulate their needs, wants, and perceptions (Cargile, 2011). These phenomena can be best explained by the theory of *habitus*. Students internalize the stereotypes articulated by teachers, thus, intensifying the occurrences of the pedagogy of poverty with this population (Cargile, 2011). Furthermore, because *habitus* and

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social capital affect individualism and voice, it is incumbent on educators to identify ways in which to influence agency in students who live in the margins (Gardner & Crockwell, 2006; Könings, 2007; Lodge, 2005; Ratner, 2000; Strom, Strom & Beckert, 2011).

There are four ways in which schools have attempted to influence agency: (a) quality control; (b) students as a source of information; (c) compliance and control; and (d) dialogue. Quality control provides feedback from students on instruction, via passive methods such as surveys (Lodge, 2005). While this method may provide a snapshot of how students feel about the services they are receiving, it is limited in capturing students' authentic voices. Similarly, the students as a source of information method of engagement is a passive approach that does not provide opportunities for all students to engage in the feedback loop. Because the approach does not lend to engaging youth in two-way dialogue towards identifying solutions to school concerns, the students as a source of information method of engagement "approach has limited value in school improvement" (Lodge, 2005, p. 133).

Compliance and control reinforces *habitus* and hegemonic constructs, which make it a flawed process for empowering youth. Although compliance and control are an active means of engagement they dis-empower students' voices. Dialogue, however, is the most active form of engaging student voice and empowering youth (Gunter &Thomson, 2007). Thus, by involving students from low-SES communities in two-way dialogue, educators increase the likelihood that they will be able to positively influence student achievement, improve instructional practices, and maintain compliance with school policies. In doing so, two-way dialogue "acknowledges the value of exploring . . . experiences together with fellow students and teachers and . . . their opinions" (Lodge, 2005, p. 134). It is also considered one of the positive traits of a good teacher. Two-way communications led to the empowerment of the disenfranchised, because they start the

process of inclusion, which supports understanding and honesty (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983a). Moreover, when good teaching practices such as listening, coaching, and mentoring are embedded in instruction students make connections between individual and institutional goals and are inspired to be engaged partners in their education, hence, increasing agency (Eisner, 1967; The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2010).

Challenges in Economics and General Education Instruction

Background and content knowledge in "mathematical, statistical, and quantitative reasoning skills applicable to a broad range of social and economic issues" (Vogel & Payne 2010, p. 469) are lagging for many students who are marginalized. The problems exist because high school teachers in low SES communities are often ill prepared in economics instruction and are in need of additional preservice education and professional development (Becker, 2000; Grimes, Millea, & Thomas, 2010). While preservice education and professional development are necessary across the board, preservice education and professional development should center on improving the skill sets of teachers who work in low SES communities (Grimes, et. al., 2010). More specifically, the research calls for more preservice education and professional development in how to make practical connections between economics and real world issues, which will provide students transferable skills (Ford, 2008; Vogel & Payne, 2010; Walstad & Soper, 1998). Additionally, teachers need skills in preparing students to engage and communicate with others throughout the academic and off-campus communities (Ford, 2008). Educating students to exercise their voice is important to student development. Some teachers use team based instructional methods such as learning communities and academic service learning as a means for addressing the need for improving instruction and for providing students with opportunities to apply theory to real world problems, (Schroder, 2010; Temali, 2002).

In building on the need for practical approaches to be imbedded in the curriculum, most course work in economics is "hypothetical and does not involve current events and observable phenomena" (Becker 2000, p. 111). The research suggests students taking courses that lack practical application oftentimes do not make connections to theory (Walstad, 2005). By exposing students to learning through activities that explore real world concerns, learning becomes practical. Because learning communities and academic service learning practices engage students in purposeful and relevant learning, there is a greater propensity enriching the learning experience for both teachers and students (Tinto, 2003). Moreover, learning communities and academic service learning provide teachers and students with experiences that are necessary for developing new faculties in social research and developing important community partnerships (Dorado & Giles, Jr., 2004; Kinnevy & Boddie, 2001). Although learning communities and academic service learning have been shown to provide benefits, courses solely centered on these methods fall short in addressing barriers such as race and stereotypes that play out in the classroom between student and teacher and are reinforced in the curriculum (Green, 2001). Understanding how each system within Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems theory influences student development may aid teachers in developing instructional practices that influence students' agency to address the barriers to development that are articulated in curriculum.

In their attempts to identify the factors that determine student success in university introductory economic courses, Anderson, et. al. (1994) delved into understanding student performance in high school courses. In their research, they explored this phenomenon through quantitative research methods that employed regression analysis. With the dependent variables being students' backgrounds, grades in three high school math subjects, gender, number of years

at the university, attrition rates, and final grades in economics, Anderson et. al. (1994) attempted to identify the correlation of each variable to student success.

It appears that there are other variables that influence student outcomes relative to learning economics (Anderson et. al., 1994; Cohn, Cohn, Hult, Balch, & Bradley, 1998). Gender, course load, and students' major were identified as areas that warranted further investigation (Cohn, et. al., 1998). While there are many variables that influence student achievement in traditional economics coursework, this study explored my actions in (a) facilitating meaningful and intentional caring practices (Fletcher, 2005; Lodge, 2005; Noddings, 2006) and (b) intentionally embedding discussions about systems that are identified Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ideology into instruction.

Summary of the Literature

The types of social, economic, and political capital that students on the margins have are influenced by *habitus*. Because students on the margins often have limited capital, they lack agency and voice in curriculum and instruction development. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems framework offers insight into how the barriers associated with limited capital can be challenged and addressed. Economics instruction was identified as another tool that could be used to empower students on the margins with voice and agency. However, with only 20 states in the United States requiring that students take at least one semester of economics instruction prior to completing their secondary schooling, the literature posits that students are underprepared to engage in the types of social, economic, and political discourse that are germane to the development of their families and communities. Critical pedagogy, which encourages two-way purposeful communications, was put forward as a potential strategy for empowering students on the margins with voice. Furthermore, in centering discussions on the

systems that are identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework, reflective teaching practices that are undergirded in critical pedagogy were offered as an approach for assisting students on the margins with identifying, unmasking, and developing strategies for dismantling the hegemonic structures that impede student development. Based on the literature reviewed, when teachers who bear in mind Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems theory in K-12 instruction, teachers can become more informed on how to empower students on the margins with the skills and language necessary for addressing the environmental factors that influence student development. More importantly, practices that are rooted in reflective instruction and intentional dialogue centered on relevant and real world issues can also increase voice and agency of students on the margins.

Chapter 3: Methodology

During the summer of 2012 (June through August), I investigated the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins? In order to answer this question data were collected, processed, and analyzed from four primary sources: (a) participant observations (case notes and journal); (b) audio recorded interviews; (c) artifacts (assignments, class discussions, and capstone projects); and (d) student focus groups.

As a case study that is rooted in auto-ethnography and participatory action research, I kept daily a reflective teaching journal (personal observations) that I chronicled daily (Brookfield, 1995). The observations that I included in the journal aided me in establishing parameters for the methods of subsequent investigations (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Weiss, 1994). The data collected from the interviews and class discussions provided me with the information required for assessing my instructional methods, the economics curriculum, and students' perceptions of my classroom practices (Mitra, 2010; Romo, 2005; Wharton, 2007). Moreover, through my analysis of the transcripts that were captured electronically during my interviews with each individual student, I was able to glean, analyze, and identify theoretical connections to the students' feedback on my instructional practices (Hutchinson, 1996; Noffke, 1992; Weiss, 1994). These data, along with information collected and analyzed from student questionnaires and student work, provided me with the data necessary for gauging the students' prior knowledge, goals, and progress in the community economic development club. Furthermore, the student questionnaires shed light on students' preferred learning styles, their

goals, and past academic experiences. The data collected from my observations, the interviews, and student artifacts aided me in exploring the primary research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional action of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins?

Data Analysis

To approach the analysis of the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins, I facilitated a two-step process of data analysis (Saldaña, 2009). During the first cycle coding, the four data sets were divided into categories:

1. Case notes (observations): (a) date; (b) activity; (c) notes; (d) general reflective thoughts; (e) theoretical connections; and (f) emerging themes;

2. Students' responses to interview questions: (a) date; (b) student's responses; (c) notes; (d) general reflective thoughts; (e) theoretical connections; and (f) emerging themes;

3. Teacher's review of students' artifacts: (a) date; (b) student's responses; (c) notes; (d) general reflective thoughts; (e) theoretical connections; and (f) emerging themes; and,

4. Students' responses to focus group questions: (a) date; (b) student's responses; (c) notes; (d) general reflective thoughts; (e) theoretical connections; and (f) emerging themes.

Once I categorized the data, I extended the first cycle coding to identify connections to Bronfenbrenner's framework. These data were divided into six sub categories: microsystem,

mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Based on the extended first cycle coding process, two thematic statements surfaced:

1. Developing student agency and voice requires teachers to address students' basic and physiological needs; and,

2. Developing student agency and voice requires teachers to care, listen, and intentionally foster discussions that focus on the unmasking agents and factors that shaped students' *habitus.*

When I unpacked these statements, I noted many of the students had basic and physiological needs, which were unmet. Most of the needs that were identified resided in the microsystem and mesosystem levels that are identified in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework. After conducting a member check I identified four final themes which best represented how my pedagogy in the club influenced student voice and agency: teacher's care, teacher's listening, teacher's engaging in critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures, and teacher's addressing students' basic and physiological needs. Caring, in the context of this study means that students believed that I paid attention to their personal concerns. Students also identified several instances where my actions associated with listening positively impacted their experiences in the club. Students stated that my changing capstone projects and other components of my instruction to meet the needs and goals of the students was reflective of my ability to listen. Critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures refers to instances where we discussed issues related to the decisions that political parties and governmental agencies outside of EDH's community negatively influenced resource allocation and curriculum development. Furthermore, the data suggests that when I connected the students with my

personal networks that I helped the students with addressing their basic and physiological needs, i.e., employment and social services.

Overview of the Site and Community

Built in 1955, Economic Development High (EDH) is located in a reinforced concrete three-story building near four main arteries in a manufacturing based urban center (City of Hope). Due to the age of the building's physical plant, internal heating and cooling are gravely impacted by the external weather conditions. More specifically, during the course of this study, City of Hope experienced a record heat wave with temperatures averaging 90 degrees during the months of June through August 2012. EDH's heating, cooling and electrical systems are dated. Coupled with the systems challenges, the glass block windows along with a limited operational budget made it impossible for the school to cool the building with window based air conditioning units.

With a focus on business and social justice, EDH has experienced challenges in addressing the high unemployment and underemployment of the families of the youth who reside in EDH's catchment area. To address these environmental concerns, the school district's restructuring plans require that EDH operate as a self managed "small school." As a small school EDH's mission is to increase graduation rates and school-to-college opportunities for its student body. Although desired outcomes have been miniscule, EDH's leadership has continued to support student development by offering supplemental services, which address environmental factors (systems) that influence student development. These services include, but are not limited to, the following workshops and classes that are aimed at mitigating challenges in the microsystem and mesosystem spheres of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 2005):

1. Parental engagement and educational levels;

2. College preparation;

3. Health and well being;

4. Remediation;

5. Academic enrichment; and,

6. Tutoring

These workshops and classes are aimed at mitigating challenges in the microsystem and

mesosystem spheres of influence that are identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework.

Targeted as a self-managed school for the 2012-13 academic year, EDH has developed an

array of community partnerships that support instruction and provide students with additional

opportunities to learn. As a self-managed school EDH operates as a charter of the school district,

which has a separate governing board that is responsible for curriculum and budgetary oversight.

The board consists of community stakeholders, who include parents, and residents, as well as

nonprofit, faith based, and corporate leaders. Although there are partnerships in place, teachers

have not taken advantage of the opportunities to connect classroom instruction to real world

practices (Campbell, personal communication on February 11, 2012)[3].

With a reported population of two hundred and seventy six students, 81.6 percent of the

student body at EDH qualified for free-and-reduced lunch. Additionally, the majority of the

population at EDH identified as African Americans with the remaining demographics consisting

of a small percentage identifying as Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, and

as Asian American. Because EDH is located in a local investment area, the school has benefited

from the financial and organizational support of many local foundations and corporations. Due in

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[3] Campbell is responsible for identifying, securing, and coordinating community partnerships at
EDH

part to the local investments, EDH has provided additional services and activities to its student

body, which include but are not limited to:

> Dual enrollment, tutoring/extended day programs, internship program, accelerated
>
> reading/math, ACT prep program, extensive mentoring programs, ROTC (required
>
> freshman year), chess, dance, honor society, newspaper, videography, sports, drama,
>
> cheer-leading, student government, basketball, football, softball, baseball, volleyball,
>
> tennis, golf, track and field, cross country. (Campbell, personal communication on
>
> February 11, 2012)

Based on my discussions with Campbell (personal communication on February 11,

2012), as well as the data that I obtained from local sources, the EDH's educational framework is

rooted in collaborative learning and inquiry based instruction. Further talks with EDH's principal

revealed that although EDH's faculty and staff have attempted to optimize the collaborative

learning and inquiry-based practices, the school's instructional framework has not yielded

positive results on standardized tests. Results from a state mandated test during the 2009-10 and

2010-11 academic years provided empirical data that supported the principal's concerns

regarding the effectiveness of the instructional practices at EDH. Based on the 2011-12 State

exam, 5.2 percent and zero percent of EDH's 11th grade student population were proficient in

English Language Arts and mathematics, respectively. Additionally, EDH's aggregate scores on

the same test were well below the state's and local school district's averages in the area of social

studies. When compared to the school district and the state, EDH's students reported scores were

50 percent lower and 72.3 percent lower, respectively. With approximately 42,233 residents and

14,000 youth residing in EDH's catchment area, well over 82.5 percent of the youth live in

poverty. Both the principal and community leader who were interviewed prior to launching this

study stated that they wanted to better understand this phenomenon and believed that surveying students and engaging their voices may shed light on why the instructional framework has not led to increased student achievement (Campbell, personal communication on February 11, 2012).

Study Participants

The participants in the study included 30 African American high school students who were in grades 9 through 12. The 30 students resided in EDH's catchment area, met the federal guidelines for free and reduced lunch, and were representative of the demographic profile specific to the EDH's population. Based on feedback from the students, all stated that they wanted a better quality of life (education, employment, housing, money, and luxury items). Twenty-seven lived in households that were headed by a single mother. Twenty-four resided in households where the heads of household were under employed in part time and/or minimum wage work. Twenty-five were females and five were males. Five had immediate family members who attended institutions of higher education. Three of the participants lived with their grandparents. Three of the students self-identified as being members of the LGBTQ community and one student shared that she had given birth to a child. The average family unit was five and one half individuals.

Other Considerations

Initially the principal at EDH recruited sophomores and juniors to participate in the study, but due to low interest from the targeted participants, seniors were invited. After securing 30 participants who self-selected to engage in the summer program, informed consents were distributed to their parents and/or legal guardians directly at the orientation session that took place at the beginning of the study. Parents and/or legal guardians that were not able to attend the orientation session received the forms from the students or through the mail. Additionally, all

study participants whose parents and/or legal guardians signed and returned the informed

consents were provided assent forms for their review and decision. Once participants made the

decision to sign and partake in the study, the assent forms were filed away in a locked cabinet

along with the respective informed consent forms. Participants were made aware that they could

withdraw from the study at any time with no consequence. Due to violations of the student code

of conduct, three (3) of the 30 participants (Deidra, Edward, and Donnie) were released from the

program during the last week of instruction. Although the three students were released, they

provided input on my instructional practices when I conducted the student interviews and the

focus group sessions and their data are included.

Framing My Instructional Approach

The course that I taught for the community economic development club was carried out

based on courses I taught at Mosaic Community College, which is accredited by the Higher

Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. In those

sessions, students, adult learners as well as high school students in a concurrent enrollment

program, worked in teams of up to five. The goal of the team-based instruction was to empower

students with the skills necessary for critically reflecting on the contents offered in the course

materials, through contemplative discussions of theory and terminology, while exploring

research specific to community economic development opportunities. Additionally, students

were able to employ the team-based strategy through cooperative learning activities such as

think-pair-shares and capstone projects[4], which reinforced learning (Maier & Keenan, 1994).

During the courses teams were responsible for conducting online research, which supported their

capstone projects. They were required to develop a project plan (case for support) that argued for

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[4] See Appendix A Capstone Project Rubric.

the creation of an innovative program and/or service that addressed a public concern (Hall,

2010). Each case for support included background data discussed in the lectures, the textbooks,

supplemental materials, and secondary sources identified from students' research, i.e., journal

articles, census data, and best practice research, which was posted on our class's Facebook page.

The course adhered to the economic and technology standards for the State Department of

Education, which are based on the high school content expectations for social studies as well as

the common core state standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical

subjects. Based on my personal experience in economics, I utilized Monopoly Here & Now®,

Monopoly Electronic Banking Edition®, and Uno® as tools for introducing the students to the

basic principals of economics.

Community Economic Development Club Course Design

The community economic development club met for eight weeks. The 30 participants in

the club were equally divided into two cohorts of 15. The students who participated in Cohort 1

included: Carl, Edward, Denise, Maria, Asia, Jamelia, Regina, Alice, Candy, Sharon, Marion,

Michelle, Cameron, Justice, and Melody. The students who participated in Cohort 2 included:

Jaimee, Traci, Mary, Latonya, Lisa, Brenda, Deidra, Jim, Donnie, Brenda, Jean, Jade, Kelvin,

Allison, and Sheridan[5]. Six (6) of the 30 students[6] who emerged as key to my findings (Traci,

Jade, Jean, Regina, Kevin, and Jim) had the following traits:

1. Regina lived in a two-parent household where both parents worked full time jobs;

2. Kevin and Jim lived with their grand parents;

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[5] In order to maintain anonymity, the students selected pseudonyms.

[6] Three students were released from the club due to student code of conduct violations.

3. Jade and Jean's mothers were dislocated workers who were experiencing health challenges;

4. Regina's parents attended higher educational institutions in the Midwest;

5. Traci was an artist who was labeled as special needs;

6. Jade and Jean were on the basketball team at EDH;

7. Kevin was a tactile learner; and,

8. Jade and Jean's mothers received federal housing subsidies.

Through our weekly discussions related to Bronfenbrenner's framework, Traci, Jade, Jean, Regina, Kevin, and Jim grew to be class leaders who encouraged others to become more vocal and engaged.

Throughout the study, participants in Cohort 1 met on Mondays and Wednesdays, while the students in Cohort 2 met on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each cohort met from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. on their respective days and received similar instructional practices. In order to meet the stated goals and objectives, the club was primarily focused around group work and guided practice. I purposely engaged in continual reflective practice that was informed by my observations of and interactions with the students, as well as my prior experiences in and outside of the classroom. During day one activities students were introduced the subject of economics by engaging them in discussions and activities relative to the factors that influenced community economic development decisions in their community. Students identified the systems and phrases that their teams considered as the primary factors which impacted their families, school, and community. Based on the students' feedback and our ensuing discussions, we intentionally connected the course materials to the 25 student identified concerns that resided in the microsystem, mesosystem, and chronosystem levels of Bronfenbrenner's framework.

Based on my past practices, the 8-week unit plan intentionally included instructional strategies geared toward increasing student voice, empowerment, and engagement through (a) critical discourse, (b) group based interactions in ideas generation and problem solving, (c) student engagement in authentic work, which supports learning through rich ongoing assessments, and (d) students' understanding of new concepts through modeling and coaching. Moreover, I deliberately integrated technologies into the unit plan, so that I would be able to: have more time to monitor, assess, and provide constructive feedback to the students; increase communication among the students and student teams and myself; and increase equity in the classroom and school (Kelly, 2008). In keeping with the high school content expectations for social studies as well as common core standards state standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, the lesson plans were based on national economics standards. The aims of the lesson plans were to provide students with the skills necessary to:

1. Perform proficiently and to display competencies with a basic level of understanding of economics;

2. Identify, recall, and recognize economic concepts;

3. Describe and explain the relationship between economic concepts; and,

4. Use data and information to identify an economic outcome (National Center for Education Statics, para. 4, 2013).

Based the national economics standards that were devised by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and the State Department of Education High School Social Studies Content Expectations for Economics, which supervises EDH's school district, adopted four goals for economics instruction:

1. Increase student achievement a basic level proficiency in economics instruction;

2. Increase responsible citizenship amongst its student population;

3. Prepare students for successful post secondary engagement; and,

4. Facilitate economics instruction that aids in developing digitally proficient students.

These goals are tied to the stated curriculum objectives of preparing students for the world of work, a vocation, public service, and education beyond their secondary experiences. Moreover, because I did not incorporate these objectives in prior instruction, I included the stated objectives in this unit plan as a guide for embedding the State Department of Education's workforce development objectives in my instruction: applied learning; communications; using technology; working in teams; and making connections. In building on the economic standards and the principles discussed in class, I deliberately developed the unit plan to include a capstone project, which focused on addressing student identified concerns as well as the standards: (a) economics knowledge, (b) intellectual skills, and (c) components of economics literacy. Table 3 provides the framework that the student teams used for their capstone projects.

Table 3

Capstone Project Measures

Measure	Criteria
Economics Knowledge	Students should understand the fundamental constraints imposed by limited resources and choices based on these factors; how economies, markets and people work.
	Students should understand the cost and benefit of economic interaction and the interdependence of people.
Intellectual Skills	Students should display skills in economic reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, and analyzing real-life situations.
Components of Economics Literacy	Students should display the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate the consequences of individual decisions and public policy.

Note. Adapted from National Center for Education Statics, 2013.

Given the economic standards and capstone project's criteria, student teams worked towards creating and delivering a report that detailed how the key terminology connected to their team's

project. In addition, the capstone projects addressed the standards of performance identified in

Appendix A Capstone Project Rubric. Steps for completing their projects included instruction on

how to:

- Conduct research;

- Develop a case for support;

- Conduct best practice modeling;

- Develop logic models; and

- Develop and deliver a Microsoft Power Point presentation.

During the final week students participated in instructor led interviews.

Chapter 4: Results And Data Analysis

During the course of this study, Cohort1 and Cohort 2 received similar instructional practices. Our cooperative learning activities were sparked by daily classroom discussions that were rooted in the systems framework as suggested by Bronfenbrenner. This framework was selected as the platform for engaging students (individually and in groups) in discussions that would aid them with identifying, unmasking, and developing strategies for addressing the hegemonic structures that influenced their development. Our discussion topics were based on current affairs. I selected our daily topics and modeled the think-pair-share strategy during our first week of instruction. As time progressed, students identified topics for our class discussions. Two of our topics were selected by the students: the State's take over of EDH's school district and the State redirecting educational funding to support economic development efforts along the city's riverfront area rather than in EDH's community. The two topics were selected because Kevin, Jean, Jaimee, Brenda, and Lisa expressed concerns with the state's decisions. The students' views on the aforementioned topics and other subject matter are reflected throughout this chapter.

Chapter 4 is divided into four sections: student narratives, significant events, interview data, and connecting the data. The aims of each section are to provide an overview of the results and a general interpretation of how the data influenced student voice and my instructional practices. The student narratives section presents a snapshot of the six (6) students who significantly influenced my instructional practices: Traci, Jade, Jean, Regina, Kevin, and Jim. Each subsequent section highlights the voices and experiences of the students who participated

in the community economic development club. Additionally, these data offer insight into how I made connections with students and how I influenced voice and agency in the community economic development club. The connecting the data section offers my reflections on how the students influenced my decisions throughout the course of our engagement. The section will build on the data presented in the significant events and focus group data sets. Note that the quotes in this chapter are taken directly from my case notes and the students' responses to the individual interview and focus group prompts. In the cases where quotation marks are used, the participants are being quoted directly. These data were collected from my instructional activities with the two cohorts of students (1 and 2) who received the same instructional practices twice weekly. Cohort 1 participated in the study on Mondays &Wednesdays and Cohort 2 participated on Tuesdays & Thursdays. Documented herein are my findings.

Results: Student Narratives

During the data collection phase, I captured student feedback through interviews and focus groups from the 30 students. Additionally, I recorded my daily interactions with the students in my case notes. After reviewing my case notes and the data from the student interviews, six (6) participants emerged as individuals who greatly influenced how I changed and carried out my instructional practices: Traci, Jade, Jean, Regina, Kevin, and Jim. Because the six participants were vocal, they were instrumental in other students identifying and making specific connections to the microsystem and mesosystem levels of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework. The student narratives provide general information on each student. The narratives also offer insight into the challenges that each participant identified exists in their homes, community, and school.

Traci. When I first met Traci, she was a shy, quiet, but yet inquisitive young lady. Once we had a chance to get to know each other, Traci, unprompted, invited me into her life by sharing her background. As the youngest of three, Traci is an artist who has a passion for drawing pictures that represent her family, community, and culture. She was a 16-year old eleventh grade student who envisioned herself as being a graphic artist when she graduates from high school. Prior to participating in the community economic development club, she had not taken economics. She self-reported her grade point average and grade in math were 3.2 and B, respectively. However, Traci acknowledged that her success was based on lots of hard work and support from her parents as well as her friends Jade and Jean.

In previous years, Traci struggled academically, which she stated made her feel isolated and different from everyone else. Because she could not focus in class, she stated that she would often drift off and draw pictures. Due to her failing several classes, her parents requested that the school assess Traci to determine what was hindering her academic success. Based on the assessment and the other procedural requirements, it was concluded that Traci had a learning disability, which required her to receive additional instructional support. According to Traci, the assessment was the best thing to happen to her because "now I have additional supports to help me do better in school like my brother and sister."

Working with Traci. During the course of the community economic development club, my interaction with Traci increased because she was open and expressive when my instructions on an assignment or team activity were not clear to her. Instead of raising her hand to be acknowledged prior to speaking, Traci would blurt out in the middle of a lesson statements like "I don't understand what you are saying" or when I was attending to another student she stated "excuse me Mr. Hudson can you help us over here." According to Traci, most teachers would

consider this as disruptive behavior, but I viewed Traci's actions as her advocating for herself and her colleagues. During the interview I asked Traci, why she was comfortable speaking up and asking questions? She replied that she thought that I cared and that I made it easy for her and her classmates to approach me. When I asked Traci if she could provide with examples of what she meant by her statements, Traci gave several examples of statements or actions that showed how I was displaying care and made the students feel comfortable:

On the first day you told us who you were and where you came from and told us

you failed economics and didn't want us to fail . . . you told us that you wanted us

to be the best and that we shouldn't be afraid to ask questions when we don't

know something . . . you gave us a lot of teamwork and helped us be leaders . . .

you helped us be creative . . . and addressed everyone in the class and encouraged

everyone to participate.

Traci's statement encouraged me to continue to take time to get to know my students and to be more reflective and responsive to their concerns.

During our interview and focus group discussions Traci acknowledged that our class discussions helped her better understand her role in making her community. Her experience in the club encouraged Traci to be an advocate for change. Her remarks were supported by my observations of her in the community economic development club. There was one occasion where Traci served as an advocate for herself and her colleagues. During the club, students developed teams to create projects to address gaps in services or needs in the community. Traci was originally on a team with individuals who were developing an entertainment and clothing establishment. Because she wanted to work with Jean and Jade, she advocated for the resources and her services be redistributed to help both teams succeed. Hence, Traci encouraged me to

allow here to contract her services to the Xscape Hall & Mall team, while fully investing her time, talents, and winnings from the Monopoly® game to Pins & Needles. When I asked Traci why she requested the change, she expressed that my engagement with the students encouraged her to speak up.

Upon request by her peers, Traci also worked with other teams in the class to develop artwork for their projects. This acknowledgement by her peers sparked Traci to focus her services to her team on her artistic talents. When I asked her why she choose to focus and sell her services to other teams, Traci stated "cause I have artistic skills and they know how to deal with people we can make a lot of money." Figures 2 and 3 depict Traci's work she submitted on July 11, 2012, for her team on her colleagues on the *Finally 16* team.
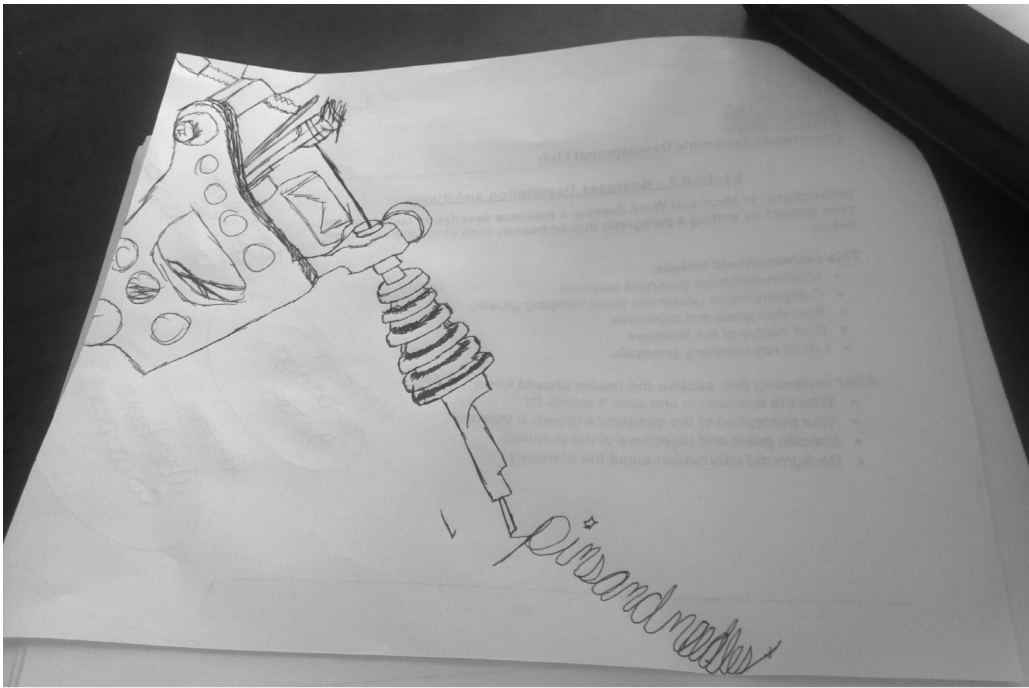

Figure 2. *Pins and Needles - Logo. This figure represents Traci's logo design skills.* Picture of Traci's work that she submitted to the instructor on July 11, 2012.
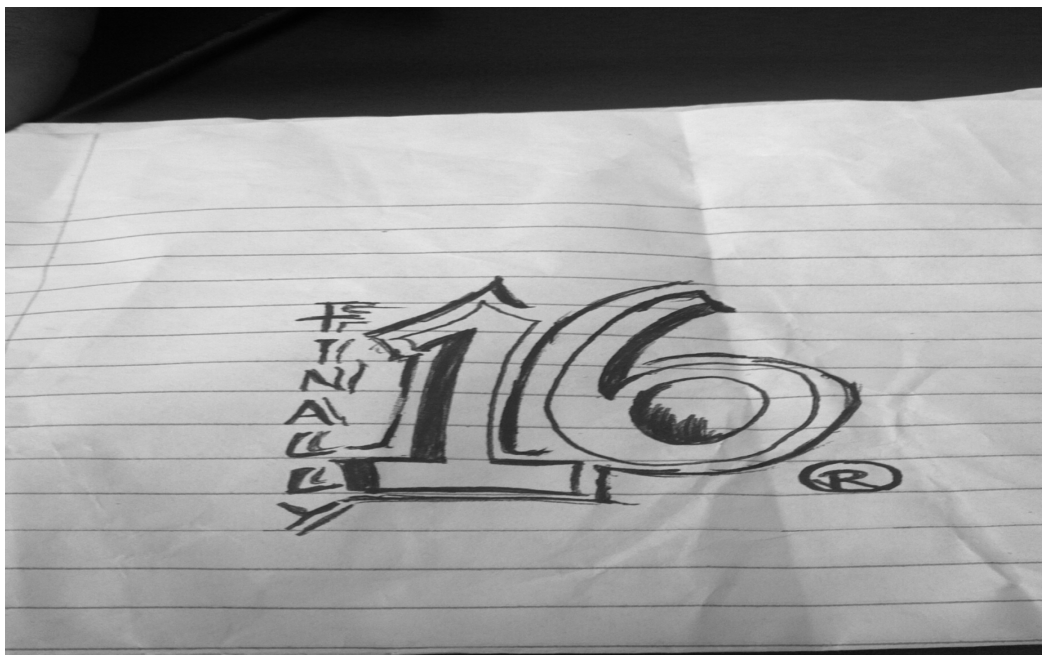
Figure 3. *Finally 16 Logo. This figure represents Traci's logo design skills.* Picture of Traci's work that she submitted to the instructor on July 11, 2012.

On two occasions in mid-July 2012 I observed Traci not engaging in our class assignment and taking assignments home. After approaching her to find out why she was not submitting the assignments, Traci expressed that she had challenges with accessing technology at home and was not familiar with basic desktop publishing software at the site. I asked her if she ever used technology in the arts and she stated that she used CAD/CAM in school but preferred her pencils and pens. In order to overcome these deficits, I paired Traci with another student (Regina from the *Finally 16* team) who had stronger capabilities in technology. This pairing of Traci and Regina led to Traci improving her desktop publishing and Internet search skills. Regina also enhanced her teaching and peer mentoring capabilities while working with Traci. I viewed Traci and Regina's individual strengths as an opportunity to extend the cooperative learning beyond my intended practices.

Traci's relationship with Jean and Jade was one of several relationships that I observed where students provided peer support to other students. When I asked Traci to explain the

dynamics of her relationship with Jean and Jade, she expressed that they were cousins and that they had to "have each others backs." She expressed that things have changed in the community and that the new people "brought a lot of drama." She also told me that because the jobs have left the area crime rates are high in her community. Because of the crime and other activities in the area, Traci, Jade, and Jean served as peer supports to each other.

Traci is quite industrious and is ready to apply her craft. On more than one occasion she asked if she could work for my company or could I help her get a job that will help make some money for school. Because of her persistence, I reached out to colleagues in my network and she, Jade, and Jean secured internships with a local nonprofit. Traci is excited about the internship because it is providing her with an opportunity to enhance her technological skills. Moreover, based on my conversations with Traci, she stated the internship gave her the work experience and knowledge necessary for becoming a successful artist and reaffirmed her identity and voice. Furthermore, in our interview, when prompted with a question about her perception of how working is connected to Bronfenbrenner's microsystem Traci stated she understood "my getting a job will help me buy food and other things that my family needs." By intentionally working with Traci to connect her with the internship, her short-term employment needs were met.

During our interview and focus group Traci acknowledged that our class discussions aided her with understanding her role in the community. She also expressed that she liked the way in which I engaged all the students. When referencing to my student engagement strategies, Traci stated, "you addressed everyone in the class and encouraged everyone to participate . . . we were never told answers were wrong and you helped us step out of the box and enhance upon the qualities we possessed." When prompted with the question what I could have done to make the experience better, Traci explained: "we needed more time to work on the projects and to make

money with our business plans." Traci's comments to this question are paramount to how I develop future activities in the club.

Jade. At the time of the study Jade's grade point average was 3.0. According to Campbell who is the director of community partnerships in EDH's catchment area, Jade is considered to be a rising star in her community. She has been an active member of three community-based organizations since 2010. Jade is a leader on the basketball team and takes classes in the newly developed medical and community health program at EDH. She expressed a desire to go into the medical profession, but appeared to be undecided on the area of medicine she would like to pursue. Jade expressed that while she thought that the school was necessary, EDH was not preparing her to go into her chosen field. According to Jade, EDH's curriculum, unlike another school in the area that has a similar focus does not expose students to real world issues in the medical field. Jade expressed that her friends at a similar school in the community "actually go to hospitals and work with medical doctors and nurses . . . visit colleges and universities . . . have guest speakers every week."

Jade has two older brothers who are working minimum wage jobs and a sister who is a freshman at a research one institution. Jade's mother had a job in the auto industry and was able to provide for the family prior to an accident in 2010. Since the accident, she has been out of work on medical leave. Prior to going away to college, Jade's older sister served as her role model and surrogate parent. With her eldest siblings living out of the house, Jade's role has shifted to primary caregiver for her younger siblings.

Working with Jade. During our class discussions on the primary factors that impacted their families, school, and community, Jade was quite expressive in her actions and remarks relative to students being change agents. After Mary stated that students "didn't matter" Jade

nodded in agreement and affirmed her position by saying, "adults [do not] listen and teachers [do not] care." We explored these remarks further through a round robin discussion format. When it was Jade's turn to speak she expressed "adults are always telling us what to do but [do not] provide us with the help to do it." I asked her to explain further and she stated, "I keep telling my teachers that I don't have Internet or a computer at home, so why would they keep giving me homework that is on the Internet?[7]" She provided other instances to explain what she meant by her statements:

> We've requested to take the net books home that the school district told us that we
>
> would have, but we still don't have them . . . we asked for textbooks but they keep
>
> giving us worksheets . . . we want to learn but aren't given the tools to do it.
>
> In working with Jade, I witnessed her helping other students identify and express their

voice in class. One specific situation occurred when she was partnered with Kevin and he was drifting from the assignment. I observed Jade asking Kevin what was wrong and he stated, "this class is boring." Jade inquired further and asked Kevin what was boring and what he wanted to do. Kevin replied, "I don't like working on computers . . . I just want to open up our tattoo business." In their interchange, Jade suggested that Kevin express what he wanted to me, which he did. Based on Jade's prompting, Kevin and I discussed and developed a strategy to help him achieve the aims of the assignment as well as his personal goals.

Jade and I discussed the aforementioned scenario involving Kevin in our interview. When I asked Jade what prompted her talk to Kevin about his being disengaged in class, Jade expressed she believed Kevin was going to pull her grade down on the project. Jade also stated

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[7]In this instance Jade is referring to the teachers who work at EDH during the regular school calendar.

she thought if Kevin spoke with me I would help Kevin get refocused. I also asked Jade why she

assumed I would help Kevin and Jade replied, "because every time we would get off track you

would help us get back on track, so I knew you would help him." Hearing Jade's perspective on

how I could help Kevin suggested to me that she viewed me as a mentor as well as an instructor.

During our week three activities, I continued my guided instructional practice[8] on ways

in which to address the issues that students identified on day one. With the goal of providing the

students with resources for increasing their voices in community economic development, I

trained the students on how to conduct research, develop a case for support, and use Microsoft

Power Point to convey a message. While reviewing the economic terms for the week, i.e.,

pricing, marketing, opportunity cost, unemployment, recession, supply, demand, outsourcing,

and brain drain[9], a robust discussion developed around how the terms connected to the students

lived experiences. I initially shared my experiences with unemployment and how it affected my

ability to purchase a car when I was an undergraduate student at Urban Mission University[10]. My

story prompted Jade to share her story about how her mother's unemployment impacted her

choices. Jade shared with the class that because her mother was off on a medical leave that her

family was experiencing financial setbacks. I spoke with Jade after class and she expressed that

she needed a job to help out her family. In consideration of her request and my relationships in

the community, I connected Jade's family with local nonprofit organizations that provided the

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[8] Guided instructional practiceis the process of presenting students with opportunities to acquire knowledge. The method consists of three steps: modeling, application, and integration of the new knowledge.

[9] See Appendix C Economic Terms

[10] This discussion was prompted by the key terms we covered during week 3 and it followed the framework associated with the guided instruction methodology.

family with housing, clothing, food, and utility assistance. I also assisted Jade with securing temporary part-time employment with a local agency. Similar to the Kevin scenario, Jade and I discussed the how we worked to address the concerns she identified in the microsystem and why she spoke so openly about her family concerns. Jade expressed that I made her feel like I cared and that I wanted to help.

Jean. From birth to age eight, Jean's father and maternal grandmother raised her. In our casual discussions, she recalled her father working hard to provide for her and a younger sibling (sister). When she turned nine, Jean moved in with her mother and other siblings (three sisters and a brother). According to Jean, her cousins and siblings were her primary support base from the age of nine until 13. When asked who was her primary support base today, Jean expressed when she was feeling lonely and shy when her cousins and older sisters by her mother started "doing their own thing and not giving" her attention, Traci and Jade stepped in and became her new support base. Throughout the course of our engagement, Jean, Jade, and Traci refereed to each other as cousins[11].

During our discussion on sociological factors that influence student development, Jean identified that at the age of 14 two major events occurred in her life, that not only propelled Jean to a higher level of responsibility in her family, but also impacted her performance in school: Jean's older siblings (brother and sisters) moved out; and Jean's mother had an accident on her job, which forced her mother out of the workplace. Because Jean was the eldest child living with her mother, she was given the responsibility of caring for her younger siblings, her mother, and the house, while going to school. Jean stated that she was torn between family obligations and

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[11] From a sociological perspective, Jade and Jean's relationship can be considered as a fictive kinship. Fictive kinship extends family connections beyond marriage, blood or legal adoption.

school activities. With all of her life challenges Jean self-reported a 2.8 grade point average, C's in both economics and math. She stated that she received tutoring in math and was involved in the Reserve Officer Training Corp at EDH.

Jean expressed that she liked talking to her peers about their feelings and loved dressing up and singing. She identified herself as a very knowledgeable person who can achieve anything that she works hard to accomplish. One of her dreams is to become an American Idol. Jean believes that in accomplishing her goal of being an American Idol she could be an example for other girls who face similar trials and tribulations that she experienced.

Working with Jean. The first week of the economic development club provide the students with the opportunity to not only identify the systems that influenced their development, but also suggested strategies for building youth capacity to address the challenges that they identified in the microsystem, mesosystem and chronosystem. During these discussions Jean identified the thread between each of the concerns was education. She expressed "if people were more educated they would be able to get jobs . . . provide for their families . . . improve schools and neighborhoods . . . and reduce drop outs . . . have better life choices."

Jean suggested that in order for education to impact youth that prior to creating new schools that educators should talk to students to identify "what they are dealing with." In doing so, Jean expressed "teachers should listen to us and act on what we say . . . be open to our suggestions and provide us with the books and computers to help us be successful." During our interview, when I asked Jean how her remarks on this day were tied to Bronfenbrenner's framework she made a direct connection to our discussions specific to the mesosystem and chronosystem.

In our interview, Jean stated that she had a lot of fears and did not feel as if her current

education would prepare her for success. She stated that she believed that most of her teachers were "teaching for a check." Jean acknowledged that while there have been many attempts to improve the school system in her community, the current test scores in her school provided evidence that the strategies were not working. Jean provided me with an example of what she meant by the strategies that were not working. As a student in a newly created technology and college preparatory program, Jean stated she and her peers did not have access to working technology, textbooks or experiences that supported the mission of the school. According to Jean, these voids in instruction were hindering her development in getting a good job when she graduated.

Jean thought about her future daily and did not have the confidence that she would be able to pay for higher education. She expressed that she believed that her educational experiences had not adequately prepared her for college. Moreover, Jean did not believe that she had the supports necessary for successfully completing her collegiate pursuits. Jean had one teacher (Ms. Schaefer) at her school that she made a connection with, but due to the reorganization of the school district the teacher was assigned to another school; thus, they have lost contact. When we discussed her views on Ms. Schaefer's practices, Jean liked that Ms. Schaefer always asked about her day and connected her with resources to address challenges at home and in school. Similar to her experiences in Ms. Schaefer's class, Jean expressed her experiences in the community economic development club provided her with the additional supports to address some of her personal and academic concerns. More specifically, Jean expressed that her family needed additional assistance to pay their utility bills and rent. Being the eldest child and the only person working in her household, Jean requested assistance with getting a job. Based on my familiarity with the resources in the community, I connected Jean's mother

with several nonprofit organizations that aided the family with the past due utility bills and rent. Additionally, I assisted Jean with securing employment and mentoring from a local organization, which focuses on working with teen girls.

We discussed our interactions in the club, (what Jean viewed were the high points of our summer, and what could make the club better, Jean expressed that the smaller class size along with the group assignments encouraged her engagement in the classroom. She really liked that I set high expectations and encouraged student voice. Being open and engaging students in continuous discussion on issues related to their community was a strategy that Jean expressed helped her connect the learning with real life. Jean really liked that I allowed the class to play games. She explained that gaming and discussions enforced concepts that she was familiar with, but had a hard time expressing when she talked to adults. Jean shared that by my incorporating the games of Monopoly® and Uno® into our class discussion on systems and agents connected the academic aims to real world examples and made learning fun.

The high points of the summer for Jean were the summer job and the final project competition. The summer job provided Jean with the opportunity to learn new skills in technology and increase her awareness of the richness of the city. While employed in the community, Jean conducted asset mapping and community surveys. Through both activities, Jean learned more about the various assets in her community. She also acquired skills in data entry and report generation. According to Jean, these newly acquired skills will help her with research and writing activities when she returns to school in the fall.

Jean, like most of the students in the club, believed that the classes should have taken place earlier during the day. The afternoon start and finish time, in concert with the heat of the building, made it difficult for the students to maintain focus. Because the subject matter was so

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important to the students' lives, Jean articulated that the club activities should be extended beyond summer and incorporated into the school's academic schedule. Moreover, Jean stated that although I was successful in connecting students to resources the limited access to technology made it difficult to complete their assignments.

Similar to Jade's experiences, many of the challenges that were identified by Jean resided within the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's framework. She attributed her need to for employment to the need to secure resources to reduce the impacts of exosystem influencers such as her mother's unemployment. Furthermore, when we discussed Jean's remarks relative to the need for improved schools and neighborhoods, she expressed schools needed to provide students with the tools and resources that will support student success.

Regina. Regina was an only child who resided with both parents. She self reported a 3.65 grade point average and a grade C+ in math. Regina enjoys reading, signing, acting, writing and participating in debates. When she graduates from high school, Regina has plans on attending a Big Ten university and majoring in business. Upon graduating from college she envisions herself becoming a career politician. Her primary goal for participating in the community economic development club was to learn new skills that she could apply in her career. She considered herself to be a self-starter and a leader in her peer group. Regina participated on the student government at her school.

When we discussed her grade in math Regina told me that she had a tutor, but was still having problems with making connections with the terms in algebra. Although math was challenging subject, Regina believed that she would overcome her deficits. According to Regina, her parent's rationale for sending her to EDH was to take advantage of the new curriculum in public leadership and the additional supports that the school publicized in its advertisement.

Regina and her parents traveled often. The majority of their time traveling has been spent visiting family in other states. Before she becomes a career politician, Regina wants to travel the world and see places like Paris, France and London, England. She has taken one year of Spanish and plans to take more courses. Her best friends in the club were Jamelia, Mary, and Alice. They all attended the same junior high school and spend a lot of time outside of the club hanging out, talking on the phone, texting, and sending pictures on Instagram. Regina acknowledged that although her school does not provide her with the technology necessary for completing her homework she had not experienced the same concerns as her peers with technology. Regina's parents purchased her a laptop, printer, and the necessary software for completing her assignments.

Working with Regina. As a self-starter, Regina functioned in class with little guidance beyond the instructions that I gave for each assignment. I noticed early on that she grasped the economic concepts faster than her peers. When we talked about her ability to make the connections to the course materials, she stated she really liked business. She also stated that she liked how I taught the course, i.e., using gaming and cooperative learning strategies to engage students. Regina also acknowledged that she had courses in middle school that introduced many of the terms and concepts we discussed in our class. Because she was a quick study, I enlisted Regina and her team's support in reviewing and providing feedback on the course materials. Based on their feedback, we included more social media based instruction in the class.

During our discussion on the last day of class, Regina expressed that she did not personally identify with the concerns in the microsystem, mesosystem, and chronosystem. When asked her why she did not identify with the three systems, Regina replied, unlike her peers, her parents and extended family were her primary support; thus, she was sheltered from the

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hardships that her classmates were experiencing. Although she was a student in the community, she lived outside the community. However different from her class, Regina was quite empathetic to their plight. Her empathy was transparent on the last day. Regina, like several students, was self-motivated and developed a project that she could turn into "real business." She went as far as writing up a separate business plan for a nonprofit called Teens Care Organization. Figure 4 represents the coversheet of the plan that Regina developed while waiting for her peers to complete their presentations of their capstone projects.
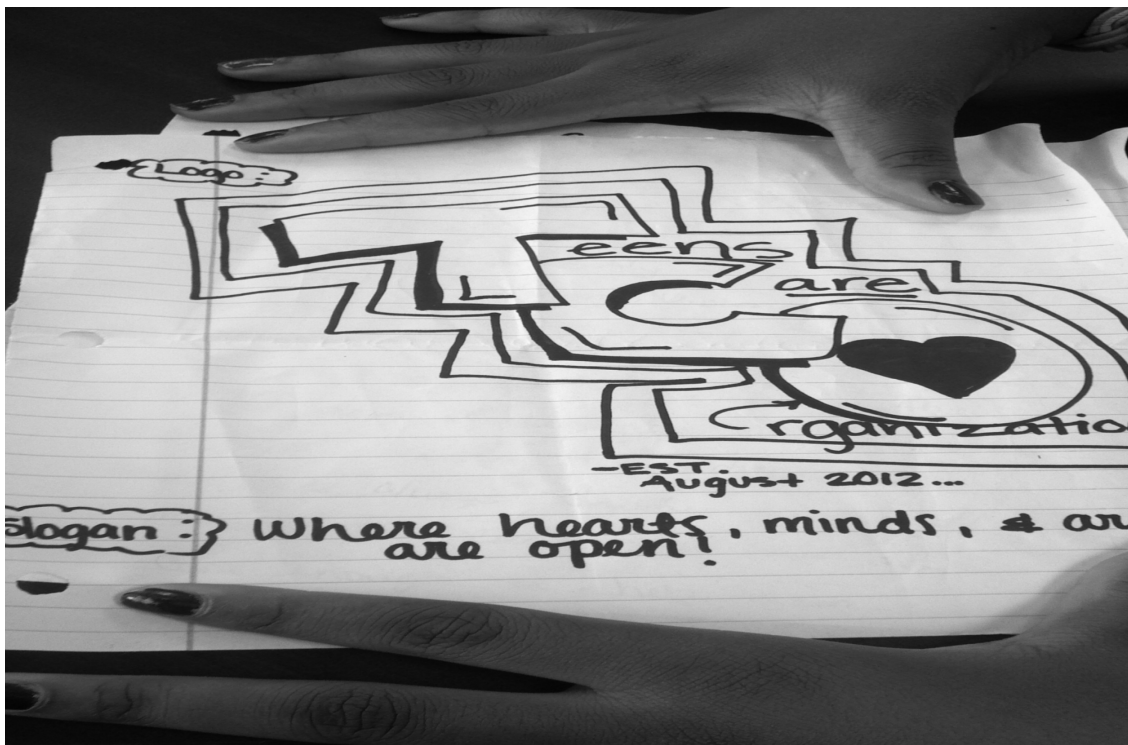
Figure 4. *Teens Care Organization. This figure represents the logo and slogan for the nonprofit that Regina wanted to develop.* Picture of Regina's work that she submitted to the instructor on August 17, 2012.

Regina's goal with Teens Care Organization was to provide a safe space for at risk teens who are dealing with gang violence, sexually transmitted infections, domestic violence, and suicidal thoughts. She envisioned Teens Care Organization's team being a group of people who show students that they care and that "things do get better and there's another way out." As a

transitional housing program, Regina believed that Teens Care Organization could offer

counseling and educational services that can help kids worldwide. I asked Regina why she

submitted the additional project and she communicated, "I pretty much wanted to open a

nonprofit and being in the class inspired me to write the plan. I know it's not professionally

written, but I feel like its something that I really want to do." She also expressed that I was the

first person she thought about when the idea came to her to create Teen Care Organization. She

expressed that because I was a business developer she believed that I could help her with her

venture.

We discussed ways in which I could improve my instructional practices and Regina

suggested that I continue to ask students questions, drop the Facebook[12] assignment and consider

using Tumblr[13], and give students the options of either working on a team or working

individually to develop their own projects on the first day. She also suggested that I continue to

give students real life scenarios. She stated that the scenarios helped the students make

connections between the materials and "real life."

Kevin. Kevin is 18 years old and lives with his grandmother and five siblings. He is the

second eldest child and considers success as making a lot of money. According to Kevin, he

repeated the 12th grade in the fall because he did not have enough credits to graduate in June

2012. He has expressed interest in attending Job Corps so that he could "pick up a trade" and

obtain his GED. Kevin self reported the grade of an F in economics and a 1.8 grade point

average. Because his older brother and father were members of a local gang, Kevin expressed

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[12] Facebook was an instructional aid that we used for out of class communications and the posting of team assignments

[13] Tumblr is an online social media tool that the students used to post pictures, blogs, and other content.

that he has to be mindful of his whereabouts when he is in EDH's neighborhood. Although he is not licensed, Kevin is a barber who has several clients who attend EDH.

Kevin expressed that he loves drawing and building things with his hands. He enjoys making jewelry and has a gift for drawing pictures. His gift for art was one of the reasons why he suggested to the Pins & Needles team that they needed to focus on developing a tattoo designs and piercing business. Kevin does not have access to technology at home, which is why he likes coming to EDH. According to Kevin, he could stay in contact with everyone on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram when he got online at EDH. Although he had a cellular phone, it was not operational, thus, he could not receive calls or text messages.

Working with Kevin. Kevin was very vocal in class and views himself as an advocate for his community. During most discussions he had something to say. During the times when we discussed hegemonic structures and their influence of the schools in the areas, Kevin would make statements that would inspire his colleagues to want to take action. For instance, when we were discussing the riverfront versus the public school investment, Kevin's comments "yeah and they aren't building the riverfront for us anyway, so why should we care about it" prompted Jaimee to remark, "we should walk out and go on strike like the teachers or the people in the auto industry have done." While some of the students nodded in agreement with Kevin, Jade and Jean appeared irritated[14] by Kevin's remarks. Once Jade and Jean were able to move past Kevin's comments they embraced his artistic talents for the first three classes. Due to his overly playful nature and slow response on team assignments, Jade and Jean requested that we meet to discuss what could be done to move their project forward. Kevin stated that he did not have a computer at home, so he was unable to conduct the research that was required for the project. He also

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[14] Jean and Jade would often tell me that Kevin got on their nerves.

expressed interest in pursuing a career in the medical field. In consideration of his goals and the team's request, I allowed Kevin to develop a separate project, which focused on medical careers. In addition, to working on his project Kevin assisted other teams with selecting pictures for their final presentation.

In our second class of week four Kevin allowed me to read some of his works (poetry and songs). I truly was inspired by his authenticity and ability to write about his dreams and the issues that he faces in his community. Kevin was quite expressive in his writings. Although he did not have access to a computer when he went home, he did not let the lack of technology impede him from journaling.

When I interviewed Kevin, we discussed his ability to be resourceful and his educational goals. During our discussion, I complimented him on his ability to know that he had talents in barbering, social work, and the arts and asked how he saw himself using his talents towards achieving his personal and educational goals. He chuckled and thanked me for acknowledging his talents. In his reply, he talked about his grandmother and how their relationship influenced his work ethic. According to Kevin, "She always listened to me and encouraged me to make honest money." His grandmother was also the person who suggested that Kevin seek vocational education at Job Corps. She believed that going to Job Corps would not only give Kevin an opportunity to complete his education and obtain a trade, but it would also provide with an chance to get out of the neighborhood.

In addition, Kevin and I had a discussion pertaining to the community economic development club. In the discussion, he provided insight on what he liked and what needed to be improved. He appreciated my flexibility with the team assignments and my willingness to allow him to use his skills in art to help others develop their projects. Kevin also thanked me for taking

the club on a tour of Mosaic Community College's allied health program. Although he had plans of going to Job Corps in the fall of 2012, he stated Mosaic Community College was another option for him to consider.

When we talked about the ways in which the club could be improved, Kevin offered the suggestion that we should "fix the air conditioners . . . keep the computers working . . . and take more trips." When I asked what he meant by taking more trips Kevin said, "There are a lot of things happening in the community that we can learn from and sitting in a classroom won't allow us to see what those things are." Kevin also suggested that we get students computers to take home and that I should "pair us up with people in the fields that were doing our projects on."

Many of the challenges that Kevin faced reside within the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem of Bronfenbrenner's framework. Kevin and I spoke about his limited access to technology, affiliation with a local gang, and his need for securing employment; he stated "I know we talked about how those things are a part of systems, but I still don't get what you are saying." I provided Kevin with a visual prompt from our discussion on day one and he began to vaguely recall our dialogue about systems. Although Kevin could not articulate the direct connections of Bronfenbrenner's framework to his technology needs and his need for security through gang affiliation and employment, he expressed appreciation for our tour of Mosaic Community College.

Jim. Jim was a freshman at EDH who self reported completing his ninth grade year with a 2.8 grade point average and a D in math. Jim had one older and two younger siblings. Jim's older brother was incarcerated during the time of the study. Jim's younger siblings live with his mother. During the summer months, Jim spent all of time at his grandparent's house. His grandparent's house is located in EDH's neighborhood. He also goes to his grandparent's house

every weekend throughout the school year. In a causal discussion that we had after the first class, Jim expressed that his grandfather was his only role model because Jim's "brother and uncles are all locked up and my daddy is dead so I don't have any positive men to look up to other than my granddaddy." According to Jim, he really enjoyed going to his grandparents, because his grandfather takes Jim and the neighborhood children fishing. Jim's grandfather is also engaged in various events at their church. His grandfather is known throughout the community for also taking the neighborhood youth to the youth based activities at his church.

Jim expressed that he liked "shopping, eating, going out and chilling with family." Jim's goals in the economic development club were to learn how to manage his money, learn more about helping the elderly, and learn how to work with different people. His life goals were to graduate from dental school, so that he could provide dental assistance to children who families cannot afford dental care. He participated in intramural sports at the local recreation center. Like many of his peers, Jim's access to technology outside of school was limited. His cellular technology did not allow him to access the Internet and was turned off regularly due to late payments on the monthly bill.

Working with Jim. In week one of the community economic development club, Jim made several statements that led me to believe that he was making connections between agency and *habitus*. The one remark stands out is his statement specific to addressing the systems and phrases that the student teams identified as the primary factors that impacted their families, school, and community. He stated,

> We have to take our lives into our own hands and get an education because if kids
>
> are poorly educated they won't be able to fit into the real world . . . businesses
>
> won't hire them . . . so stop complaining and take a proactive role.

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Jim's statements steered us into a deeper discussion around agency and what it means to be proactive. He suggested that proactive students would do their homework, make parents more accountable, and demand that teachers teach children the way they would want their children to be taught.

Based on Jim's statement we also explored the ideology of hegemony when we discussed how business leaders perceive African Americans. Jim stated "Business people see Black people as consumers . . . they don't think we know nothing about how to make money or run a business, but we can. Just look at Diddy and Jay Z." Kevin chimed in and disagreed with Jim. Kevin provided an example of why businesses perceive Black people as consumers:

> Just look around the room and you'll see everybody in here has some designer's
>
> name on their back, but how many of us have a bank account . . . [let us] be real
>
> with ourselves . . . look at the number of vacant business near our school.

Jade agreed with Kevin, but offered that they "could do something to change the how African Americans are viewed." One of the suggestions was to explore developing a project that would promote the ideas Jim espoused during our discussions. This led to Jim's team working on creating a business plan for a charter school (BDJDB Fine and Performing Art Charter School)[15], which would focus on preparing students to go into the arts. As referred to in significant event three, Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, and Deidra requested to work on a project related to health careers. Thus, their capstone project changed as well. In concert with his final presentation, Jim also submitted a poster board that represented his research on one of the colleges that he was considering for dental school (see Figure 5).

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[15] The acronym BDJDB represents the first letter of the pseudo name of each participant on Jim's team, i.e., Brenda, Donnie, Jim, Deidra, and Brenda.

Figure 5. *College Research Project. This figure represents Jim's research on one of the colleges that he was considering for dental school.* Picture of Jim's work that he submitted to the instructor on August 17, 2012.

Like Kevin, the issues that Jim associated with his mother's limited ability to support him and her substance addiction resided within the microsystem. Jim's need for employment and his identification of the general perception of African Americans in business are directly connected to the mesosystem and chronosystem of Bronfenbrenner's systems framework.

Student Narratives Summary

The six narratives provided insight into how each of the students exercised their voice in my classroom. While each participant displayed various levels of engagement, agency was developed. More importantly, because agency was developed the six students reflected in this section were empowered with tools that enabled them to address concerns at the microsystem level. In addition to the student narratives, there were five significant events that influenced my instruction: day one activities, day two activities, week three activities, week four activities, and week eight activities. Information pertaining these events is presented in the next section of this chapter.

Results: Significant Events

There were many events, which occurred during the eight-week program that could be considered as significant to the findings. Events such as students' securing employment and students' making decisions to pursue vocational careers were powerful moments for the individuals and inspired me to be a greater conduit of change for the students who were in my care. Every event was meaningful in my investigating the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins. However, I selected to approach this section from perspective of providing the sequence of events that influenced the analysis of my practices. Thus, this section chronicles the activities that occurred during day one, day two, week three, week four, and week eight. Data from these events were collected from my observations (case notes) that were captured in my daily journal. The data from my case notes aided me in analyzing how the changes in my pedagogy influenced student voice, engagement, and feelings of empowerment. The headings in Table 4 reflect the major themes that emerged from my analysis of data for each significant event.

Table 4

Significant Events and Major Themes

Significant Events	Major Themes
Week One Day One Activities	Establishing the Foundation and Sharing Experiences
Week One Day Two Activities	Making Personal and Academic Connections
Week Three Activities	Developing Student Agency
Week Four Activities	Responding to Students' Concerns
Week Eight Activities	Inspiring Agency and Building a Network

Note. Based on data collected from case notes.

Each significant event concludes with a discussion, which provides a reflective examination of the data.

      Establishing the foundation and sharing experiences. On day one, I spent my time getting to know the students and sharing my life experiences with them. The aims of these activities were to break down barriers associated with the traditional student teacher relationship in the secondary setting and start the process of understanding and respecting similarities and differences. The aforementioned objectives were tied to the instructional goal of students' being able to make connections between key economics and sociology terminology and their lived experiences. On day one, we also had an additional instructional goal, which was for students to discuss their views of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory relative to their personal, family, and community goals. Based on my review of the data associated with the day one activities, this event is an example of the themes teacher caring and listening. The following data reflect my analysis of significant event one.

      I began day one by introducing myself to the students and sharing my experiences as a student and resident from the community. I also shared background information about my family and work experiences. Afterwards, I engaged each cohort in a discussion on how prior experiences shape our views of the world. I also shared with the students my research goal and how valuable their participation in the study was to others and me in the field of education. When prompted, the students also shared their views on education and provided background information, which included their names, ages, grade, hobbies, family make-up, and life goals. Some of the students shared very personal information. Their sharing life events provided insight into how the students viewed themselves and their community. During our discussion, the students in Cohort 1 made the comparison between their school and schools in more affluent

school districts. When comparing the two educational models, Regina stated the "students in the suburban districts have access to more resources, so they do better in school than we do." Many of the students shared Regina's sentiment. In general, like students from more affluent school districts, the students identified that they too wanted to be successful. During our discussion on success the students defined success as their ability to go to college, get a good job, and have a nice home. The students' deficit based views were fueled by challenges that have been reinforced by hegemonic structures in the media. When we discussed how the deficit based views impacted student performance, Denise stated, "it gives us a hopeless attitude." Building from Denise's position, I asked the students, "What could we do to change this perception?" Jamelia suggested we get parents from EDH to become engaged and require the teachers to do more. She stated, "It shouldn't take the State to come in to make the schools do their job." Jamelia's statement was in reference to a state appointed manager who was responsible for providing oversight of EDH's school district. Many leaders, residents, and educators viewed the state's take over as unwarranted and a violation of the local citizenry's rights. Some have argued that the take over reinforces the stereotypes associated with African American led entities like EDH's school district. In this case, the students in the club made several comments related to how the general perception that African Americans do not know how to run businesses led to the devolution of EDH's school district. The fall out from the negative images of African American leadership in EDH's community reinforced the students' views of their limited agency.

With the goal of getting the students comfortable with our class, I also laid the foundation for our interaction by discussing the value of embracing differences and similarities. This was achieved by carrying out an icebreaker entitled "categories." Prior to beginning, I shared with the students that people, animals, cars, all fit into categories. In order to better understand each other,

I expressed that we would identify categories that they fit in. They were told that I would call out a category, i.e., left-handed people go to the back of the room or right-handed go to the front of the room. After seven rounds of categorization, we wrapped up our activity by discussing what the students gained from this experience, how many people shared similar attributes, likes, dislikes, etc., and how categorization influenced team work, business, and community decisions. Jim stated that he liked the icebreaker, because it helped him learn more about his classmates. Mary, Cameron, Justine expressed that while they identified with the spirit of a lion, that they also shared the temperament of a gazelle. This is important to note because it provided me with information on potential motivating factors that could propel these students towards realizing their goals. Furthermore, what also stood out to me during the icebreaker was that many of the girls in Cohort 1 consistently shared similar categories, i.e., Jamelia, Regina, Mary, Alice were in four groupings and Traci, Jade, Jean were in five. Their pairing together provided me information on their preferred means for socializing in the classroom setting as well as their natural understanding of social capital. The girls from each group verified my assumptions in later conversations where they expressed their comfort in working with people they knew and shared similar values.

After the icebreaker, we revisited my research goals and discussed Bronfenbrenner's framework and the economic concepts that we were going to cover over the eight-week period. To make the students comfortable, we developed ground rules for engagement and agreed that we all brought something valuable to the discussion and that diverse perspectives could enhance our learning. The ground rules were no name calling, respect everyone's opinion, consensus is not necessary, and no outbursts (one speaker at a time).

We started our dialogue as a large group where we focused on the identification of community issues and determining how they influenced the economic decisions of families, schools, businesses, buyers, sellers, investors, and businesses. After we identified the issues, we divided students into three groups of five individuals. Students were given random numbers one to three to determine the teams that they would participate in. Based on the broad discussion from our large group, the teams were responsible for developing a list of issues, which had to be described by using no more than two words. Once completed, the teams had to place the one to two word phrases into five systems categories identified in Bronfenbrenner framework: (a) microsystem, (b) mesosystem, (c) exosystem, (d) macrosystem, and (e) chronosystem. Table 5 reflects the systems and phrases that the student teams identified as the primary factors that impacted their families, school, and community[16].

Table 5

Systems and Phrases Identification

Microsystem Phrases	Mesosystem Phrases	Chronosystem Phrases
Food	Safe Neighborhoods	Racism
Stress	Abandoned Houses	Family Relationships
Favoritism	School Supplies	Poverty
Teacher's Effort	Safe Schools	Witnessed Abuse
Teacher's Support	Conflicting Values	Media Influences
Parent Relationship	Theft	Life Choices
Stress	Drop Out	Low Skills
Gangs	No Pride	
Electronic Communications	Unemployment	

Note. These are items we discussed on the first day of instruction June 25, 2012 (Cohort1) and June 26, 2012 (Cohort 2).

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[16] The students did not identify concerns in the exosystem or macrosystem.

Upon tabulating the data from the team discussion, the students identified 25 concerns that influenced their development in the microsystem (9), mesosystem (9), and chronosystem (7).

Next, teams identified people (agents) who were currently addressing the concerns, people who should be addressing the concerns, if students had a voice in addressing the concerns, and how students would address the concerns. Afterwards, teams were given the direction to prioritize the issues that each team believed they should address. The scale that teams used for prioritization was one to 10, with one being the highest priority and 10 being the least. The purpose of these activities was to further engage students in discussions specific to agency in their *habitus*. Both cohorts identified the same systems, phrase identification, and agents.

Once the ranking was completed, teams were given CD cases, peel off labels, blindfolds and instructions for carrying out the next steps, the minefield activity[17]. Teams wrote their concerns on labels, placed the labels on the CD cases and presented their lists to the class. Once completed, the CD cases were handed into me. I placed the CD cases on the floor in a pattern representative of a minefield. Each team selected one person to serve as their coach and four members who would participate in the activity as blindfolded citizens of the community. The team coaches placed blindfolds on each of their team members and were given two minutes to give their team instructions of how to maneuver through the minefield. With the goal of being the first team to get all of its members to the other side within five minutes, coaches gave their teams instructions. I turned on the radio and we began the process. During this exercise, I acted

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[17] The goals of the minefield activity were to engage the students in identifying the various obstacles that could inhibit their development and aid the students in making the connections between the issues identified (obstacles) as well as the need for community (teams) and planning when addressing challenges.

as a disruptive force by yelling at the teams and telling the coaches how to do their jobs. When the five minutes were up, Team B in Cohort 2 was the only team that was able to get their entire team to the other side. We processed what the students experienced going through the minefield with all of the disruptions (music, other teams, students yelling, and my yelling) and having limited preparation/education in this exercise. We drew connections to how students and others in society oftentimes feel powerless, because they were not aware of the obstacles. Students also identified that the coaches, like teachers, parents, and adults were just as challenged in aiding students maneuver because there were several disruptions and issues that they were not prepared to address. In drawing on the basic economics principals, while all agreed that community economic development could be a tool that could aid in reducing community concerns, only three students in Cohort 2 (Edward, Jaimee, and Cameron) believed that they could have a voice in influencing change in their community. Based on the overall responses, the students' feedback revealed the students did not believe they had either the agency or social capital necessary for addressing concerns in the microsystem, mesosystem, and the chronosystem.

After having a discussion on how businesses influence community development and provide resources to schools, we identified the types of businesses that existed in the community and what was needed to spark and sustain growth which included childcare, a marketing firm, a tattoo and piercing parlor, a doctor's office, lawn care, a performing arts charter school, retail (apparel store and a mall), entertainment venues, and a new community center. We carried out the discussion via the cooperative learning strategy think-pair-share. The discussion was prompted by the questions that I posed: What are the challenges in our community; and what is the role business in addressing the community concerns? The challenges/concerns were representative of the obstacles that were used for the minefield activity. Teams agreed that they

would utilize these suggestions for the remainder of the course for framing the research, course discussions, and capstone projects. The goal of this discussion was achieved because it established the foundation for students' making the connections between bridging the systems that are identified by Bronfenbrenner's framework and the course content. In addition, it allowed the students to dream and engage in the direction of our club as well as have a voice in how we would carry out discussions and interact with one another in future classes.

Reflective examination of day one. All actions on day one were deliberately developed with the idea of fostering student voice. During our discussions, students identified issues that resided within the first three rings of Bronfenbrenner's framework[18]. Students initially identified adults as the primary agents for addressing the concerns the teams identified. Students appeared very engaged when discussing concerns in their homes, families, schools, and communities. During this point of our activities, I noticed continuous dialogue at each table that was on par with our discussion points for the activity. I also noticed the students also seemed to be concerned with the blindfold exercise.

After discussion, I asked the students, "What are your thoughts about the exercise?" In general, the students enjoyed the process, but acknowledged that the blindfold exercise required trust. Because our class was the first time that many of the students worked together, "It was hard to trust each other right off the bat" (Jamelia). Team B in Cohort 1 (Jamelia, Regina, Mary, and Alice) were very familiar with each other which is why the trust factor was higher which they also attributed to the success in the minefield exercise. Discussions with the four revealed that they went to middle school together and were on the same educational track at EDH. Knowing about the students' relationships in the class informed me of the relationships dynamics that

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[18] See Table 5.

existed in classroom instruction. This information was helpful in conducting group projects and building community in the class.

After reviewing the concerns that the teams identified, we discussed why the students did not see themselves as agents of change. Mary stated that they "didn't matter." Jade and Jean nodded in agreement and affirmed their position by saying that "Adults don't listen and teacher's don't care." In talking about the concerns, students became emphatic with identifying issues that connected to the microsystem, mesosystem, and chronosystem levels of Bronfenbrenner's framework. Concerns such as witnessing domestic violence at home, lack of housing, food, and clothing, experiences with racism, favoritism, conflicting values, unemployment, bullying, bad relationships with parents, and unsafe neighborhoods were identified as students' primary concerns. Marion, Jaimee, and Edward were really vocal and quite explicit in sharing their experiences. Marion discussed how her family is still dealing with the death of her sister and how that impacts her education. Edward stated that the neighborhood is a really bad place to be and that drugs and vacant houses make it unsafe. Jaimee expressed concerns with how teachers give instruction and correction "without even knowing where a student is coming from." Jaimee's statement suggests teachers are removed from the issues that impact student development. In analyzing her response, I ascertained it was important to her that teachers spent time cultivating caring relationships with their students.

Jim shared, "My mama uses drugs so I'm always missing school." Although he had a desire to be successful, Jim expressed that his home environment was not supportive of his goals. Thus, he moved in with his grandparents so that he could be close to school and work. Jim's sharing was his way of seeking support to address some of the challenges that reside in the microsystem sphere.

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While we accomplished a great deal on day one with both cohorts, several obstacles impacted my planned activities. The heat and lighting in the building made it difficult to keep the students engaged. The students were constantly voicing concerns about how hot it was and how the heat was making them sleepy. Likewise, they expressed their displeasure about not having adequate technology. Even though the school had laptops, we did not gain consistent access to the computers until week three. The lack of consistent access to technology forced me to improvise and modify student assignments. I facilitated a discussion on the following key terms and their connections to Bronfenbrenner's framework: 1) economic development, 2) business, 3) macroeconomics, 4) microeconomics, and 5) entrepreneur and micropreneur. Students participated in this discussion via the think-pair-share strategy. They received prompts that require the small groups discussions on the connections of the terms for the redevelopment of their community. Textbook definitions and students prior knowledge helped with informing the discussion.

Based on my analysis of my journal notes from day one, I observed that 27 out of the 30 students did not perceive that they had agency to address concerns in the school or community. Edward, Jaimee, and Cameron in Cohort 2 were the outliers. The thematic connections that surfaced from these discussions were *habitus*, agency, basic needs, physiological needs, social capital, and cultural capital. In exploring Bronfenbrenner's framework, students identified the microsystem, mesosystem, and chronosystem as the primary systems that influenced their development.

Making personal and academic connections. Similar to day one activities, I engaged students in guided instruction with the objective of building on the students' prior knowledge to make academic and personal connections. The instructional goals for day two were for students

to learn key economic terms and build on our discussions from day one to identify the structures that influenced student and communal development. The primary theme that emerged in the data for this event was engaging in critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures. The data provided in this section will provide an overview of how the goals and aims were executed and general analysis of how my practices aided students with making connections with the academic language.

We began our day by reviewing the activities from day one after which we worked on connecting various economic terms to real life. Similar to day one, students were divided into the same three teams. Using the economics terms from day one, I modeled a think-pair-share activity, which required the students to research the terms online, develop a definition of terms in their own words, and to draw pictures of what the terms were and were not. For this exercise the teams were given the following economic terms from the course materials: 1) capitalism, 2) expense, 3) free-market economies, 4) investment, 5) money, 6) money supply, 7) monopoly, 8) oligopoly, and 9) socialism. These terms were selected because they introduced the students to competing ideologies relative to voice, democracy, and socialism. Generally, it is believed that empowering students to think, talk, and act critically encourages them to challenge the power base. In keeping in line with the aims of critical pedagogy, fostering discussions centered on the aforementioned economic terms armed students with the language to understand and attack the deeply embedded doctrines associated with democracy and capitalism and address hegemonic forces that are evident in schools where teachers exercise the pedagogy of poverty.

In order to assist the students in deconstructing the pedagogy of poverty, I debunked the general perception that critical discourse will lead to anarchy or the overtaking of the government. Thus, in carrying out our discussion on these terms, I used Bronfenbrenner's

framework as our platform for identifying strategies that both cohorts could use when addressing social concerns. One of the challenges with this activity was that the computers were not available. In adjusting my practice, I polled the students to identify who had access to cellular technology. While 28 percent had access to cellular technology, only six had cellular phones that allowed them to surf the net for the terms. Given this dilemma, I borrowed smart phones from five staff in the building and provided them to the students.

After reporting out from the think-pair-share activity, I introduced the students to three games Monopoly Here & Now® (MHAN), Monopoly Electronic Banking Edition® (MEBE), and Uno®. Teams drew straws to determine which game they would play. Students were dissatisfied with the drawing and asked if they could they self-select games that they played rather than play on the teams that were developed on day one. In listening to their concerns, I allowed the teams to reform by self-selecting which games they wanted to play. The Uno® table had six students and MHAN had four students. In order to have the same number of members on each team, I asked the class how we should resolve this dilemma. After a few minutes of going back and forth about who should move to another table, Jamelia volunteered to go to the MHAN table. Instructions for each of the games were distributed to teams for their review and guidance on how to play. While everyone had experience in playing each of the games, they never played by the official rules. There was push back in reading the rules and playing by the rules. Reading and playing by the rules were important to this exercise. Because this activity exposed the students to the language of power that is exemplified in the financial markets and other social settings it dispelled ideas associated with hegemony. It should also be noted that students at the Uno® table became quite spirited and competitive. Marion and Michelle kept expressing how Cameron was constantly cheating. In my analysis of the students' interactions, it appeared that

Marion and Michelle's perspective about Cameron not playing was their attempt to exercise agency in the classroom.

After the students spent two-hours playing the same games, each station was required to tally the points (Uno®), the money and property (MHAN and MEBE). Once tallied, the students recorded and submitted their points and net worth. Next, I led a discussion on the connections that each of the games had to real life. Using personal experiences I shared with the students on how people who have access/privilege to various systems are more likely to live a lifestyle of comfort. MEBE served as the example of great influence because participants in the game start out with capital ($15,000,000) and had access to a process and tools for keeping track of currency (Banking Unit - Electronic Debit Cards). Players with the MHAN started with a similar advantage of $15,000,000, but were not afforded the process and tools for keeping track of their finances electronically. They had to rely on traditional methods of counting the face value of their currency to determine their fiscal position. For the students who played MHAN counting the currency and the property values was challenging.

Both versions of Monopoly® exposed students to multiple economic concepts, i.e., mortgaging, banking, foreclosures, utilities, hotel and housing management/ownership, community giving, and financial penalties. Uno® players, on the other hand, did not start out with access to capital. We discussed how the experiences of students who played Uno® were likened to families born into poverty or from historic low-SES backgrounds. Similar to individuals from low-SES backgrounds, the Uno® players were not privy to access to capital and had to start out life with the cards that they are dealt. Based on our discussion students gained an understanding of why learning about economics was important towards moving individuals, families, and communities out of poverty. Although the monopoly money did not have an

exchange value in the real world, students were able to connect the concept of their cash and property winnings to their ability to change their *habitus*.

This was achieved during our guided discussion session that focused on the key economic terms and extended it to include Bronfenbrenner's framework. The extension to Bronfenbrenner's framework allowed us to talk about how the students could use their cash and property from monopoly in ways that would allow them to improve the lives of their families and students who reside in their community. Marion suggested that we develop new schools that are clean, have resources, and hire teachers who care. Carl stated that the community needed more jobs and opportunities in the entertainment industry. Edward and Denise agreed with Carl, adding that if we improved the housing and addressed safety concerns that the students would have a better chance of achieving success. Each of their suggestions showed that with access to social and economic capital that the students would not want to continue to live under the conditions discussed on day one. More importantly, by playing games and identifying connections to Bronfenbrenner's framework, I was able to garner student input on how to improve their community and use them as resources to changing *habitus* in the classroom and their community.

After our discussion, teams reported on their net worth (total value of properties and currency minus their debt). We then identified the player with the highest net worth at each table. Because the players at the Uno® table did not play for currency or property values, they were instructed to tally their points and identify the player with the highest total. Next we revisited the outcomes from our day one activities and identified potential businesses (projects) that could aid in moving people in the area out of poverty. Teams narrowed their focus to the following projects:

- Cohort 1

    - BDJDB Fine and Performing Art Charter School - School;

    - Xscape Hall & Mall – Teen Shopping and Dance Studio; and

    - Pins & Needles – Designer Piercing and Tattoo Parlor

- Cohort 2

    - Finally 16 - Teen Girls Apparel

    - Cloud 9 – Entertainment Venue

    - Cool Club – Designer T's and Novelty Items

Once teams determined their projects they were told that each project would need seed capital

and that each team would use the winnings from the player with the highest net worth at each

monopoly game table to fund their projects:

- Finally 16 - $33,800,400

- Cloud 9 - $41,227,500

- BDJDB Fine and Performing Art Charter School - $32,450,000

- Xscape Hall & Mall – $22,500,000

The teams from Cool Club and Pins & Needles utilized the $500,000 government subsidy that

was awarded to the player with the least amount of points.

Reflective examination of day two. My original intent was to spend one-hour on the

games, but because the students were enjoying the games and the computers were not available

for the students to complete the pre-instruction surveys and the student questionnaires, I

extended the activity to two-hours. The extra time allocation allowed me to increase my

interaction with the students. It also informed my observations. Based on my observations, I

noticed that the students became expressive about what they wanted and needed in their

community. In listening to Jim's conversation with his team, I noticed that they identified that there was a need for better schools that focused on the performing arts. When I asked about the possibilities of students from their community being bused to the performing arts school in the downtown area, Jim replied, "We need one in our community because that one is too far away."

Unlike our day one activities, based on their engagement in class, it appeared that the students began to identify themselves as agents. Also, the games and the economic terms aided in our discussion on critical discourse and the need for students to exercise their voices on issues pertaining to their communal, familial, and personal concerns. Based on my analysis of my journal notes from significant event two, it appears that my actions of identifying and assisting the students with accessing the technology that was necessary for completing their assignment was closely associated with the emerging themes care and listening.

The gaming activity accomplished two objectives. The activity provided the students with the opportunity to identify the connections between access to capital influences and personal and community economic decisions. In addition, the gaming provided the students with a platform for exploring the connections between their *habitus* and social cultural capital and articulating suggestions on ways in which to improve their stations in life and their community. Furthermore, the use of the currency and government subsidies as tools for addressing community concerns aided the students in making the connections to the primary mediums of exchange that are germane to community economic development.

Developing student agency. In week three, my primary objective was to continue my guided instructional practice on ways in which to address the issues that the students identified on day one. My instructional goals for the week were for students to discuss their understanding of system's role in the social and the political and economic frames of the society, as well as

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articulate declarative knowledge relative community economic development. My objectives for this week were to train students on how to conduct research, develop a case for support, use Microsoft PowerPoint to convey a message, and utilize community resources for addressing student identified concerns. The main theme that reemerged from the data specific to event three was critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures. The reflective examination in this section provides insight into how agency developed during week three.

During week three, I continued my guided instructional practice on ways in which to address the issues that the students identified on day one. By educating the students on how to conduct research, develop a case for support, and use Microsoft PowerPoint to convey a message, my goal was to empower the students with some of the resources necessary for exercising their voice. While reviewing the economic terms for the week, i.e., pricing, marketing, opportunity cost, unemployment, recession, supply, demand, outsourcing, and brain drain, a robust discussion developed around the connections of the terms to the students lived experiences. I initially shared with the students my experiences with unemployment and how it affected my ability to purchase a car when I was an undergraduate student at Urban Mission University. My story prompted Jean to share how her mother's being unemployed impacted their choices. Similarly, by disclosing my experiences to the students I believe Jade was encouraged to discuss her mother's unemployment. In connecting choices to opportunity cost, they argued that due to the recession people are choosing to forgo unemployment to participate in "black market activities." Jean asked, "If adults and the government really cared for students, why were they investing in the development of the riverfront area rather than in reducing the school deficit?" I asked Jean to explain what prompted her remarks and she stated that she had heard about it on the radio. Kevin chimed in and remarked that "Yeah and they aren't building the riverfront for us

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anyway, so why should we care about it?" The riverfront is located in the downtown area of the city and has been under redevelopment for at least 40 years. Several large corporations are headquartered in the area. The community also houses two major sports complexes, as well as high-end restaurants, condominiums and apartment buildings. The students introduced their concerns with the city investing more in the riverfront than in the failing public school district in the previous week.

Reflective examination of week three. Based on this exchange we used Bronfenbrenner's framework to identify the agents that were responsible for addressing the redirection of resources from the riverfront to the neighborhood and schools. Unlike the first week where students identified adults as the primary agents, Jaimee, Brenda, and Lisa argued that students could be agents as well. When asked how students could serve as a vessel for change, Lisa stated that students could protest like they did in the 1960's or conduct a letter writing campaign. When prompted on this discussion on day two of week three, all of the students in Cohort 1 expressed deep concerns that adults believed investing in the riverfront was more important than addressing their failing schools. In building on Lisa's call to action from the previous class, I facilitated a discussion on student engagement in policy decisions and asked about other ideas for voice. Cameron suggested that we use Facebook and Twitter as a means for getting others involved. These instructional tools were not included in my intended practice plan, but due to the students' request, I adjusted my plans accordingly.

In consideration of this two-day discussion, our discourse about the riverfront project versus the school investment strategy led to the following questions:

- How do I build on the class' desires to get more engaged; and

- How do I build on this discussion and connect it to the capstone project?

In response to these questions, I decided to take time to talk with each individual student to identify their goals and life aspirations. Additionally, I asked the students to review the unit plans and provide feedback. My discussion with the students uncovered more than what I was able to capture in the student questionnaires that were finally completed during week three. More specifically, I learned that Lisa wanted to go into politics and was quite adept at using Twitter and Facebook. She also revealed she and her three siblings were being raised by a single mother who worked as a medical assistant at a local physician's office. Due to her mother's limited skills, her income potential was capped. Consequently, Lisa inquired about employment opportunities that could help her secure enough money to help her mother with the bills. When I asked her what bills she would specifically help with, she stated that she would help with getting her eldest sister enrolled into a local university, food for the house, and clothes for her mother.

Conversations with Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, and Deidra revealed that they did not want to start the charter school. They stated that they took on the assignment because it was what they thought I wanted them to do. When asked what they wanted to do, each identified careers in the medical profession, with Jim wanting to be an orthodontist, Brenda and Allison pediatric nurses, and Deidra a medical biller. In consideration of their career choices, I asked the team how we should move forward. Donnie commented, "Let us do a project on what it will take to be in the careers we selected." Given the students feedback I changed my intended instructional activities for weeks four through eight to reflect their desired goals. This change consisted of the following:

1. Identifying and pairing Lisa with an internship opportunity with an elected official who needed assistance with a re-election campaign;

2. Reviewing the unit plan and developing instructions that would empower Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, and Deidra to complete their new capstone projects; and,

3. Revising the unit plan to include Facebook and Twitter as strategies for assignment submission, promoting capstone projects, and fostering student voice.

More importantly, my allowing Jean and Jade to share with the class their challenges at home revealed that they sensed it was safe to expose their concerns. Additionally, their sharing was an opportunity for us to establish a culture of care and a deeper authentic connection in class, which led to their increased participation.

Based on my analysis of my journal notes from week three activities, three or more of the emerging themes from the coding were reflected in the following occurrences during week three:

- Jean discussed how her parent's unemployment affected her life (basic needs, physiological needs, care);

- Jade discussed how her parent's unemployment affected her life (basic needs, physiological needs, care);

- Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, Deidra, Jaimee, Brenda, and Lisa identified that students could do something towards making a change in their community and school (agency, *habitus*, microsystem, mesosystem); and,

- Lisa identified that she needed employment to address some of her personal needs (basic needs and physiological needs).

In addition, during our discussion about concerns in their community, Jean, Jade, and Kevin challenged the hegemonic structures and their *habitus*. Student voice, social capital, and cultural capital surfaced as the primary themes for this incident. Moreover, the coding revealed that

agency care, listening, basic needs, and physiological needs were the themes which were most associated with my changing the assignments to address Lisa, Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, and Deidra's workforce development goals.

Responding to students' concerns. The instructional goal for week four was to build students' capacities to produce and discuss their capstone projects. The major themes that surfaced during the data analysis process were teacher caring, listening, and addressing students' basic and physiological needs. The students were quite expressive during week four. Based on the data from my journal notes, it appeared that my responsiveness to the students' needs led to increased student agency.

Building on week three activities, I provided students with new instructions for the week. This included the assignments for Lisa, Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, and Deidra as well as a new assignment for the entire club. The new assignment consisted of a think-pair-share activity that required the teams to read and respond to two articles. One article pertained to a student walk out at an area school and the other provided more information on the Riverfront Park investment strategy that was discussed in the prior week. In connecting the articles to the economics terms and Bronfenbrenner's framework, students reviewed their capstone projects to identify reasons why investing in their projects would be of benefit to their families and community. With the goal of locating their projects in their community, students agreed that the investments would help in reducing unemployment while providing a tax base to support the schools.

Reflective examination of week four. The discussions in week three prompted me to change the lesson plans for week four. Changes included my facilitating more one-on-one discussions with students. The aims of the one-on-one sessions were to provide me with the

opportunity to better understand each student's personal goals and how the various systems identified in Bronfenbrenner's framework influenced each student's development. The majority of our discussions centered on two concerns, students wanting to know about what type of college degree they would need for their proposed capstone projects and students needing to secure employment to help out at home. Both questions were relevant because they supported this study's question, which purports schools should support students' goals.

With the resources at EDH and in the neighborhood, I reached out to colleagues to assist the students with securing opportunities. This led me to delivering instruction on resume development, mock presentations, and 25 of the students being placed in part-time employment after the study was completed. For the students who expressed interest in college, we worked on conducting research on colleges and developing display boards, which highlighted the various colleges and universities that the students researched. Additionally, I reached out to a colleague at Mosaic Community College to discuss taking the students on a tour of the campus and the health sciences program. After working out the details, the trip was scheduled for week eight of our project with the goals of exposing the students to options at the community college level and vocations that they could consider if they were to go to the community college, i.e. phlebotomy, pharmacy technician, surgical technician, nursing, and emergency medical technician (EMT).

Based on my analysis of my journal notes from week four activities, my responsiveness to the students' request as well as my observations of their needs was well received. In connecting the students to resources in their community many of the students were able to secure part-time employment. My actions and the students' responses are closely connected to the agency, listening, caring, basic needs and physiological needs themes that were identified during the coding process.

Inspiring agency and building a network. The data for week eight was based on the instructional goal of students' articulating declarative knowledge specific to the core competencies as identified for the course. Similar to significant event four, teacher caring, listening, and addressing students' basic and physiological needs were identified as the main themes for significant event five. This section provides an example of how responsive teaching can inspire students and influence agency.

In consideration of the students' request, we went on a college tour to Mosaic Community College. While at Mosaic Community College, we visited admissions, student services, financial aid, the bookstore, the Learning Resource Center, Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS), and Health Science Program departments. After our tour, we had a working lunch, during which students delivered presentations on capstone projects they had developed over the summer. Because the discussions in weeks three and four led to a change in the capstone projects, the guidelines were modified to reflect standards, as well as the goals of the students, EDH's principal, and community leaders. Hence, the student teams presented their capstone projects via Microsoft PowerPoint, which included a title slide, an executive summary, a business description and vision, a definition of the market, a description of the products and services, an overview of organization and management structure, and a marketing strategy. Furthermore, the competition guidelines for the students who selected to focus on the projects entitled "What would it take to be . . '" developed seven slides that presented an overview of what it takes to be the profession they had chosen. These slides included:

1. An overview of the profession and why you selected the profession;

2. The number of years of education and/or practice required;

3. Types of classes required for the average salary of the chosen profession; and

4. An overview of the educational/vocational institutions that grant degrees and certificates in the chosen field.

The staff at Mosaic Community College agreed to judge and rank the capstone presentations based on the rubric in Appendix B Capstone Presentation Judges Rubric. Listed below, in the ranking order of first through tenth place, are the students' capstone projects:

1. Medical and Careers Project (Cohort 1)

2. Finally 16 – Teen Clothing Store (Cohort 2)

3. Cool Club – Online Personal Apparel (Cohort 2)

4. Pins & Needles – Upscale Tattoo and Piercing Studio (Cohort 1)

5. KA's Studio – Music Production Studio (Cohort 1)

6. Cloud 9 – Multi Level Club (Cohort 2)

7. Sadie's Fashions Auto Body Designs – Custom Design Auto Body Studio (Cohort 2)

8. Decadent Caramel Apples - Online Caramel Apple Store (Cohort 2)

9. Teens Care Organization – Nonprofit for At-Risk Teen Girls (Cohort 2)

10. Mary's Garden - Planting Project (Cohort 2)

Reflective examination of week eight. On the last day, the tour guides shared how they had experienced similar challenges that the students at EDH faced. One of the staff members shared how he had a prior felony conviction, but due to his hard work ethic, not giving up on his higher education pursuits, and his caring and supportive network, he was able to obtain full time employment as an enrollment specialist. The associate dean also talked to the students about his personal experiences as a teen. He shared although he was a student from low-SES background who also contended with a learning disability he did not let the deficits hinder his personal and professional development. When Brenda asked the associate dean about how he overcame his

challenges and stayed motivated while in college, he stated "one step at a time." Instead of going to a four-year institution the associated dean started out at Mosaic Community College in the EMT program. After gaining his certification, the associate dean went on to graduate from the firefighter academy to become a fireman. While serving as an EMT and fireman, the associate dean went back to school to obtain his associate's, bachelors and master's degrees. Donnie inquired into how hard the work was and how he could afford to complete his education. He shared that because he went to school part-time, he was able to gain the practical experiences that reinforced what he learned in class. By maintaining a 3.5 grade point average, he was able to acquire scholarships. In sharing their stories, the associate dean and the enrollment specialist provided evidence to the students that could help them overcome the challenges of life. Allison, Brenda, and Kevin stated that they wanted to go to Mosaic Community College and inquired about the concurrent enrollment program. When I asked the students why they wanted to go to Mosaic Community College, Kevin stated, "so I can make some quick money and get my degree." This experience inspired Kevin to continue with his education, because he was able to see how education could help him.

Based on my analysis of my journal notes from week eight, students identified with several thematic connections, i.e., agency, listening, care, basic needs, physiological needs. In honoring Lisa, Jim, Allison, Donnie, and Deidra's request to take a trip to a college that had a health service program, students' concerns related to unemployment and poverty, were addressed[19]. In talking with Kevin, Lisa, Jim, Allison, and Donnie, after our tour, the students were able to articulate a general understanding of how completing their studies at Mosaic

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[19] Unemployment and poverty reside in the mesosystem and chronosystem levels of Bronfenbrenner's framework.

Community College could directly impact unemployment (mesosystem influencer) and the cycle of poverty (chronosystem influencer) in their families and their community.

Summary of significant events. These five significant events provided insights into how students exercised voice in my classroom. Each participant displayed various levels of engagement and agency. Upon review of the data, each significant event had connections with several of the emerging themes: teacher's care, listening, and addressing student's basic and physiological needs, as well as teacher's engaging in critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures. More importantly, the data in the section provide evidence of my responsiveness to the students' challenges on the microsystem, mesosystem, chronosystem levels of Bronfenbrenner's framework. The next section will weave together the common themes that materialized during my analysis of the data from the student interviews.

Results: Interview Data

In preparing for the student interviews, I reviewed my case notes and the initial post instruction interview/focus group questions to determine their relevance to the research questions: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins? Upon review, I decided to use the following three questions as the initial prompts for garnering feedback from the 30 students:

- What are your general thoughts of your experience in the community economic development club?

- What did you like most about the community economic development club? and

- Was there anything that you did not like about your experience in the community economic development club?

In an effort to extend my analysis of the data I conducted another interview to ask the students additional questions. Based on my review of the data collected from the interviews, four thematic connections surfaced: basic needs, physiological needs, care, and listening. The themes in this section are primarily connected to Bronfenbrenner's macrosystem. The following data are based on students' responses to the interview questions and their links to the four thematic connections and Bronfenbrenner's systems framework.

Interview responses to significant event one: establishing the foundation and sharing experiences. On day one Edward, Jaimee, Cameron, and Marion stood out as the most vocal of the participants in the club. Their feedback and responses to our class discussion showed a level of confidence in their discourse that was absent with the rest of the class. In building on Edward, Jaimee, Cameron, and Marion's responses to the interview questions, I inquired specifically about significant event one and asked: why they believed that their experiences in their families, school and community influenced their development; why they believed that students can have voice in influencing education; and what led them to speaking up in my class. Edward stated that he lived in a community where very few people care and because their lack of care "Kids are being thrown to the wayside . . . not having enough food and having to deal with gangs make it hard to go to school." Edward was extremely motivated. He attributed his views on education to his grandmother. According to Edward, as an educator his grandmother "taught us early about our role in school and how to achieve success . . . she always taught us to speak up for ourselves." Jaimee shared Edward's sentiments, but added environmental factors such as coming from a single parent home and living in an impoverished neighborhood motivated her to speak up for herself. Cameron and Marion's parents promoted education as a means for improving their life options. Like Edward and Jaimee, both Cameron and Marion expressed that

their families, school, and community experiences influenced how they viewed the world.

Cameron stated that "My father always talks to me about my plans for the future . . . my teachers

encourage me to develop my potential." Although there are negative images in the media,

Cameron was affirmed in his position because of the support he receives at home and school.

Unlike Edward, Jaimee, and Cameron who had family support models who reaffirmed

their voices, Marion's voice was developed based the harsh realities of her mother's powerless

disposition in her relationship with Marion's father. According to Marion, her mother was a

victim of domestic violence. From as early as she could remember, Marion described her mother

being "beaten up and disrespected" by her father. She told herself that she "wasn't ever going to

take that from anyone." She vowed to herself that she would always speak up and fight back.

After Marion shared her position on how and why she was vocal, I asked her if

everything was okay at home. She stated yes, but her family was dealing with the loss of her

infant sister, so "I have to be there for my family." In speaking with Marion, I became concerned

with her well being, I asked her if could share her story with a colleague who a licensed

counselor. Upon her approval, I reached out to colleagues at EDH and connected Marion with a

counselor. When we last spoke, Marion's mother began receiving counseling sessions as well.

Summary of interview responses to significant event one. Edward, Jaimee, Cameron,

and Marion were very vocal on the first day of class. When I asked them what prompted them to

engage in discussions in class, each stated that they were comfortable and that I made it easy for

them to share and voice their opinions. Edward, Jaimee, and Cameron's responses connect with

the literature on the value of family/parental engagement. Their ability and willingness to be

expressive was not the norm for the other students in the community economic development

club. Although Marion's family/parental dynamics were different than Edward, Jaimee, and

Camerion's, Marion's role as the *de facto* matriarch helped shape Marion's voice and desire for something better. Being able to understand her situation was valuable in engaging her throughout the course. When engaging Marion I considered her leadership role in her family as an asset. I encouraged her to utilize her attributes as a leader when she was working with her team during our class discussions. My actions aided Marion with increasing her agency in the club.

A general analysis of Edward, Jaimee, Cameron, and Marion sharing snippets of their life stories and views with me suggests that relationship building and connectedness are imperative in facilitating dialogue with students. Thus, while collecting the data from the student questionnaires and pre-instruction surveys were important, changing my practices to become more engaged and observant of my students on day one provided me with more opportunities for establishing the foundation for developing meaningful relationships. Valuing and reflecting on Edward, Jaimee, Cameron, and Marion's engagement on day one prepared me for subsequent interactions with the students.

Based on the students' responses, it appears that the students enjoyed their experience on day one, because several students expressed they believed their opinions were valued. This was apparent when we discussed concerns that were relevant to the students. The team based instructional practices gave the students opportunities to develop agency and a safe space to reflect on the large group discussions specific to the microsystem and mesosystem concerns they identified on day one. Moreover, students shared that my intentional actions to engage them in two-way communications, secure employment placements, and change my instructional practices to meet the needs of the students' goals, influenced their engagement in the class. Furthermore, in review of the students' feedback, I ascertained our discussions related to

Bronfenbrenner's systems framework provided the students with a structured process for analyzing the various agents that influenced the students' development.

Interview responses to significant event two: making personal and academic connections. On day two, I still did not have access to technology, thus, students spent more time building relationships and getting to know each other through their interactions at the game tables. After tabulating the net worth and points, the students on the Pins & Needles team in Cohort 1, Jade, Kevin, and Allison, voiced their discontent with having to receive a government subsidy for developing their business. Although Jean and Jade lobbied for the opportunity to get more money, I expressed to them that the allocation was all that we had and like with life in the "real world" that they would have to develop arguments that would support their case for an increase in their subsidy. When asked during the interviews why they responded this way, Jade stated that she "didn't want to be broke like my family . . . to get more money would help me start a business to help my family." In their replies, Kevin, and Allison concurred with Jade comments.

As an honor student, Allison stated that she "is always given a chance to speak up for my class." Although Kevin was not an honor student, he shared that he was always speaking up for himself and his peers. He expressed that he does this because "I'm usually the oldest in all of my classes so I feel that I have to speak up for everybody else." All of the students made comments about the deplorable conditions at EDH and in their communities. Allison remarked, "even though I'm an honor student, I don't feel like one because the teachers give us the test to take home and prepare and let us use our notes from the test to take the test the next day. To me that is wrong." In an effort to move the conversation from the concerns at EDH to our the activities that I observed on day two, I asked Allison why was she compelled to speak up about the

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reallocation of the money? Allison replied, "cause it was wrong for us not to have money like everybody else . . . they had millions and we didn't." Allison's remarks suggest that she has an intrinsic understanding of the value of agency and social capital.

Summary of interview responses to significant event two. Allison, Kevin, and Jade's comments suggest that although we were not dealing with actual currency in our class that they understood and internalized the social and economic inequities that exist in their communities. Additionally, it appeared that the students viewed their potential success in the community economic development club as an opportunity to positively change the students' lives. While the changes in my pedagogy on day two did not directly influence student voice, engagement, and empowerment, it is worth noting that my practices provided students with practical experiences that encouraged them to deconstruct and identify ways to improve their lives. In addition, the students responses to the questions reinforced my position that if I were going to influence voice, engagement, an empowerment, there was a need for me to identify ways in which to empower the students with the skills necessary for mitigating the negative effects of various systems that Bronfenbrenner's framework contend influence student development.

During our discussions, the students identified the need to have social and cultural capital to address their basic and physiological needs. As expressed in the students' remarks, my instructional practices provided them with a venue to identify and deconstruct the various hegemonic structures that influenced their development. In doing so, the students began to develop agency to address the concerns identified in the microsystem and mesosystem levels of their *habitus*.

Interview responses to significant event three & four: developing student agency & responding to students' concerns. Similar to the activity in significant event two, Jean, Jade,

and Kevin were quite vocal in regards to their concerns with how the city was going to invest in a downtown park versus their education. Their input, along with Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, Deidra, and Lisa's influenced me to make significant changes in my pedagogy. More specifically, based on our dialogue, Jean, Jade, and Kevin did not operate well as a team and wanted to change team members. They were concerned that they would not be able to achieve their goals because the team lacked synergy. So, they requested that I allow Kevin to break away from the team to do something in the medical careers area and to allow Traci to become a part of their team. I told them that we could do this, but only after they have to talked with Traci and her team to see if they were open to the change. Once the students completed their discussions and negotiations, they agreed that Traci would be on loan from her initial team for a fee while serving as a full partner on the Pins & Needles team. They also successfully negotiated with me to utilize Traci's net worth from day two activities as their basis for the development of their business, thus, achieving their initial goal of increasing their capital for their capstone project. This scenario is an example of how the students started to implement voice, in turn, increasing their engagement and ownership of their academic experience.

During the interview, we discussed these events to determine if my practices influenced student voice, empowerment, and engagement. Based on feedback from Kevin, he believed that he had a voice in education and was happy that I "respected us enough to let us find out who we can be." Kevin's views were affirmed in Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, Deidra, and Lisa's responses to the prompt: Did my teaching encourage you to speak up? Deidra stated "You made it easy for us to talk to you, I mean, like, I really liked that you let us play Monopoly® and Uno® because school should be fun too." It should be noted that Deidra shared with me some of her life challenges and goals which led to her developing her individual project which focused on

marketing decadent caramel apples to schools in the area for fund raisers. As it relates to empowerment, Lisa discussed that my allowing her to engage in the internship activity with the local candidate for office was fun and allowed her to gain more insight into how she could "make change in my community . . . showed me that if I speak up that I can get what I want." In discussing their proposed careers in the medical profession, Jim, Allison, Donnie, and Brenda, identified that their research would propel them into careers where they could provide dental and medical services to children in low-SES communities.

Summary of interview responses to significant events three & four. Jean, Jade, Kevin, Jim, Allison, Donnie, Brenda, Deidra, and Lisa's voices influenced the changes in my practices in weeks three and four. Allowing the teams to reform was based on my ability and desire to identify, hear, and understand the challenges and goals that each they faced was key in redirecting my instruction. Equally as important, I believe that my prior experience as a community organizer and the skills gained from my prior employment in the concurrent enrollment program at two local high schools positioned me with the requisite skills for being able to connect the educational standards to the students' needs that are identified in Bronfenbrenner's framework. Furthermore, Lisa and Deidra's comments suggest that when students feel at ease with their teachers and when the teachers make learning fun students become more engaged in instruction.

The students exhibited agency when they voiced their concerns with the capstone project. Their agency prompted me to change the capstone projects to meet the students' personal development goals. In listening to the students' personal needs, I was able to connect them with community partners who were able to provide the students with internships. The internship opportunities led to the students gaining the workforce skills necessary for developing social

capital. Moreover, the monetary stipends that the students received aided them in addressing the basic needs concerns that they identified existed at their homes.

Interview responses to significant event five: inspiring agency and building a network. During the interviews, I followed up with the students that identified that the tour of Mosaic Community College inspired them to want to attend college. When I asked why his decision changed, Kevin talked about the money that he could make. Like Kevin, Mary's interest was sparked by the earnings potential of the graduates in the surgical technology program. When posed with the same question, she stated that the surgical techs "get paid a lot to pass tools." During the interview, Allison, Kevin, and Mary also stated that they wanted more information on the dual enrollment program.

Allison, Kevin and Mary were able to make connections between education and their ability to build capital. Allison, Brenda, and Kevin also appeared to have found their voices and a sense of direction when we took the tour of Mosaic Community College. This is evidence in their responding to questions specific to significant event five. When prompted with the question what were their thoughts about the tour of Mosaic Community College, Kevin stated, "I liked it because I see how I can make money." Allison stated, "I was glad to you took us on the tour . . . now I know what I have to do to become a pediatric nurse . . . and will get more information on their program." Kevin's statement suggested that he was considering how education could influence his access to capital. Similarly, Allison remarks implied she was better informed on what it would take to achieve her goal. Because of her request to change her project in week three, Allison influenced the changes in my practices to make the club experiences relevant to her goals in the medical field. By being open to Allison's and her teammates requests to explore

career options in the medical field and having connections to the resources in the community, I was able to provide the students with a transformative experience.

   Summary of interview responses to significant event five. Two valuable outcomes occurred from the tour of Mosaic Community College. First, students learned about the entrance requirements for Mosaic Community College and the job opportunities that were available to those who completed either the associate's or certificate programs in the allied health program. Second, the students were better equipped to make the connection between the public goals of academic attainment with the discourse on social capital. Moreover, the students interviewed identified how completing school could help them with increasing their agency to earn enough income to address the pressing basic and physiological needs that are of concern to their families (chronosystem influencers).

Connecting the Data to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework

   The following data are based on students' (focus group participants) responses to our discussion related to the themes that emerged from the coding process:

1. Teacher's Care;
2. Teacher's Listening;
3. Teacher's Addressing Students' Basic and Physiological Needs; and,
4. Teacher's Engaging Students in Critical Discourse in Unmasking Hegemonic Structures.

The students' feedback that are reflected in this section are an attempt to provide students who are not represented in the significant events, interviews, and student narrative sections voice in the research. The feedback also aided in establishing validity of my analysis of our experiences

in the community economic development club as it pertained to embedding Bronfenbrenner's framework in my instructional practices.

When I posed the question "What are your general views of your experience in the community economic development club?" I received feedback from the students, which supported the emerging themes of teacher's care, teacher's listening, teacher's addressing students' basic and physiological needs, and teacher's engaging students in critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures. The first connections that I identified were related to the microsystem level. More particularly, when analyzing the student narrative, significant event, interview, and focus group data, teacher's care and listening occurred when I intentionally aided students who lacked computers and internet connection at home and in school with accessing technology so that they could complete their assignments. I also worked with the teams to develop approaches to capitalize on the individual assets of various team members. Because I listened to the students' needs in developing teams in this fashion, I exhibited care by assisting the students with reducing the stress associated with teamwork. Additionally, by introducing students to Bronfenbrenner's framework on day one and reinforcing their understanding of the Ecological System framework through our discussions, students were open to seeking assistance in addressing family concerns related to their basic needs. The internships that I assisted the students in securing are examples of how we began to develop strategies towards addressing the basic and physiological needs of the students. Furthermore, allowing students (Jim, Allison, Brenda, Brenda, and Deidra) during week three to explore capstone projects that were outside my initial instructional plans provided the students with information on careers that would guide their academic and professional careers.

During our discussions other connections to the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's framework were evident in our dialogue relative to the perception of power in the field of economics. When discussing how businesses perceive African Americans, several provided insights. While Jim and Kevin presented opposing views, Jim's proactive approach sparked students to consider discrediting the negative perceptions of African American businesses by developing an arts based instruction charter school that would produce future African American business leaders in the fields of broadcast and performance media.

In review of the focus group and student narrative data, the three themes that are mostly connected to the mesosystem are teacher's caring, teacher's listening, and teacher's engaging students in critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures. Several of the students expressed the need to gain employment so that they could help their families meet their expenses. When I assisted the students with securing internships (employment) I not only exhibited care and listening, but I also empowered the students with the ability gain economic capital. Short-term, their attainment of economic capital aided the students with addressing their families' need for money that many expressed throughout the course.

The internships also provided some of the students with the political know how on how to attack hegemony. In building on Lisa's suggestion that the students develop a letter writing campaign to address issues in their school, I secured Lisa an internship with a local candidate who was running for public office. While working with the candidate, Lisa learned how to develop a platform, an campaign team, and a strategy for engaging the electorate. Her internship placement is an example of how modeling agency and being responsive to students voice can place students in positions that can help them develop their agency to combat hegemonic structures.

From an exosystem perspective, concerns with parent employment and high school dropout rates were identified in the student narratives and significant events data associated with Kevin. When Kevin requested the college tour, I listened and honored his request by reaching out to my network and coordinating a tour of Mosaic Community College. The tour led to Kevin self-identifying the need for him to stay in school so that he could acquire the credentials necessary for obtaining employment.

Connections to the chronosystem occurred when I exhibited care, listening, and facilitated critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures. Regina's proposed Teens Care Organization (TCO) and Jim, Allison, Brenda, Brenda, and Deidra's proposed charter school are examples of how a teacher's listening and caring can lead to a student embracing agency and developing projects that can address hegemonic structures. In the case of Regina, TCO was an opportunity to provide housing and support to youth who are voiceless. Additionally, TCO was Regina's effort to break the cycle of poverty in her community. Equally as important, the proposed charter school that Jim, Allison, Brenda, Brenda, and Deidra started out developing in the first three weeks of class resided within Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem. Like Regina's TCO, the proposed charter school was Jim, Allison, Brenda, Brenda, and Deidra's effort to circumvent the hegemonic structures that influenced resource distribution and instructional delivery in their community. In the case of Jim, Allison, Brenda, Brenda, and Deidra, the identified hegemonic structure was the state government, which usurped the home rule of the municipality. In the case of Regina, TCO was developed debunk the pedagogy of poverty that many of the educators at EDH exercised. Moreover, TCO's proposed intended aims were to the address the hegemony that the school district officials exercised. Regina and her peers viewed

the school officials as not caring about the quality of education that was being delivered to African American students in EDH's community.

Other connections to the chronosystem and hegemony can be identified in student narratives and significant events section where students sparked discussions on the business perception of African Americans as well as the Riverfront Park investment strategy. In the case of business perceptions, Jim and Jade offered strategies for empowering youth and residents to overcome the negative perceptions that businesses have of African Americans. In debating the riverfront project, students challenged the state's power and decision to invest in their community. Jean offered that the investment strategy helped perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty that existed in EDH's surrounding communities. Similarly, Jim, Kevin, and Jade's debate on business leader's perceptions reignited the debate on how economic capital influences the access to social capital.

In review of the focus group data, the activities coupled with our daily open dialogue, created an environment whereby the students were continuously challenged to identify practical approaches towards building agency for addressing the concerns that the students identified on day one. Additionally, the students' responses suggest that my practices influenced their voice, engagement, and feelings of empowerment in the class. The data also suggest that my pedagogy provided students with the language and skills necessary for understanding their environment and how they could affect change. Moreover, the students' responses suggest that I provided them with skills and tools for building their agency as well as their capital necessary for addressing the concerns in their *habitus* on microsystem and macrosystem levels.

Examples of caring and listening are best identified the Sharon's statement: "You cared about us not repeating what you did in school and that made me want to do more." Jaimee also

supported my ability to care and listen influenced her development. She expressed, "When I wanted to give up and quit you wouldn't let me. You made a big difference in my life and I am grateful." As it pertains to my ability to foster critical discourse in unmasking hegemonic structures, Cameron expressed, "We were taught to break a situation down and were encouraged to participate in each class." Kevin's comment "I believe that you cared about us . . . like when you helped us find jobs" supports the themes of caring, listening and helping students address their basic and physiological needs was important. As suggested by Allison's feedback, my responsiveness to the students' needs gave them "a sense of what was going on and how we could change things or make them better." The students' comments in the appendices D-E are direct quotes from the focus group participants, which support the emerging themes.

Chapter 5: Interpretations, Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

In reflecting on the primary themes relative to the research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins, I determined that my pedagogy aided students on identifying how economic systems and the ecological systems identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework, influenced their development, access, capital, and educational outcomes. As depicted in my case notes and the data from the interviews and focus groups, students also identified that addressing their basic and physiological needs were important to them while participating in the community economic development club. Further review of the interview and focus group data revealed that the students identified my ability to embed caring, listening, and practical experiences into instruction as key determinants to their engagement and empowerment. Additionally, my responsiveness and ability to make connections to the community resources aided me in uncovering and addressing some of the students' basic and physiological needs. Furthermore, data from students' feedback in the interviews and focus groups suggest that the students responded favorably to my instructional practices. Students became more engaged and empowered in class as time progressed due in part to my actions and ability to make connections to their lived experiences.

Based on my observations, my ability and willingness to care and understand the students' lived experiences, along with my familiarity with the community resources/assets that aided the students in addressing the basic needs and physiological needs, led to continuous changes in my instructional practices. With an emphasis on facilitating instruction from a caring

disposition, this responsiveness to the students' needs required me to operate from a constructivist multidisciplinary approach. Thus, in review of the data from the significant events, student interviews, student narratives, and focus group data, the following were determined:

1. Students' perceptions of my care, listening, and skills influenced student voice, engagement, and empowerment;

2. While trying to influence voice, engagement, and empowerment, it was important for me to address the basic and physiological needs of the students;

3. Engaging students in discussion on their perceptions of the hegemonic structures/systems (micro and meso) influenced voice, engagement, and empowerment; and

4. Engaging students in discussion on perceptions of *habitus*, agency, social and cultural capital influenced student voice, engagement, and empowerment.

In review of my case notes, my responsiveness to the students throughout the process was cyclical. While caring was a primary function that led to students' voice and agency, students' voice and agency were key to my listening to the students. Based on students' feedback to my listening and being responsive to their voices, I engaged them in deeper discourse related to hegemony. Out of our discourse on hegemony, students' needs emerged. Furthermore, in response to the students' emerging needs, I identified and connected several of the students to resources (agencies and individuals) to address the students' needs. Figure 6 depicts the conceptual framework employed in this study.
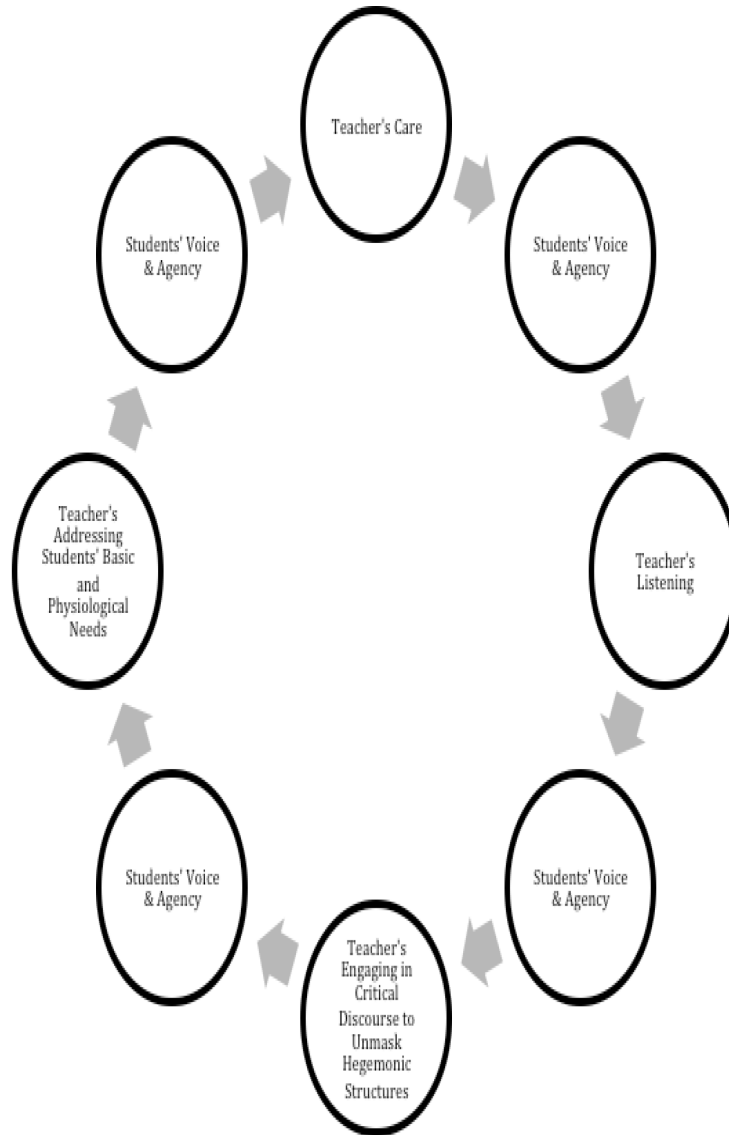
Figure 6. *Study's Conceptual Framework. My initial act of care established the pattern of student and teacher interactions that led to students' voice and agency being developed.*

Overview of Student Voice in Instruction

In keeping with Delpit (1988) and Fried & Sanchez's (1997) research on student voice, it is paramount that educators value and understand the experiences of the student participants. By listening to the students I identified their needs and goals. During my discussions with the students, they also exposed a belief that adults in positions of power did not genuinely care about the students' well being. My conversations with the students in regards to various investment

strategies that took place outside of EDH's community unmasked this concern. Additionally, our discussions related to community economic development needs in EDH's catchment area revealed that the students believed that they were powerless to address the hegemonic structures in their community. As revealed during the first few sessions of the club many of the students expressed that they believed they were powerless. However, by the end of our experience, several of the students who expressed disbelief were convinced of their empowerment and expressed that they believed their voices were valuable.

Changes in practices and how students' voice informed practices. Based on my reflections, understanding, and interpretation of the students' preexisting attitudes, experiences, and knowledge, as suggested in Janesick (1991) and Nakkula & Ravitch (1998), I made intentional adjustments to my instructional practices. Instead of moving forward with the capstone projects as originally planned, I altered my instruction to meet the request and needs of the students. I also followed Freire (1970) and Bourdieu's (1984) ideas on student engagement and empowerment by encouraging students to participate in two-way critical discourse, which allowed the students (individually and in groups) to identify, unmask, and develop strategies for addressing hegemonic structures. Moreover, I also utilized the technology that the students were most familiar with (Twitter, Facebook, and cellular) to engage the students outside of the classroom. While I had limited experience in using many of the technologies, the students taught me how to integrate the tools into instruction. Functioning in the role of a coach and teacher as required me to be responsive to the students' needs and to intentionally build on the students' strengths as suggested in Fletcher (2005).

The researcher's **perspective on being responsive to students' voices**. To address voice and agency in the classroom educators must also identify ways in which to engage students

on the margins by "talking their language" (Tierney1995, p. 388). Talking their language required me to be culturally responsive and develop instruction that valued the students' experiences. The idea of delivering culturally responsive instruction is reflected in Delpit (1988) and McKinley's (2010) research. Additionally, being familiar with the students' *habitus* improved my ability to make personal connections, which influenced the students' willingness to share and express their views in the club. According to Cargile (2011), making personal connections is important when addressing challenges associated with *habitus*. More importantly, because I shared, valued, and had a genuine understanding of the lived experiences of the students in the study, I was better able to interpret and speak their language and identify strategies that empowered the students with tools for improving their lives. Furthermore, in building on our commonalities, as offered by Delpit (1988), Hay (2009), McKinley (2010), Norwood (2006), and Tierney (1995) and, I also provided the students with skills necessary for synthesizing and articulating their personal and academic experiences during our class discussions.

A review of Gore & Zeichner (1991), Hughes, Pennington, & Makris (2012), and Romo's (2005) research suggests that I was able to connect the students and my experiences to a broader context and discourse on student voice. While culturally responsive teaching required me to take additional time to assess and prepare my daily lessons, valuing students' voices in instruction, as suggested by Freire (1973, 1970), led to the students' developing agency. Furthermore, Noguera (2012), Wagner, Joder & Mumphrey (2003), and Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002) support my position that there is a need for teachers to develop community connections and to be adept in delivering culturally responsive instruction which values student voice in instruction.

Limitations

My social and cultural capitals were assets, however, they are limitations for teachers who do not have similar experiences. Being a community developer and adjunct faculty member at two higher education institutions in the area has afforded me the graces of being able to reach out to colleagues and garner their support for my students. In the case of teachers who are working with similar populations, if they lack long-term ties to the community or personal relationships with key people in the community, being able to provide culturally relevant support to their students may prove to be a challenge.

Additionally, this study was planned for one academic semester; however, EDH would only allow the study to be conducted over an eight-week period during the summer of 2012. The eight weeks that we were engaged in the study were not sufficient because it did not allow us enough time to delve deeper into economics concepts. Moreover, due to the lack of technological resources, most of the computers and Internet access were not adequately available for the students to use during instruction. This sporadic access to technology reinforced the pedagogy of poverty ideology (chronosystem influencer) that was common practice in EDH's school district. Furthermore, the students in the study had competing interests with outside activities such as the need for employment. Considering the current employment market, being able to address the students' needs for employment (micro and mesosystem influencers) may not be an easy task to accomplish. More importantly, the time spent identifying employment opportunities, while valuable to teaching and learning, required me to spend additional time outside of the classroom making connections and revising my lesson plans. While making connections and revising my lesson plans required me to take my work home, witnessing the students' desire to learn and

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make changes in their community provided me with the extrinsic motivation to work beyond the time required.

Conclusion: Lessons I Learned from the Study

School reform measures must move from replicating broken practices in failed models to implementing strategies from successful models that are servicing high-risk populations (Noguera, 2012). In doing so, it will require a paradigm shift from the pedagogy of poverty to an ideology which unpacks poverty and requires educators to get to know the students they service. When I reflect on the data from my case notes, the student interviews and focus groups, and the student questionnaires, similar to Delpit (1988), Hay (2009), McKinley (2010), Norwood (2006), and Tierney's (1995) findings I ascertained that it is important for teachers to provide students with opportunities that connect instruction to their lived experiences. In the case of the students in the community economic development club, the capstone projects provided the students with the opportunity to connect the economic theory to solving student identified concerns that resided in the microsystem, mesosystem, and chronosystem layers of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework. The *Finally 16* capstone project provided such evidence, as the team identified there was a need in the market for clothing and accessories that promoted positive self-images of 16-year old girls in their community. Thus, the *Finally 16* project was the team's strategy for meeting market demands while addressing concerns in the micro and mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework.

In reflecting on Brooks & Brooks (1993), Hughes, Pennington, & Makris (2012), and Mitra's (2010) research, another lesson I learned from my experiences with the club is delivering instruction through a constructivist approach is time intensive and requires substantial support from others, i.e., colleagues, students, community, and the school's leadership. As a higher

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education professional who teaches dual enrollment courses in high schools, I am often removed from the day-to-day challenges of securing books, supplies, equipment, and materials. During the course of the study we had limited access to technological resources and supplies. The limited access to technology and supplies coupled with the challenges of being responsive to students' voices required me to work additional hours. Moreover, working in an environment where the pedagogy of poverty is the common practice made it necessary for me to spend additional time fostering relationships with my students. When considering the number of students that the average teacher has a responsibility for, coupled with standards and an instructor's life issues, being cognizant of and responsive to students' needs while teaching as a constructivist, as suggested by Brooks & Brooks (1993), poses challenges to the delivery of instruction. Furthermore, the continued adjustments to my instructional practices required ongoing authentic assessment to adequately maintain a more harmonious and cohesive learning environment.

As proposed in Fletcher (2005), when I honored students' voices in instruction, new areas of learning emerged. In the case of the students in the club, when I incorporated the student voice in the delivery of instruction, opportunities to learn outside of the classroom through internships were developed through collaborations with neighboring organizations interested in providing a network of resources to the students. The internships also provided the students with opportunities to make connections between theory and practice. For example, when Lisa expressed her desire to go into politics, I placed at an internship site that allowed her to extend learning into the field of political science and community development.

My experience in the study provides evidence to support Noguera's (2012) position that advocates for utilizing student voice to inform instructional practices. Other opportunities for the students to make connections emerged from my being responsive to the students' voices. For

instance, when I adjusted my instruction to allow Jim to explore his desired career as a dentist (microsystem concern) he was able to improve his skills in research. Jim's newly acquired skills in research improved his understanding on the academic requirements for dental school. Echoing Delpit (1988), I learned that by utilizing prior knowledge to engage and taking time to get to know each student not only influenced the adjustments I made in my instruction, but also aided me in creating an environment of safety and trust. This practice not only influenced voice, but also encouraged more student engagement. These actions also allowed me to pick up on the social cues that are necessary for addressing the challenges students in low-SES communities face.

Noguera (2012) purports good teaching should connect with students lived experiences and build on the assets of the school's community. Noguera (2012) also contends, in getting to know the surrounding community, educators should walk through and identify where their students live by observing the activities that take place. This "walk through" strategy can inform educators on the assets and challenges that students' experience, thus increasing empathy and understanding. In the case of the community economic development club, my long-term history in the community, as well as my working relationships with Mosaic Community College, EDH, and the local community center, provided me with the knowledge and access to resources that Noguera (2012) postulates are valuable for addressing the challenges that impede student development. Furthermore, having roots in the local community also afforded me the opportunity to work with agencies and individuals who were committed to providing the students in the study with the resources necessary for addressing student identified concerns that resided in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) micro, meso, and chronosystem spheres.

Based on the students' feedback in the interviews and focus groups, I ascertained that the cooperative learning activities that I led further reinforced student voice, empowerment and engagement by providing the students with a forum to discuss and process information that we reviewed. More importantly, the cooperative learning strategies that I facilitated in the club assisted me in creating the culture of learning and a sense of community that Noguera (2012) offers is vital to student development. By employing cooperative learning in my practice, I had to shift from my traditional practice of lecturing to executing the facilitation skills that are required in guided instruction. This instructional modification allowed for increased observation time as well as the ability to reflect and adjust my pedagogy. Moreover, by having more time to observe how the student teams and individuals interacted with one another, I was able to identify students' strengths and weaknesses that aided me in adjusting my instruction so as to capitalize on students' needs, goals, and strengths.

Another lesson that I gained from this experience was building on the students' needs, goals, and strengths required me to carryout Roberts & Kellough's (2004) interdisciplinary studies approach to curriculum and instruction. By intentionally incorporating Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework into my instruction I addressed some of the barriers that influenced the students' development and built on students' voices. These actions became major factors in my approach to instruction.

By exhibiting the characteristic of caring teachers and becoming familiar with personal environmental barriers that students encountered, I positively influenced student voice, engagement, and empowerment. Moreover, because the change in my pedagogy required me to include transformative learning pedagogy in my instruction, I was able to connect the course content to the students' lived experiences, goals, and strengths. Delpit (2006), Mezirow (1981),

and Noguera's (2012) research contends I encouraged critical thinking by connecting the course and the students' experiences, goals, and strengths. By promoting students to critically reflect on their experiences as a means for making connections to the content, my instruction aided the students in acquiring agency, which Mezirow's (1991) contends increases students' abilities to "make choices" (p. 167) that lead to successful development.

Furthermore, based on the students' feedback, I established that my practices helped bring a better understanding of the world around them that led to the development of new perceptions, active engagement, self-empowerment and voice. I believe that this was achieved because I considered and implemented the elements of Mezirow's (1981) recommended teaching practices which suggests that effective transformation/change in students is actualized through a recursive process of engaging students as well as reflecting, adjusting, and developing strategies to address students' goals and needs.

During our daily discussions centered on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework, the students identified the disorientating dilemmas that changed throughout the course of our program. Some of the students embraced the universal dilemmas that were identified during our discussions as early as day two. As demonstrated in the five significant events, other dilemmas emerged over time, i.e., some of the students expressed a need to address basic and physiological needs. The emergence of new dilemmas occurred because the students began to feel comfortable expressing their needs and goals. The critical discourse coupled with cooperative learning empowered students with the skills to self-examine and critically analyze their familial, educational, and communal roles. Additionally, our continuous two-way dialogue revealed that we shared similar experiences that aided in creating and sustaining a culture of care and trust. My past experiences as a community organizer and educator, brought value to the students'

abilities to be able identify and explore options of actions. Through our practical learning activities, students' built competence and self-confidence, developed plans to address concerns in their *habitus* as suggested by Bourdieu's (1984) and acquired new knowledge, language, and skills that were needed for increasing their social capital and challenging hegemonic powers.

Next Steps

In consideration of the students' feedback, I have secured funding from a group of national funders to offer a 12-month supplementary educational course in economics to students in EDH's catchment area. Beginning in fall 2013, in partnership with a local university, the club will provide 30 to 45 students with ample space, access to technology, and support services. Consistent with the high school content expectations for social studies as well as the common core state standards for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects, the aims of the club will be to increase students' engagement in school and community related concerns. Additionally, the aims of the club will consist of the following:

- Increasing students' literacy in civics and economics to include analysis, reasoning, problem solving, and decision-making;

- Exposing students to employment opportunities through internships and provide each student with personal computing equipment; and,

- Providing the students with more time to make the connections between the data to their personal experiences.

Furthermore, it is my hope that delivering a year-round program will improve the chances of developing relationships and increasing critical discourse in the classroom.

Areas to Explore In Future Research

Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework is primarily associated with early learning. The aim of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework is to meet students' instructional needs while addressing the systems that effect students' development. Unfortunately, the systems that impact students' development early on are even more pressing during their formative years. As evidenced in my findings, due in part to lifelong challenges that were reflected in the chronosystem, the high school students from Economic Development High expressed a need for additional supports in addressing micro, meso, and macrosystem level concerns. Thus, I would argue that future research should focus on exploring how preservice education and professional development influences secondary teachers' abilities to address the needs of students from low-SES communities.

The outcomes of the club also suggest secondary classrooms should be nimble and responsive to the needs and aims of students on the margins. In being responsive to the students' needs, my research offers a solution to secondary teachers' need to engage students prior knowledge which may require educators to continuously revise their lesson plans while employing constructivist pedagogy that adhere to the content standards. Because I had prior academic and professional experiences in the application of interdisciplinary pedagogy, implementing constructivist practices in instruction was second nature. In consideration of the mono disciplinary approach that many preservice teacher education programs promote, it is my position that future research should explore the correlation between mono disciplinary versus interdisciplinary pedagogy and student development.

My research provides an example of how teachers' pedagogy can be positively influenced when they act as advocates and mentors to their students. As provided in my findings, being an

advocate and mentor requires that teachers to care, listen, engage, and empower students while taking actions to support their students. In order to better understand how a teachers actions impact student development, I believe that future research should explore the research question: How does the application of preservice education and professional development centered on advocacy and mentoring influence student development in low-SES communities?

Significance of the Research for Teachers Working With Students on the margins

In building on Bronfenbrenner's framework, I facilitated daily class discussions that encouraged students to identify the limited social and cultural capital that Dumais (2002) and Bourdieu (1984) contend exists in the students' *habitus*. While my lesson plans were based on the state's standards, as argued by Giroux (1992) and Romo (2005), it was also necessary for me to provide the students with opportunities to make connections between the students' personal experiences and the standards. Once engaged in instruction, I functioned as a mentor and coach: thus, I spent time getting to know each student in the community economic development club via two-way communicative practices. The two-way communicative approach that I incorporated into my practices was rooted in Fletcher' (2005) and Freire's (1970) research.

As argued in Brooks & Brooks (1993) and Noguera (2012), through my observations of the classroom, building, and community environment, I gained a better appreciation and understanding of the experiences of the youth in my study. Consequently, the auto-ethnographic approach that Romo (2005) proposed aided me in uncovering and interpreting the youth views on their experiences in the school district (academic identity), family, classroom, and society. Additionally, the facilitation of participatory action methods in my instruction aided in implementing a research-based process for planning, taking action, observing, and reflecting on my practices in the community economic development club. Furthermore, the participatory

action research allowed me to participate in the study as an auto-ethnographic practitioner. The participatory action research process that Wharton (2007) suggests provided me with the tools necessary for encouraging student voice, engagement and influencing involvement and critically assessing and correcting my instructional practices in real-time to address students' concerns that are presented in Gore & Zeichner (1991), Hutchinson (1996), Noffke (1992), Roberts & Kellough's (2004) research.

During the course of my instruction, I utilized Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological systems framework in my practices as a means for exploring the primary research question: How does an economics teacher's intentional actions of embedding Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems framework into instruction influence students on the margins? In doing so, I engaged students in discussions related to hegemony. During our conversations I guided the students in understanding how their expressed concerns in their *habitus* were connected to the various systems that Bronfenbrenner (2005) contends influence student development. My guided instructional practices that are identified in Tierney (1995) helped me gain a better understanding of the students in the study. Furthermore, because I was intentional in my approach to engaging the students in discussions pertaining to hegemony, Fletcher (2005) and Tugui's (2012) research suggests my instructional practices influenced the students' decisions and affected their voice and feelings of empowerment and engagement.

I approached the design of the course from Walstad's (1992, 1998) perspective of educating students to connect the instructional content to real world concerns. For example, based on my professional experiences and my working knowledge of Hall's (2010) historical perspective of the nonprofit sector, I engaged students in discussions related to the role of nonprofit corporations in addressing a myriad of concerns that either public or private entities

may not be equipped or willing to champion. Concerns such as hunger, teen pregnancy, birth defects, and access to adequate healthcare are but a few of the issues that nonprofits address. As much as these are concerns for the broader community, they are also challenges that influence student development in the systems identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework.

According to Delpit (2006), educators who share similar experiences with their students are well suited to interpret their students' experiences. Since many of the challenges that the study participants experienced in their lived and educational environments were similar to my own experiences, the autoethnographic case study method referenced in Romo's (2005) research aided me with interpreting the students' actions and views of my instructional practices in the economic development club. My practices also employed the Straussian's techniques of induction, deduction, and verification during the data collection and analysis phases. Employing the Straussian's techniques that are reflected in Cooney's work (2010) provided me with an opportunity to develop a rich detailed description of the broader environmental and contextual factors (micro and meso conditions) that Bronfenbrenner (2005) contends influences the students' participation in class. Moreover, the critical pedagogy and participatory action research frameworks that were applied in this study presented an alternative viewpoint (cross-ideological) for understanding the students' perspectives.

Concluding Remarks: The Researcher's Voice

My process towards regaining my voice started on the day that I met one of my mentors (Perry L. Moon) at Urban Mission University. Although we were both African Americans, we represented differing socioeconomic status. Perry Moon was a tenured administrator and an accomplished musician who was starting his doctoral studies at Urban Mission University. On the day we met, my best friend and I were hanging out at Urban Mission University joking about

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who would get enrolled first. When we came across Moon we asked him about helping us get some financial aid. He suggested that because we had on more jewelry than the people in the financial aid office that we should "hock" our jewelry then maybe we could have the money needed for school. My friend was turned off by Moon's remarks, but I was in awe of Moon's presence and statements. He was the first African American male that I came in contact with that I knew I wanted to mold myself after. So I took Moon's advice to heart and went to the pawnshop and secured a loan to enroll in Urban Mission University.

Like many of the students on the margins that enroll in my courses, the acquisition of the knowledge and, social and cultural capital was not an easy task. Because I entered higher education underprepared, my six years as an undergraduate at Urban Mission University was an academic and emotional roller coaster. With a grade point average that fluctuated each term, along with the feeling of academic isolation, I found it difficult to remain focused. Having someone like Moon, as suggested in DuBois (1989), exposed me to the language of power that is embodied in the scholar academic ideology, which was pivotal in my development. Due in part to my desire to want to be like Moon, as well as his willingness to guide and expose me to the various agents in the academic, corporate, and nonprofit sectors, I acquired the social and cultural capital, declarative knowledge, and the skills necessary for challenging the hegemonic structures that influenced my development. I was privileged to have a mentor like Moon to assist me with moving into the ranks of academia.

Due to Moon's active participation in my personal, professional, and academic life, I have served as an adjunct faculty member at Urban Mission University and Mosaic Community College. The lessons learned from my experiences under Moon's tutelage served as the primary framework for my instructional practices for my first 10 years as a higher educational instructor.

During those years, I focused my practices on achieving the goals of the scholar academic framework and even practiced precepts of Haberman's (2010) pedagogy of poverty. After taking courses in my doctoral program, I re-evaluated my effectiveness in the classroom and realized that I was not reaching the students on the margins to the degree that I wanted. So, through my research and practice, I have learned to develop and deliver curriculum and instruction through the social reconstructionist that Delpit (2006), DuBois (1989), Eisner (1967), Schiro (2013), and Walstad (2005, 1998) argue will encourage and empower student voices in the margins so that they may become active participants in society.

Like the students from Economic Development High, when I met Perry Moon I was in need of support to address concerns associated with the micro, meso, macro, and chronosystems levels identified in Bronfenbrenner's (2005) framework. As an advocate, Moon cared, listened, and provided me with the assistance and encouragement that was needed for overcoming obstacles that impeded my development. Because Perry Moon cared, listened, and provided guidance and encouragement, I not only developed voice and agency, but I also embraced and adopted his life philosophy in my pedagogy. Thus, serving as a mentor and advocate is deeply ingrained in my approach towards working with students from low-SES communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Capstone Project Rubric

Content Area	4	3	2	1
Environment	Student exhibited highest level of performance in identifying and describing the influence of the environments created by the economy, technology, competition, diversity, global opportunities, and social responsibility.	Student exhibited mastery in identifying and describing the influence of the environments created by the economy, technology, competition, diversity, global opportunities, and social responsibility.	Student exhibited development and movement toward identifying and describing the influence of the economy, technology, competition, diversity, global opportunities, and social responsibility.	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in identifying and describing the influence of the environments created by the economy, technology, competition, diversity, global opportunities, and social responsibility.
Business Ownership	Student exhibited highest level of performance in comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the major forms of business ownership and discuss why many people are willing to accept the risks of entrepreneurship	Student exhibited mastery in comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the major forms of business ownership and discuss why many people are willing to accept the risks of entrepreneurship	Student exhibited development and movement toward comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the major forms of business ownership and discuss why many people are willing to accept the risks of entrepreneurship	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the major forms of business ownership and discuss why many people are willing to accept the risks of entrepreneurship
Management Structure and Process	Student exhibited highest level of performance in understanding the need for management in business organizations, its role in developing an organizational structure, and the process of producing products and services.	Student exhibited mastery in understanding the need for management in business organizations, its role in developing an organizational structure, and the process of producing products and services.	Student exhibited development and movement toward understanding the need for management in business organizations, its role in developing an organizational structure, and the process of producing products and services.	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in understanding the need for management in business organizations, its role in developing an organizational structure, and the process of producing products and services.
Management Human Resources	Student exhibited highest level of performance in describing the management role of acquiring and retaining human resources and creating a supportive work environment.	Student exhibited mastery in describing the management role of acquiring and retaining human resources and creating a supportive work environment.	Student exhibited development and movement toward describing the management role of acquiring and retaining human resources and creating a supportive work environment.	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in describing the management role of acquiring and retaining human resources and creating a supportive work environment.
Business Strategy	Student exhibited highest level of performance in explaining the marketing function and describe the concepts and processes involved in designing product, promotion, distribution, and pricing strategies.	Student exhibited mastery in explaining the marketing function and describe the concepts and processes involved in designing product, promotion, distribution, and pricing strategies.	Student exhibited development and movement toward explaining the marketing function and describe the concepts and processes involved in designing product, promotion, distribution, and pricing strategies.	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in explaining the marketing function and describes the concepts and processes involved in designing product, promotion, distribution, and pricing strategies.
Technology and Business	Student exhibited highest level of performance in exploring technology utilization to manage information and to understand accounting's role in managing financial data.	Student exhibited mastery in exploring technology utilization to manage information and to understand accounting's role in managing financial data.	Student exhibited development and movement toward exploring technology utilization to manage information and to understand accounting's role in managing financial data.	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in exploring technology utilization to manage information and to understand accounting's role in managing financial data.
Financial Mgt.	Student exhibited highest level of performance in describing the financial management function and the role of money and financial institutions and to illustrate the concepts and processes involved in managing the acquisition and allocation of funds.	Student exhibited mastery in describing the financial management function and the role of money and financial institutions and to illustrate the concepts and processes involved in managing the acquisition and allocation of funds.	Student exhibited development and movement toward describing the financial management function and the role of money and financial institutions and to illustrate the concepts and processes involved in managing the acquisition and allocation of funds.	Student exhibited a beginning level of performance in describing the financial management function and the role of money and financial institutions and to illustrate the concepts and processes involved in managing the acquisition and allocation of funds.

Appendix B

Capstone Presentation Judges Rubric

Each presentation should be 3-5 minutes, which must include (a) an oral presentation to the panel of judges, (b) electronic or poster board presentation, and (c) each team's responses to questions and feedback from the panel of judges. The table below will serve as the rubric for each presentation.

Points	Criteria
Oral Presentation (25 points)	Did the team (a) present their concepts for the project clearly, (b) introduce each team member and their role on the project, (c) explain how the team conducted their research, (d) explain the process for developing the presentations, i.e. concept development, story boarding, scripting, production, and editing, and (e) address the judges questions and comments appropriately?
Project (40 Points)	Did team clearly convey the need for their project in the community? Is the project realistic? Did the project encourage you to invest in the team's concept(s)?
Overall Presentation (35 points)	Was the presentation creative? Did the team maximize the use of the time allotted? Did the team carry themselves in a professional manner? Was every member of the team involved in the presentation? Did the team show poise in their delivery?

Appendix C

Economic Terms

Bear Market

Bull Market

Brain Drain

Business

Business Cycles

Capitalism

Command Economies

Communism

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Deflation

Demand

Depression

Disinflation

Economics

Economic Development

Entrepreneur

Expense

Fiscal Policy

Free-Market Economies

Full Employment

Government

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Inflation

Investment

Invisible Hand

Keynesian Economic Theory

Macro Economics

Marketing

Market

Market Price

Market Segmentation

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Micro Economics

Micropreneur

Mixed Economies

Monetary Policy

Money

Money Supply

Motivators

Monopolistic Competition

Monopoly

National Debt

Nonprofit Organization

Oligopoly

Opportunity Cost

Outsourcing

Perfect Competition

Producer Price Index (PPI)

Product Mix

Product Life Cycle

Product Mix

Product Life Cycle

Recession

Resource Development

Revenue

Savings

Socialism

Stagflation

Supply

Unemployment

Appendix D

Teacher's Care & Teacher's Listening

Comments	Names
You are just a good teacher. When I wanted to quit you would not let me. You provided encouraged me to read more and to do more research on ways to help my community and me".	Michelle
You encouraged me to do my project on what I wanted to do. That made me feel like you cared.	Marion
You addressed everyone in the class and encouraged everyone to participate. We were never told answers were wrong and you helped us step out of the box and enhance upon the qualities we possessed.	Traci
I was able to realize that I can be a really good leader and became more confident in expressing my thoughts and feelings about different situations . . . I was really empowered to continue my interest in business.	Lisa

Appendix E

Critical Discourse in Unmasking Hegemonic Structures

Comments	Names
We were taught to break a situation down and were encouraged to participate in each class. We were encouraged to be our best and to ask and seek out knowledge so that we could achieve our dreams.	Cameron Justice
My participation helped me realize that I can have an active role in changing my community.	Latonya
I was inspired to think outside the box. Through your teaching I was motivated to research the pros and cons of any subject.	Deidra
I felt a sense of empowerment due to your passion for the subject. You taught us to have no fear, how to analyze a situation and how to network with people in our community.	Jim
You helped me think about solutions to the problems that we are constantly facing with today's society. You allowed us to come up with ideas and share them with others in our class, and get their input as well. You always taught us to do research to find out what is needed to make our community better and helped us become more open minded to solutions we can utilize to solve some of the socials issues that we face today.	Donnie
I learned that the things that are built in certain places affect business and schools in the city. If there are new stores and attractions somewhere it can draw people, which could create revenue for Detroit.	Brenda
It encouraged me to read more and to research in the field of community development. You showed us how everyday events, local, and national, could connect to our community and business investment.	Jean
We were taught to break a situation down to see how it connects to what we were learning and recognize how we could change and enhance our surroundings.	Kevin
It affected my development in many ways. Before the class I didn't read much. The class gave me a chance to read more and understand what I was reading . . . the team projects helped me process what I read and make the connections to what was going on in my community.	Edward
Your teaching made us aware of the various opportunities to help others by heightening our awareness and helping us see different ways of helping others and building up our community.	Maria
We talked about what was needed to support our education and how we could become better individuals to make positive influences in our community.	Asia
You taught us that in some way that your environment helps you with learning and that in some way everything connects.	Jamelia
I learned how society really works and how I can make a difference.	Regina
I understood my environment and how it affects my development and how statistics of things affects can tell us how much we are being affected.	Alice