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THE CHARTER SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PIPELINE: EXAMINING
THE COLLEGE ACCESS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINA/O STUDENTS

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

by

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ABSTRACT

THE CHARTER SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PIPELINE: EXAMINING THE COLLEGE ACCESS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINA/O STUDENTS

By

Stephanie D. Nuñez

Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

College access in traditional comprehensive high schools has been extensively researched, yet there is a paucity of research that examines the charter high school college-going culture environment (Farmer-Hinton & McCullough, 2008; McDonough, 2004a; Oakes, 2003; Zimmer & Buddin, 2007). With the dramatic increase in charter education on a national level, it is imperative to explore how charter school administration, staff, and teachers view college access, especially with the rise of African American and Latina/os enrollment within this sector (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Kurlaeander, 2006; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012). In addition, the scholarship on college access should be expanded to include how students and staff view community colleges as part of their college choice process.

The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic case study is to examine how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students, specifically regarding community colleges. The study attempts to answer the following research questions through a critical race framework: 1) How do charter school personnel define college access for their students?; 2) How do charter school personnel perceive community colleges?; and 3) What are the postsecondary aspirations for graduating African American and Latina/o charter school students? How do charter school personnel influence these aspirations?

One-on-one interviews were conducted at a charter high school in southern California that has a high college-going rate for its graduating students. Specifically, I interviewed the principal, vice principal, a counselor, a teacher, and 8 senior African American and Latina/o students who were going through the college application process. In addition, I observed a guidance class session for students who were academically prepared to apply to a four-year university.

I found that the college-going culture at the charter school was evident and that a “college for certain” motto was clear to all students. Students who participated in the study attributed much of their success to the relationships built with the charter school staff and the personnel had high expectations of their students regarding college after graduation. While attending college was the ultimate goal that the staff had for their students, attending a community college was sometimes seen as a stigma and only appropriate for those students who were academically underprepared. Staff members believed that the students overall were not socially ready to step out of the comfort zone of their community and enter diverse college campus environments. CRT theorists argue that colorblindness lowers the realness of the struggle that students of color go through. I

found that African American and Latina/o students at CCHS were undergoing challenges that affected their ability to receive equal college access.

On a national scale African American and Latina/o students continue to be pushed out of high school and college at higher rates than their white peers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012, Yosso & Solorzano, 2006). This study found that although charter schools boast a strong college-going culture, community colleges are still positioned as a deficit choice amongst students and staff. The relationship between charter high schools and community colleges needs to be further explored at various levels as both sectors serve such large populations of students of color.

CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The educational pipeline for students of color from elementary school to the doctorate has been well researched regarding persistence and completion (Covarrubias, 2011; Ewell, Jones & Kelly, 2003; Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Based on data from the 2000 census, Latina/os have the highest pre-college push out rate compared to other students of color, i.e. if 100 Latina/o students begin kindergarten at the same time, only 52 of them will persist through high school (Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). When disaggregating this data from the 2010 census, it does not show much improvement with only 56 out of 100 Chicana/o students persisting from kindergarten through high school (Covarrubias, 2011). For African Americans, only 72 out of 100 that begin kindergarten will graduate with a high school degree (Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). For both African American and Latina/o students, less than 1% will persist through high school, college, and graduate with a Doctorate, the highest terminal degree possible (Ewell, Jones & Kelly, 2003; Huber, Huidor, Malagon, Sanchez & Solórzano, 2006; Villalpando & Oseguera, 2005).

There are many structural inequities that exist within the U.S. schooling system that prevent African American and Latina/o students from successfully persisting through the pipeline, such as biased curriculum and standardized testing (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006), non-culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1992), disparities in school/district funding (Condrón & Roscigno, 2003), and greater suspension rates than their White counterparts (Department of Education, 2014). The California Department of Education

estimated that in the 2011-2012 school year, 73.7% of Latina/o students and 66% of African American students graduated high school. The Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute report that “only 51% of all black students and 52% of all Hispanic students graduate, and only 20% of all black students and 16% of all Hispanic students leave high school college-ready” (2003, p.1).

Although the pipeline has been heavily researched regarding educational inequities and racialized barriers (Covarrubias, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2006), there has been minimal research on whether or not the type of high school a student attends impacts their opportunity to graduate and enroll in a four-year colleges or community college (Allen & Jayakumar, 2012; Teranishi, Allen & Solórzano, 2004). Specifically, to date, there is a lack in research that examines how a traditional comprehensive high school versus a charter high school impacts college access for African American and Latina/o students, especially as it pertains to community college enrollment. Research shows a significant connection between race, high school graduation, and degree completion (Villalpando & Solorzano, 2005). As students of color continue to form a high percentage of the community college population, it is imperative to address if and how charter schools are tailoring their college access information to include community colleges as a postsecondary option. For this reason, I explored college access for African American and Latina/o students to better understand if charter schools could make a change in the educational pipeline for these students.

American education underwent a significant undertaking with the charter school movement in the early 1990s (Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000). According to the Charter Schools Act of 1992, Education Code, Section 47600-47604.5, charter schools are public schools that are required to follow state educational goals, but are given the opportunity to

independently operate from the structure of the school district in which they are located to provide new learning opportunities for all students. While charter schools were created as a tool to enhance student achievement in the classroom and provide quality education for all students (Vanourek, 2005), as indicated by Section 54032, preference for charter school approvals went to institutions that targeted students who were identified as “low achieving.” In recent years, low achieving has become synonymous with low-income, communities of color (Haycock, 2001). In 2011, Black, Latina/o and low income students were three times more likely to perform within the lowest achievement category and percentage points in reading and math (Bromberg & Theokas, 2013).

Charter schools have been lauded with increasing student of color achievement (Wells, Lopez, Scott & Holme, 1999) and have been seen as “the answer” to education reform (Bulkley & Fisler, 2003; Warren, 2005). The schools have focused on changing the structures of teaching by empowering its staff members, communities, and students to delve into their educational creativity (Lubienski & Wietzel, 2010). Critics state that this educational reform movement has framed public schools as failing, the public education system as broken, and that they are constructing new schools to attempt to make transformative change (Bulkley & Fisler, 2003; Ravitch, 2013).

While charter schools have seen a dramatic increase in enrollment in comparison to traditional public schools, there have not been significant academic gains experienced by charter school students (Zimmer, Buddin, Chau, Gill, Guarin, Hamilton, Krop, McCaffrey, Sandler & Brewer, 2003; Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2013). This goes against conventional knowledge in that student achievement varies by the type of charter school and the difficulty in assessing the academic success of charters is that there does not

exist one traditional mission or vision. This in turn impacts the accessibility, performance, operation, and governance of each school. In addition, often not considered in the research on charter school impact, is the college access provided to African American and Latina/o students, specifically regarding community colleges.

Improving secondary education and increasing student preparedness post high school is a challenge that continues to overwhelm the education system in the United States today. African American and Latina/o students continue to enroll into post-secondary institutions at a lower rate than white students as evidenced by the educational pipeline (Bozick & Lauff, 2007; Solorzano et al, 2005). Charter school districts often function outside of state governments and at a high level of independence (Farmer-Hinton, 2006; Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000). Many times, charter schools are intended to provide increased higher education opportunities to their graduates, and such opportunities are often assumed to entail access to four-year colleges and universities.

African American and Latina/o college student access has been heavily relegated to the community college sector (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011). This has been largely due to the academic preparedness that students of color are receiving from their schools and the ineffective resources that they have (Martinez & Klopott, 2005). Charter schools are continuing to serve students of color and have been applauded for creating college preparatory programs that are providing effective college counseling and college access opportunities to them (Farmer-Hinton & McCullough, 2008). Although African American and Latina/o students are receiving college access opportunities, examining how charter schools view community colleges is imperative because of the similarity in student populations that both these institutions serve.

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2014), nearly half of all community college students in the nation are students of color, including 19% of Latina/o students and 14% of African American students. In California, community colleges serve nearly 80% of African American and Latina/o students enrolled in higher education (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011). In addition, Latina/o and Black students transfer and complete degrees at community colleges at a significantly lower rate than students of different backgrounds (Jepsen & Sengupta, 2006). While the statistics continue to show a deficit in the educational attainment of African American and Latina/o students, the change in educational environment that charter schools provide could influence the educational pipeline. Since charter schools strenuously promote college access for students of color in low-income areas, it is important to examine the linkage between charter schools and community colleges.

Community Colleges and the California Master Plan

The Master Plan of California has three major public higher education systems, which are the University of California (UC) system, the California State University (CSU) system, and the California Community College system. Additionally, the plan established that all students who are eligible to participate in an educational setting are able to enroll at a community college (Johnson, 2010). The California Community College system is the largest educational system in the U.S. and has multiple missions, including transfer, workforce preparation, and remedial education (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2013).

There are 112 community colleges in California, 23 CSUs and 10 UCs (California

Community College Chancellor's Office, 2012; California State Chancellor's Office, 2012).

In context of the community college system, more than 60 percent of community college students are of diverse ethnic backgrounds. However, only 34% of African American students and 31% of Latina/o students who enroll at a community college, transfer onto a four-year school (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, 2012).

Community college is necessary for students who may not be academically, socially or financially ready to attend a four-year institution (Rosenbaum, 2006). Due to the lack of educational resources that are provided to African American and Latina/o students at the high school level (Ravitch, 2013), community colleges can serve as the educational institution to aide in their academic success.

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2011), community colleges continue to grow and prove to be an active source of education for students. With the continued increase in community college enrollment, it is essential to examine how African American and Latina/o students are prepared to make the decision to enroll in a community college or four-year institution; and how community colleges play into their college choice process. Research shows a significant connection between race, high school graduation, and degree completion (Villalpando & Solorzano, 2005, Covarrubias, 2011). As students of color continue to form a high percentage of the community college population, it is imperative to address if and how charter schools are tailoring their college access information to include community colleges as a postsecondary option.

Problem Statement

Charter schools have increased to more than 5,700 schools nationwide, in 39 states,

(Center for Education Reform, 2012; Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2013) and continue to successfully transition students from high school to college. However, compared to the scholarship focused on traditional schools, there is limited literature regarding the types of postsecondary options that charter school students pursue (Vanourek, 2005), as well as the relationship between charter schools and community colleges. As the growth and influence of charters schools continue, it is important to note whether or not the postsecondary tracking of students is solely focused on their transition into four-year colleges and universities. With community colleges and charter schools primarily educating students from low-income, communities of color, especially in California, it is essential to interrogate the relationship between such institutional types and understand the role that charter schools have in guiding students towards or away from community colleges during their search process.

Purpose and Significance

To determine the relationship between charter schools, community colleges, and African American and Latina/o college access, I conducted an ethnographic case study that examined the practices of charter school personnel and how they define college access for African American and Latina/o students. Community college enrollment has continued to increase and serves as the primary choice of higher education for many African American and Latina/o students due to access, support, and the need to compensate for their low preparation from high school (Achieving The Dream, 2012). As education reform continues to take place and charter schools increasingly serve as the model school type to serve low-income students of color. This study represents an attempt to examine the connection between charter school perception and community college access. In particular, I examined

how charter school personnel portray community colleges in the college choice process and whether or not they are part of the college access measure for charter school students. In addition, I interviewed students and chronicled their perception of their college choice process and community colleges, and how school personnel impact those perceptions.

Research Questions

The following questions are designed to better understand the relationship between charter schools and community colleges, charter school personnel, and the type of college choice access personnel provide to African American and Latina/o students:

1. How is college access defined in a charter school context?
2. How do charter school personnel perceive community colleges?
3. What are the postsecondary aspirations for graduating African American and Latina/o charter school students? How do charter school personnel influence these aspirations?

Theoretical Framework

I used critical race theory (CRT) to guide and interpret the results of my study. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic are prolific contributors to the framework who state that CRT is a movement that was born out of the civil rights, and aims to discover the relationship between race, racism and power (2012). In the 1970's, the progress of racial reform in the United States was not moving steadily, leaving African American scholar Derrick Bell and White scholar Alan Freeman frustrated and led them to begin an intellectual movement in the field of law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). They believed that the legal studies occurring were not proposing solutions, rather were only highlighting the problems (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In 1995, African American theorists Ladson-Billings and Tate introduced critical race

theory to education by connecting and addressing race and racism's legal aspect to educational oppression. Ladson-Billings (1999) stated "a CRT perspective on the literature is akin to applying a new prism that may provide a different vision to our notions of school failure for diverse students" (p. 215). Critical race theory in education argues that education should acknowledge race and culture as an important influence for students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Through narratives, storytelling and counter stories, critical race theory researchers uncover the experiences of staff, faculty, and students in education as it relates to oppression (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Daniel Solorzano (1998), a prominent critical race theorist, offers five tenets that guide the analysis of racial marginalization within education: 1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; 2) the challenge to dominant ideology; 3) the commitment to social justice; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) state that "racism is ordinary, not aberrational" and that "our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material, for the dominant group." In education, unequal access for African American and Latina/o students is not unusual.

Critical race theorists argue that education as an institution serves as a way to continue to oppress students of color while white students succeed in the educational pipeline (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, Taylor, Gillborn & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Scholars Lesley Bartlett and Bryan Brayboy (2006) discuss the academic gap between African American and White students in particular. Through their research they found that many believe that the low performance in schools has to do with the ethnic background of the student, rather than the educational opportunities that they are receiving. Due to the fact that a large portion of

charter schools are located in underrepresented areas and community colleges are also serving low income students of color, it is imperative that we assess why there is such disconnect between two educational settings which cater to students of color. CRT is an ideal theory for the examination of how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students because of the fact that the charter school movement was founded by white developers in order to serve students of color in low income neighborhoods (Bulkley & Fisler, 2003; Ravitch, 2013). The centrality of race and racism is key to the historical and contemporary context of both institutions (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Parker, 2000; Solorzanó, Villalpando & Oseguera, 2005).

Overview of Methodology

This qualitative research was conducted as an ethnographic case study (Creswell, 1996). The focus of this case study were charter school personnel, specifically the principal, assistant principal, counselor and teacher, and their views on college access for African American and Latina/o students, as it pertains to community colleges. I also interviewed eight African American and Latina/o graduating students regarding their post-secondary aspirations. I identified one high performing charter school in Southern California that is located in South Los Angeles. In determining which charter schools in the Los Angeles areas were successful, it was imperative to ensure that not that they had a high percentage of graduating students, but also provided quality education throughout a students' high school years. I explored different Academic Performance Index (API) scores, which determine the schools' academic performance and growth and found that this school has one of the highest API scores for its district.

My goal was to identify how community colleges were portrayed throughout the school and whether or not they were a part of the college going mission that the charter school projected. This study used school personnel, and African American and Latina/o students of a low-income charter high school as data sources. Through criterion and snowball sampling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012), I was able to set requirements for the selection of participants.

The first segment of my research included interviewing four charter high school personnel. I conducted one-on-one personal interviews with the school principal, assistant principal, one counselor and a “college knowledge” teacher. The second phase of my research included conducting one-on-one interviews with two African American and six Latina/o students who were in their senior year of high school, and eligible to apply to both a four year university and a community college. Through the one-on-one interviews, I was able to garner a sense of student perception as to what type of educational options were available to them and how they perceived the college information they received.

During the interviews I was able to capture discussions of college access and race, how it may or may not differ in regards to community colleges versus four-year colleges and universities. I conducted member checks in order to make sure that I was accurately capturing the voice and thoughts of all participants. The data collected explored whether or not there was a linkage between charter schools and community colleges and found that although community colleges were included in the “college for certain” motto, there was a stigma about students who were on track to attend a community college.

Limitations

Bryant (2004) states that limitations in a qualitative study are the restrictions that are produced due to the methodology used in order to answer the research question. A limitation to this study was the site where the research was being conducted as well as its location and demographic background. The research setting that was chosen was a California Distinguished School, which are schools that represent excellent educational programs and gains. According to the California Department of Education (CDE, 2013), California Distinguished Schools are schools that demonstrate exemplary educational programs based on criteria from the No Child Left Behind Act, Academic Performance Index and Adequate Yearly Progress. Due to the fact that the research site was one of the high performing schools in its district, the personnel could have been reluctant to expose whether or not all forms of college access was provided to all of their students.

Delimitations

Bloomberg & Volpe (2012) define delimitations as “conditions or parameters that the researcher intentionally imposes in order to limit the scope of a study” (p. 8). A delimitation in this study was that students and school personnel may have been hesitant to share their true feelings because they were physically present at the site during the conversation, and the interview space can influence their response. Another delimitation to the study was the specific characteristics of the students and personnel that were participating; having school personnel of different ethnicities may have added a different voice to the findings of the study. Conducting the study at a charter school that did not have a high API score, located in a different community, or had different students may have resulted in different findings. The

perceptions of college access and community colleges may have differed between the personnel and students; therefore conducting research with other school personnel and other students who are not in their last year at the school may have provided different data.

A delimitation of the study was focusing exclusively on African American and Latina/o students. Due to the fact that the charter school was predominantly Latina/o, the results from this study may differ if only Latina/o students participated and/or if the study was conducted at a different charter with a different student population. The number and gender of African American students who participated in the study was also a delimitation. Having more African American participants could have given a different perspective on the college choice process. Although only focusing on African American and Latina/o students was a delimitation, it was important to research those students in particular due to the fact that charter schools and community colleges both serve large segments of this student population

Researcher's Background

This study will explore how charter school personnel define college access and postsecondary attainment and how that definition encompasses community college education. As a high school counselor who works for a charter organization that is determined to instill aspirations in their students about college, leadership and life, I was interested in exploring how charter school personnel tailor their expectations to students who may not be regularly exposed to a strong college-going culture.

Nearly all the African American and Latina/o students I work with show signs of the inequitable education that they were provided throughout the educational pipeline. As a

counselor I often times find it difficult to create a new way of thinking for them so that they understand their college options and the communities which they will explore once they graduate high school. While I have seen and helped a large amount of students graduate and go onto four-year colleges and universities, the majority of my students are better prepared to attend a community college. I wanted to research and understand how a colorblind approach to education impacted my students' educational journey. Understanding why charter school personnel provided that educational approach to their students was important for me in order to ensure the commitment to social justice and to end the forms of subordination in the education of African American and Latina/o students .

Organization of the dissertation

Chapter 1 is a brief overview of charter schools and community colleges. It also is a synopsis of the importance of this study in addition to the methodology, limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 sets the foundation of the study by providing the different dimensions of charter schools and community colleges. The literature reviewed covers charter schools, community colleges and different types of college access that are available to students of color in high school. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to design this study that examines the linkage between charter schools and community college access. The chapter also provides information on the school setting, the data sources and instruments, the researchers role and how data was collected and analyzed. In chapter 4 I provide the study's context and share the stories of charter school personnel and students pertaining to college access and community colleges. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study and provides recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This ethnographic case study explores charter school personnel and how they define college access for African American and Latina/o students, specifically access to community colleges. This chapter includes extensive literature about charter schools, and community colleges and its relevance to the college access that is provided to African American and Latina/o students. College access is a topic that has been explored by researchers throughout the years in order to identify the gaps between secondary and postsecondary education (Martinez & Klopott, 2005; Oakes, 2003; McDonough, 1997). The research that has been conducted on college access focuses on the traditional relationship between high schools and four-year institutions, with a noted absence of charter schools and access to community colleges. Due to the fact that there is limited research on this topic, this study will examine the gap in the literature between charter schools, community college access and the perceptions of college access that charter school staff hold for African American and Latina/o students.

This chapter analyzes literature concerning charter schools, college access and community colleges in an effort to garner a better understanding of the African American and Latina/o educational pipeline and post-secondary attainment. The literature regarding charter schools reviews the origins behind the educational movement and the positive and negative outcomes that charter schools have created for students. The review of college access literature examines what best practices schools are used to properly disseminate college information to African American and Latina/o students and families, as well as assesses why there is a gap in the K-12 college access literature between four-year institutions and

community colleges. Finally, the literature review of community colleges includes a discussion on the role that these institutions serve, the goal in educating diverse students and the outcomes of students who attend a community college. The purpose of analyzing the linkages between charter schools, college access and community colleges is to understand what information is being offered to African American and Latina/o charter school students in preparation for college. Furthermore, tying in the benefits of charter education and college access will allow for an examination of how school personnel view community college and whether or not it is considered a positive post-secondary attainment.

Charter Schools

Charter schools, as defined by the US Department of Education (2012), are:

A public charter school is a publicly funded school that is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract or charter with the state of jurisdiction. The charter exempts the school from selected state or local rules and regulations. In return for funding and autonomy, the charter school must meet the accountability standards articulated in its charter.

Charter schools have autonomy, yet are still subjected to meet certain standards that are set forth by the district in which they reside. According to the Center for Education Reform (CER, 2012), there are close to 2 million students who attend charter schools across the U.S., with California hosting the most amount of students with over 410,000. While there is not a uniform structure for all charter schools, a common thread is that they have the goal of creating an alternative way of teaching students (Finn et al., 2000). Charter school scholars Julian Betts and Paul T. Hill (2006) state “ the whole point of the charter school movement is

to allow these schools greater flexibility and to encourage innovation and diversity” (p. 18). They believe that by having a charter education system, it will create a sense of competition between charter schools and traditional public schools in order to retain their students and to provide access to high quality education. Betts and Hill (2006) also state that “ a closely related concern is that the spread of charter schools could lead to decreased integration along racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic lines” (p. 9). Due to the fact that charter schools have continued to grow in areas where African American and Latina/o and low-income students reside (Zimmer & Buddin, 2007), it is important to understand how this new educational movement will change this populations’ educational experience.

The charter school movement began in the early 1990s with the hope to create a new identity for public education. As educators hoped to transform instruction, they began to design schools that provided a different type of approach, which followed a set of rules other than the systematic regulations under which failing schools were operated. Finn, Manno and Vanourek (2000) outline the five key features of charter education: (1) They can be created by almost anyone; (2) They are exempt from most state and local regulations, essentially autonomous in their operations; (3) They are attended by students whose families choose them; (4) They are staffed by educators who are also there by choice; and (5) They are liable to be closed for not producing satisfactory results. Essentially, charter schools are independent schools that have control of their own structure, yet are public due to the fact that they must abide by certain public school standards.

Charter schools are granted a “charter” which is a legal document that authorizes and monitors a school or districts function and has the expectation that the school will implement strategies to raise academic achievement in the community which they are built (Finn,

Manno & Vanourek, 2000; Buckley & Schneider, 2005; Garcia, et. al., 2008). The mission for how charter schools address educational achievement gaps, instructional methods and cultural immersion vary depending on the school, district and organization (Farmer-Hinton, 2006).

The charter concept was created by Ray Budde as an idea to restructure the education system, and to hold teachers accountable for the academic rigor they were providing to their students (Bracey, 2005). In 1991, Minnesota adopted Budde's idea, California followed in 1992, and in 1994, the Clinton Administration encouraged states to implement charter laws into their educational plans (Kolderie, 2005). Throughout the years, as states witnessed the difference in the quality of education, many began to implement efforts and tailor it to their benefit.

In 1992, California sought to create a type of school that would build a unique curriculum tailored to student success. Charter schools were formed as a distinctive solution to aide in the reform of public education in a state that was continuing to grow and where education was suffering (Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000). While the purpose of charter schools did not differ from traditional schools, they were created in order to generate competition within public education in a smaller setting and in an environment where personalized education was key (Finn, Manno, & Vanourek, 2000). Charter schools were designed to operate on the principles of choice, accountability and freedom (Center for Education Reform, 2012). These schools followed the same operation procedures as public schools however they were able to operate within their own organization because most identified as private charters; therefore, they were under their own regulations related to hiring, curriculum requirements and specific focus (Finn, Manno & Manourek, 2000; US

Department of Education, 2012).

The Center for Urban and Multicultural Education at Indiana University (2012) drew a comparison between charter education and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It stated that one of the goals behind charter schools was for students who were attending low-performing schools to have an academic choice when it came what school they attended. That choice allowed for students and parents to feel comfortable in selecting a school where they felt their student would gain a level of educational support that would address their racial background. Richard Kahlenberg and Halley Potter, researchers for the Century Foundation, argue that students who attend schools in low-income areas have developed higher-level critical thinking; however, charter schools who educate racially isolated and high poverty areas students continue to struggle in showing significant academic gains (2012). Kahlenberg and Potter (2012), define racially isolated schools as having 90-100 percent of students of racial minorities, and high poverty area schools as having 51-100 percent of their students on free and reduced price lunch. While some schools may have a high percentage of their students on the free and reduced lunch program, they may not have a racially isolated school.

Many individuals are still unaware of the differences between traditional schools and charter settings, however it is important to note that charter schools are well-known for serving underrepresented students, and are most often located in areas of low socio-economic backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). There has been a significant amount of traditional public schools that have not been able to maintain their academic standing, and local districts have sought to create smaller learning environments in order to reform the type of schooling that students are receiving (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Most of the

schools that are failing are schools that are not given the proper resources to function, and happen to be located in low-income areas (Center for Education Reform, 2011). Charter schools often find themselves in warehouses or small buildings that do not meet their students' needs due to lack of funding and operational obstacles, some of which are set forth by the local school districts (Center for Education Reform, 2011). Often times charter schools are operated by private schools or private companies, yet categorize themselves as public charters when convenient (Ravitch, 2013).

Charter schools are rapidly growing and “are overrepresented in the top 10 percent of California public schools” (California Charter School Association, 2012). In 1992, California adopted the Charter Schools Act, in order to reinvent public education and to provide an option to students and their families (California Charter School Association, 2012). The National Center for Educational Statistics (2012) reported that in the 1999-2000 school year, charter schools grew between 2 to 9% depending on the enrollment size of the school, and served low-income and high poverty areas where 75% of their students participated in free or reduced lunch. In 2012, about two million students and 4 percent of the nations K-12 students were enrolled in charter schools (Ravitch, 2013).

There are different types of charter schools, including start up charters (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), conversion and virtual charter schools (Molnar, Garcia et al, 2005), and for-profit schools (Toson, 2013). The differences between these types of charters are distinguished by how they have been formed and how they are managed. Start-up charter schools are described as new charter schools created by a developer and which did not exist as a traditional school prior to obtaining a legal charter (Department of Education, 2004). Molnar and Garcia (2007), state that conversion schools were formed because local

school districts deemed a particular school as failing, and believed that charter education would create a better learning environment as well as a “supplemental education service” (p. 12). They describe virtual schools as schools who “offer an Internet based curriculum outside of the conventional brick-and-mortar setting of traditional public and charter schools, and they frequently cater to children who were previously home schooled” (p. 14). For-profit schools are private educational management organizations (EMOs) that have grown tremendously since the 1990’s (Toson, 2013). EMO’s are for-profit organizations that are hired to run public schools, whether they identify as individual or a cluster of schools, or as charter schools or traditional public schools (Kowal & Arkin, 2005). There are now 43 states that have the ability to charter independent schools (Center for Education Reform, 2013).

There is limited research on whether or not charter schools promote college access for African American and Latina/o students. Although there is limited research, it is evident that charter schools have engaged in the task of providing quality education for a population of students who may require a more nurturing environment (Farmer-Hinton, 2006). Serving a population where the need for resources, not only in regards to education, but other social services is extremely high, should affect the mission and vision of charter education in order to tailor the school to the community that it serves.

Critiques of the Charter School Movement

Toson (2013) examines the benefits of Educational Management Organizations (EMO) by exploring their involvement and change for under-represented students and the significant gains in their students’ academic achievement. The author explains that most EMO’s are built in low-income areas and serve “easy to teach kids” (p. 3), meaning that the

students, whom they are servicing, do not have exclusive educational needs because they are in younger grades. In order to try and prove that students in low-income areas could in fact learn in a charter environment, Loveless (2003) explored whether or not students were learning “better” through a charter education. The author examined EMO-run charter schools and compared them to non-EMO charters, which included schools who were a part of non-profit charters.

The results showed that EMO-run charters usually “took over” schools that were showing system failure, and showed more academic gains within 2 years. Loveless (2003) stated that “they [EMOs] serve a larger proportion of Black children and children in poverty and are more likely to be located in urban communities” (p.34). The author recommends that while EMO’s are definitely showing gains, it is important to incorporate family into the development of the school so that all partners can benefit from the change. It is important for educators to take into consideration the gains that EMO’s are making and make the connection to the college access that students who are attending those schools will be receiving.

Buras (2011) researches how the charter school initiative has restructured education in New Orleans. She examines educational policy and how race, along other dynamics, aided education reform during a time when the city was recovering from the impact of Hurricane Katrina. Her purpose was to determine how the charter school movement was helping or harming students of color in their school performance. Additionally, she evaluated whether or not the type of education they were receiving was different than the education that white students in the same “struggle” were going through. She found that charter school operators were not sensitive to who their target students were, who was going to teach them and the

types of services which they were going to provide, such as special education. In addition to the multitude of aspects that charter schools were not sensitive to, post secondary partnerships, and student academic and financial preparedness were also absent. Buras (2011) suggests that in order for change to take place, educators must actively consider the tumultuous relationship between policy making and privatization.

Buras implements a critical race theory (CRT) perspective, and analyzes how “white” organizers were more concerned about public monies and less interested about the needs of those oppressed in New Orleans. She continues by mentioning that white entrepreneurs have gained control of a majority of resources within black communities, such as charter schools. Like Buras (2011), this study will examine whether or not charter schools take into consideration the type of student that they are serving, especially regarding college access. It is imperative to examine whether or not charter schools are aiding in the success of their students and are providing adequate and equal post-secondary information to the entire student body.

Zimmer and Buddin (2009) examined whether the success of charter schools led to the improvement of public education. While conducting a study in California, they sought to inspect how leadership at each charter school reacted to the continuous academic gain of their “competitor”, the traditional high school. While the data showed that there is an increase in the academic gains of traditional public schools, “it may be that growing areas such as California are less likely to respond to competitive pressures, and charter schools may act more like a release valve for growing enrollments rather than inducing competitive pressure” (Zimmer & Buddin, 2009, p. 840). Thus, in California, there has not been significant growth of charter school academic gain; therefore, the statement that students,

who attend charter schools, have a better education than those who attend traditional public schools, cannot be said with fidelity.

In addition to not having concrete data to measure the success of charter school students, it is difficult to be able to describe how students are educated, due to their non-traditional settings (Zimmer & Buddin, 2009). Betts (2006) also argues that while educators focus on test scores as the success of charter schools, the focus should also be on whether or not charter schools aide in students graduation rates and college access, including enrolling into and completing college. The Center for Education Reform created a report in 2003 that defined the struggles and gains of charter schools in comparison to public schools. They mention that while charter students certainly had academic gains, there has not been a significant difference than those of students in public schools.

Research has been contradictory in its facts when comparing student achievement gains between traditional high school and charter schools. In 2009, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the achievement levels of students (Zimmer & Buddin, 2009; Ravitch, 2013). However, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University, conducted a study in 2013 that showed students who attended charter schools were performing about 7 days of additional learning in comparison to their traditional public school peers. That data showed gains in students who in 2009 showed lower academic achievement than students who attended a traditional public high school. The rise in the student enrollment can be an indicator in the belief that charter education is an aide in education reform and a place where students are able to receive a high quality education that many parents believe traditional schools lack. Finn et al (2000) states “efforts to appraise charter schools’ efficacy are also handicapped by the information vacuum, that weakens our

entire public education system. Conventional public schools are derelict when it comes to documenting their performance” (p. 74).

Could this be a reason why charter school enrollment is on a constant incline? While charter schools continue to track their academic progress, traditional schools have not been consistent in documenting their academic gains, allowing charter schools to shine with the data they are providing; leading outsiders such as parents, community and educators to believe in the charter movement (Vanderhoff, 2008). While some parents are enthusiastic about the opportunity of hope for better instruction, there are parents and community members that do not agree with charter school takeovers (Ravitch, 2013). Some community members and schools believe that a less aggressive approach allows for students to receive adequate academic and resource support in order to ensure academic achievement (Mead, 2007). Ultimately, there is no significant data to show that converting a school guarantees better academic performance from students (Mead, 2007).

With the continued success of charter education and the belief that it will eventually transform public education, parents are more inclined to continue enrolling their children in charters, rather than enrolling them in traditional high schools. Rofes and Stulberg (2004) states, “as choice becomes a larger part of the American education reform agenda, critical and nuanced looks at school choice are increasingly important. The lived reality of school choice plans is more complicated than many supporters and critics would have us believe”, (p.2). It is evident that families will continue to choose based on the lived experiences of their students and the factors that matter to them such as the identity that schools are shaping and the academic rigor that they are providing.

In the 2010 documentary, directed by Davis Guggenheim, “Waiting for Superman”, the audience is given the opportunity to follow several students as they attempt to be accepted into charter schools in their areas. The documentary agrees with Rofes and Stulberg’s (2004) argument that choosing a charter school is a complicated and stressful time for families. It also sheds light on the fact that some charter schools have become privatized and that the media has made a big impact on them.

There are several ways in which education reformers believe the charter initiative will aide education and it begins with how communities perceive the change and what social movement is taking place. Wells, Lopez, Scott and Holme (1999) conducted a comprehensive qualitative study that examined 10 charter schools in California. In this study the authors observed how individuals in different areas defined social movement and how it affected the change occurring in certain communities. The study explains the difference in the types of charters that have been developed and similar to Indiana University’s report (2012), it states that only by being able to compare charter schools to the larger school environment can a clear picture of the successes in charter schools be seen.

It is imperative that data be collected in order to show the significant growth in academic achievement, as well as the different programs that encourage community and parental involvement within charter schools. This research study will allow researchers to see how education reform encompasses what message is being given to the students and parents about post-secondary education, as well as the type of education that they are receiving in comparison to “regular” public schools. Addressing the differences between the resources and support that charter schools have in comparison to traditional high schools will also shed light on the type of access that students are receiving in terms of their options after high

school.

In order to fully determine how the meaning of college success is being communicated to charter school students, studying college access and the different methods is essential to the connection of charter students and community colleges. It is imperative to understand how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students and how community colleges are being presented, if at all, because of the similarity in the populations that they serve. According to Fleischman and Heppen (2009) “successful charter high schools seem to maintain a focus on higher education and foster a safe, orderly learning environment and positive school culture” (p. 124). Charter schools continue to be portrayed as highly effective and ensuring that their students are graduating and continuing on to post-secondary success (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009). However, there is no significant evidence that shows that college access is being provided to students in charter schools and that they are better equipped than traditional public high schools to aid students in their post-secondary choices (Fleischman & Heppen, 2009).

One study that begins to connect charter schools with community colleges is by Roderick, Coca and Nagaoka (2011), scholars at The University of Chicago. In the study, the authors examined students of urban schools and what events or information impacted their enrollment into a four-year institution. The research focused on minority students at Chicago Public Schools, the ability to create a college-going culture on their campuses, and analyzed whether creating that type of culture begins in the home or in the classroom. Throughout the study, the authors’ mentioned that in order for a student to be successful in college, it is imperative that high schools are accountable for the preparedness of their students, despite the type of school, which they choose. The authors state: “even among students who have

similar academic qualifications, low-income and minority students are more likely than high-income and white students to attend a two-year institution and less likely to enroll in a selective four-year college” (Roderick et al, 2011, p. 198). The college-going culture that students are exposed to during their high school years attributes to the success that they will experience once they graduate and enroll into their post-secondary option. If schools do not create a college-going culture, it can have a negative impact on the matriculation process of their students.

While students of color tend to enroll in community colleges, it is important that all students are college ready by being able to understand the application process, making informed college choices, and how to matriculate and apply for financial aid. My proposed study fits in to the research that Roderick, Coca and Nagaoka (2011) conducted because African American and Latina/o students are continuing to enroll at community colleges at a higher rate than other students of color and white students (CCCC, 2012). Due to the fact that charter schools are also opening in low-income neighborhoods, it is important to understand how to better serve and prepare African American and Latina/o students to succeed if they choose the community college route, and how the information which they are receiving in high school affects their transfer decision in the future. By examining the college going culture of charter schools, I plan to emphasize the importance of school counselors, teachers, and school administration as the pioneers of college access within high schools.

College Access

College access is implemented in schools through the actions of teachers, administrators, and students through the college choice process and by creating a college

going culture. A component of college access is college choice, which is how students choose which college to attend to. McDonough (1997) states that college access is influenced by parents, college size, location and academic reputation, in addition to the students' perception of their ability to succeed in college as well as the number of options that they have. The ability to prepare and encourage students to consider their options post high school, is the foundation of creating a college-going culture at a school (McClafferty, McDonough & Nunez, 2002).

Many charter schools pride themselves in preparing students for college by providing a substantial type of education that measures up and competes with traditional high schools. Charter schools offer competitive courses and successfully graduate and prepare their students for post secondary success by educating them on the college choice process (McClafferty, McDonough & Nunez, 2002). Due to the small sizes and the personal attention that is available to the students, the suggestion that McClafferty, McDonough and Nunez (2002) of having a consistent college message for all students, allows for a successful college culture and a partnership in preparing all of their students for post secondary attainment. Holland and Farmer-Hinton (2009) define a college culture as:

“college culture reflects environments that are accessible to all students and saturated with ever-present information and resources and on-going formal and informal conversations that help students to understand the various facets of preparing for, enrolling in, and graduating from postsecondary academic institutions as those experiences specifically pertain to the students' current and future lives” (p. 26).

Ultimately, students are exposed to college information daily in their schools and are given

the resources necessary to make informed decisions about applying, enrolling and attending college. In addition to a college culture, education scholars have defined college choice as the developmental process that students go through when attempting to decide on college options (Freeman, 2005; McDonough, 1997).

Roderick et al (2011) analyzed students who were academically ready to apply for a four-year school compared to those of students who were not academically ready and were willing to apply. The data showed that students who attended schools where teachers and staff were more encouraging and helped the student through the process, had a higher rate of post-secondary attainment; in fact 9-13 percent were more likely to apply, be accepted, and enroll . Due to the fact that charter schools are continuing to grow around the country (CDE, 2012), it is significant to understand how charter school personnel define college access for their students and how they are aiding in their college process.

Oakes (2003) states that in order for students in disadvantaged areas to be successfully ready for college, they must have the following indicators in their environment: safe and adequate school facilities, a college going school culture, rigorous academic curriculum, qualified teachers, intensive academic and social supports, opportunities to develop a multi-cultural college going identity, and family-neighborhood-school connections. Many charter schools often find it difficult to secure a stable facility and are required to occupy warehouses or office buildings, yet still have the task to create and implement innovative approaches to student improvement and their overall academic achievement (Farmer-Hinton, 2006).

Although some charter schools struggle with organizational obstacles, others are successful in creating a prominent school and college-going culture. Successful charter schools that proved to maintain a safe and positive school culture were also aligned to the five outcomes

of school improvement, which consisted of creating a rigorous curriculum and to prepare their students for life after high school. Clear expectations are prominent components of a strong college going culture and providing college access for all students (Oakes, 2003). According to research about charter schools and college access, it seems that although the structures of charter schools allow for a cohesive relationship between students and staff, there has not been a significant gain to show whether or not the organizational models that they are adhering to are working (Farmer-Hinton, 2006; Ravitch, 2010; Ravitch 2013; Oakes, 2003) in the best interest of all students, especially those who are African American and Latin American.

African American and Latina/o College Access

Educational outcomes and movement through the educational pipeline for African American and Latina/o students has been significantly different than Whites (Solórzano & Ornelas, 2004). Education scholars, Patricia Perez and Patricia McDonough (2008) examined the Latina/o college choice process in the Los Angeles area and focused on 106 juniors and seniors. They found that parents, peers and high school staff highly influenced the students' decision about college. Although Latina/o students relied heavily on their close network, Carden (2007) found that parents of Latina/o students were not thoroughly informed about the college process and lacked a college-going culture within their family. Constantine, Kindaichi and Miville (2007) analyzed influences that impacted African American and Latina/o college process and transition into higher education. Perez and McDonough (2008), and Constantine, Kindaichi and Miville (2007) found that students' school and family both formed large parts of students' educational attainment goals, as well as college access and the presence of a college-going culture. This connection between family college knowledge, a

school's college-going culture and student educational goal development is crucial to the conversation regarding students' views of college and their perceptions of the community college system. There are a variety of factors that contribute to a family's limited college knowledge, including, but not limited to poverty, academic preparation and cultural values (Constantine, Kindaichi and Miville, 2007).

African American scholar Kassie Freeman (2005) discusses the influences that affect African American students' decision to continue onto higher education. Those influences are: 1) familial and individual influences such as gender issues and economic expectations 2) school influences such as the curriculum that they have received, the type of school which they attend, and the college access which they receive (Freeman, 2005). African American high schools students tend to have higher academic aspirations than other racial groups (Ellwood & Kane, 2000), yet are insecure and unpredictable due to other factors that affect their lives (Berkner, et al., 2007; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Freeman, 2005). These factors are parental education and involvement, extended family, high school type, racial composition, academic rigor and socio-economic status (Berkner, et al., 2007; Smith, 2009; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Freeman, 2005; Bateman & Hossle, 1996). African American scholar Michael Smith (2009) explains "for low-SES African American parents, maps that outline roads to any number of vocational options are easier to read and make more sense than those that lead to college" (p. 174). Arguing that college road maps that were given for a four-year institution seemed difficult to read and analyze (Smith, 2009). Similar to Latina/o students, African American students depend highly on the relationships that they have built with school personnel and their peers.

Counselors and College Access

Prior research suggests that students of low-income backgrounds have not always understood the steps needed in order to apply to college and have the time or willingness to learn about applying for financial aid (Calaff, 2009; Keup, 2007; Perez & McDonough, 2008). For example, the racial composition of a high school and the school personnel, specifically the counselors, affected African American students' college process and outcome (McDonough, 2005; McDonough & Calderone, 2006). McDonough (2006) argues that counselors and teachers are individuals who affect student decisions and ultimately encourage the college choice process. Although counselors are often times advocates for the students, it is difficult for them to effectively guide students towards post secondary schooling due to the many roles that they play, such as academic counselor, social-emotional counselor, having to supervise yard duty, and performing other administrative duties as asked (McDonough, 2006). She states "if counselors begin actively supporting students and their families in middle school in preparing for college, as opposed to disseminating information, this will increase students' chances of enrolling in a four-year college" (McDonough, 2006, p.4) McDonough's discussion focuses on counseling in traditional schools, and doesn't mention how, if at all, counselors at charter schools are effectively encouraging students and creating a college culture at their school.

Farmer-Hinton and McCulloch (2008) conducted a mixed methods study of high school charter counselors in a predominantly African American community in Chicago. The researchers wanted to focus on counselor roles at a charter high school and analyze the opportunities and struggles that they face compared to public schools. The authors found that while charter school leaders provide counselors with structure and the ability to have small

caseloads, the ability to effectively help their students is often compromised because of the roles that all school personnel play in the start up of a school. Often times, counselors are considered the “ go-to” individuals because they create the schedule of classes, are aiding in implementing and creating school wide rules, all while continuing to do guidance, college and social-emotional counseling, which is the same for non-start up charter schools.

Themes that the authors mentioned about college access within charter schools are: having a strong curriculum, personalized attention, and most importantly that it is a whole staff effort in creating a college going culture. While charter schools are often placed in communities of low-income students, the authors express that “equitable and effective college counseling is lacking for students of color due to the organizational capacity of the schools they disproportionately attend” (Corwin, et.al., 2004), adding to the disconnect of both the students and the family.

Martinez and Klopott (2005) examined some of the reasons why African American and Latino students have continued to graduate and pursue higher education at a lower number than their White counterparts. The authors look at programs such as Project GRAD and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and describe how effective they have been in providing high schools with the added support for their students. Similar to Martinez and Klopott (2005), McDonough (2005) states that in order schools to instill college knowledge, they must support both college and school expectations, resources for college counseling, a rigorous curriculum and a staff committed to encourage their students to pursue higher education. Oakes and Saunders (2006) state that in order for students to want to pursue post secondary education, they must have adults and mentors that encourage college preparation and who expect their students to succeed

academically. Creating an environment where students are aware of their college options, will aide in the success after high school, whether it is at a four-year school, or a community college.

Community Colleges

The mission of community colleges has evolved throughout the years. Known as a gatekeeper for students who need extra aid after high school, community colleges have become the type of school that allows for students to continue their education without the pressures of attending a four-year school (cite). Rosenbaum (2006) states that community colleges are a safe haven for students who may not be academically ready to attend a four-year institution.

Rosenbaum (2006) provides a brief and important definition of community colleges:

Community colleges are amazing institutions designed around an idealistic goal: increasing college access. Community colleges are the primary source of opportunity for ethnic minorities, immigrants, and low-income students. They offer a second chance for students who attended poor high schools, or who did poorly in high school (p. 1).

Students with academic records who have shown struggle in high school tend to enroll in community college at a higher rate than those who are college-ready (Kurlaeander, 2006; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Bragg (2001) introduces us to community colleges (CC), their mission, and what the key elements to higher education are at the community college level. She defines the focus of community college students is to transfer, have a vocational occupation, continue education, and participate in developmental curriculum that will

ultimately aide them in their transition to a four-year school. Community colleges are set to “provide economic opportunity for the majority of immigrant, minority, and first-generation college goers” (Templin, 2011, p. 7).

The California Community College system is the largest higher education system in the nation and was developed under the California Master Plan for Education in 1960 (CCCCO, 2012). The Master Plan established three tiers of education (Johnson, 2010). The University of California system was designed to be a research institution, the California State University system was established to provide undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees, and the California Community Colleges were designed to provide two-year degrees or to prepare students for development education and to transfer to a four year school, career and technical education (CCCCO, 2012; California State University, 2012).

Research shows that under-prepared students are enrolling in community colleges at a higher pace and in order for the opportunity gap to be closed, changes need to be made to the type of curriculum and support that is being offered (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005).

Community colleges and four-year institutions have seen an increase in serving Latina/o student (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014; CCCC, 2012). According to McKillip and Mackey (2013) 75% of African American students who took the SAT had enrolled in college and 21% of those students had enrolled at community colleges.

Community colleges are often the first choice of schooling for under-represented students and students of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Many community college students tend to enroll students of color due to their flexibility with classes and tuition, especially because of their age or the familial responsibilities (Perez & Ceja, 2009).

While community colleges continue to enroll under-prepared students, it is important to note

that many students attending charter schools are considered to have a more selective type of schooling due to its class sizes and specialized attention.

Dowd (2008) examines community colleges, equity and access of higher education and how applies it to the concept of open access at community colleges. She states that community colleges are often seen as “the little brother” of four-year schools and the state of equity is often questioned. The Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California has examined strategies of accountability and assessments in order to successfully examine performance at the high schools. They suggest that in order for schools and their leaders to be accountable for their students and type of education, they must track transfer rates, degree completion and workforce readiness. Due to the fact that the roles of community colleges are often changing, leaders aren’t able to successfully be accountable for their schools. Dowd (2008) states that “students with greater educational needs require greater resources in order to achieve at rates equal to those with fewer needs” (p 4). According to Dowd (2008), the transfer and remediation procedures that are put in place are not helpful to underrepresented students.

The Civil Rights Project (2012) compares and contrasts the type of students that are attending community colleges and the types of high schools that they graduate from. It is important to assess whether or not charter school students, and traditional high school students are enrolling in community colleges at the same rate. A study of all California community college freshmen whose goal was to transfer into a four-year school between 1996-1998 was conducted. The students who participated were grouped by their high schools Academic Performance Index and demographics. As the groups were analyzed, it was noted that 1/3 of Latinos derived from “low” schools as well as 1/5 of African American

students, in comparison to 1 out of 25 white students and 1 in 10 Asian American students. The purpose of the study was to examine why some students chose to attend higher transfer colleges and what schools did to aide students of color.

While there were more differences between community colleges in how they supported students, the report bundled the results into five sections that stated students who transferred were not necessarily from high performing high schools, that they needed extra counseling support, needed extra program support, more resources, and needed academic remediation while in college. This study is relevant because charter schools tend to serve the same student that community colleges do and it racializes both institutions. The type of students who are attending low-income charter schools, mirror those that are continuing to enroll at community colleges. It is imperative that educators understand whether or not African American and Latina/o students who are graduating and enrolling in community colleges, are being prepared through counseling and extra support. Research shows that high school climate, relationship with school personnel and high school counselor relationships influence a students' decision to enroll in a community college or a four-year institution (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Kurleander, 2006; McDonough & Calderone, 2006). By examining whether or not students were in fact college ready, charter schools can determine the type of preparedness that they are instilling in their students, and how that is aiding in their choice of school.

Due to the fact that the students have different goals while attending community colleges, community college leaders are always evolving and their mission, accessibility, and programs are constantly under review. Bragg (2001) states the because changes are often made, it is important for community colleges to be able to budget and link resources in order

to help their students.

Mary Martinez-Wenzl and Rigoberto Marquez (2012) discuss that for many students in California, dreams of post-secondary attainment can only be through community colleges (CC). Their report for UCLA's Civil Rights Project, examines the different types of students and communities that CC's cater to. The authors identified the colleges by breaking them up into the following categories: intensely segregated, majority underrepresented minority, highly diverse, majority white/Asian, and majority white. Results showed that students are being serviced based on the type of community that they grew up in and are receiving fewer resources than a high performing area. "The reality is that for most students who live and attend schools in racially segregated communities, their opportunities and access to an equitable education are severely compromised. In the absence of real access to education, inequalities are perpetuated" (Martinez-Wenzl & Marquez, 2012, p.37) Students whose high schools are low-functioning are often concentrated in community college areas where African American and Latina/o dropout percentages are high. Community College scholar Kay McClenney (2004) states: "community colleges serve disproportionately high numbers of poor students and students of color. Many of the students are the ones who were least well served during their previous public school education and therefore most likely to have academic challenges as well as fiscal ones" (p. 11). Therefore, students who attend community colleges where there is a high population of African American and Latina/o students will receive a lack of educational opportunity compared to more affluent areas because of the remediation that is expected.

In order to make change, Martinez-Wenzl and Marquez (2012) recommend the following strategies to be implemented within community colleges: recognize and reward

success, streamline the transfer process, alignment across institutional sectors, information and integration, and increase funding. It is essential that community colleges take into consideration all of the factors that can hinder student success and what efforts can be done to make a change.

Sanchez, Esparza, Colon, and Davis (2010) found that Latina/o students, who had familial obligations, attitudes were influenced and often times affected their decision to continue onto higher education. Similar to those students in community colleges, charter school students in low-income areas are beginning those familial responsibilities while in high school (Attinasi, 1989; Sanchez, Esparza, Colon & Davis, 2010). Latina/o students were more likely to attend community college and local schools close to their residence because of cultural variables and family responsibilities (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). It is important to ask questions such as: How do African American and Latina/o students and parents respond to the academic and familial responsibilities? How do charter schools structures maintain racial discrimination in college access, primarily when focusing on community colleges? Answering these questions will allow for an analysis through critical race theory and to better understand the various forms of discrimination that are happening in charter schools.

The lack of research in African American community college choice, and the connection between charter schools and community colleges adds to the gap in the literature that further complicates college access for African American and Latina/o students. The literature of charter schools shows an increase in student participation, yet does not formally state the academic success that charter schools have; specifically with college access. The college access literature that I reviewed allows for a better picture of the information that

students are receiving about their college options and how to create a successful higher education path. The communication in charter schools seems to allow students to receive individualized attention, yet there continues to be a disconnect in how charter schools are creating college cultures that specifically cater to students of color. Community college literature mirrors the demographic of charter schools, and it is imperative that educators continue to create roads for success in order for students to understand that they too can be successful at a community college.

Charter schools and community college scholarly discourse can be viewed as colorblind and race neutral. Critical race theorists argue that colorblindness reduces the struggles of people of color and the “color” that a person is definitely matters in how they are treated and viewed in society (Lopez, 2005; Lynn & Parker, 2006). Charter schools and community colleges are often managed in a colorblind manner by not acknowledging their racialized student populations, and teaching students about the racially charged campus environment they may encounter once they graduate and leave their communities.

The colorblind ideology minimizes racial differences and justifies the absence of white acknowledgement, which disseminates racial inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). The term whiteness is often used by CRT scholars to understand white privilege and white supremacy (Lynn & Parker, 2006). Gillborn (2008) argues that white interest is valued above black student rights in all forms of education policy, teacher education and the classroom. This in turn creates an inequality when policy makers create education standards that are based on white ideals, leaving other racial groups out.

Dixon and Rousseau (2005) state that “CRT scholars believe and utilize personal

narratives and other stories as valid forms of “evidence” and thereby challenge a “numbers only” approach to documenting inequity or discrimination, which tends to certify discrimination from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective” (p. 35). Through story telling and narratives, I was able to better understand the challenges and strengths that underrepresented students are facing in charter schools. While some CRT scholars are often criticized for basing their research on story-telling, “critical race theorists argue that these stories of discrimination and cultural survival and resilience are essential for uncovering institutionalized and endemic racism” (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999, p. 35).

This study will address how charter school personnel defined college access for African American and Latina/o students at a high performing charter high school in Southern California. I examined how that definition included community colleges and how it impacted graduating African American and Latina/o students. Critical race theory has been used in order to examine education widely; however missing from the discussion has been the racial examination of charter schools and community colleges. Few scholars have used critical race theory to analyze community colleges and students of color; and have focused on the culture and commitment that community colleges have to ensure a successful transfer into a four-year institution (Jain, Herrera, Bernal & Solórzano, 2011). By applying critical race theory to charter schools and community colleges, it will allow educators to see how charter school personnel are framing community college access for their African American and Latina/o students and how their racial background is steering their educational path.

Summary

Chapter 2 provided background on charter schools, college access and community colleges. Critical race theory argues that social justice is lacking in education and that the

normality of racism is very much prevalent in our schools. The literature examined has a shortage of information on how charter schools are increasing African American and Latina/o students' college completion and movement in the educational pipeline. Addressing African American and Latina/o students' college-going culture at charter schools offers a different perspective on academic counseling, what factors influence their college choice decisions. In addition, addressing whether or not African American and Latina/o high school students' college choice process includes community colleges would provide insight as to why African American and Latina/o students choose to attend two year schools.

Chapter 3 reviews the methodology and research design used. It also discusses the research questions, its participants, research site, and data collection methods. The chapter is concluded with the role of the researcher and ethical considerations of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Charter schools are continuing to grow and have filled an educational need for students of color (Boo, 2004; Wells, Lopez, Scott & Holme, 1999). It is important to examine how charter schools prepare their students and what goals charter schools have for them in regards to post-graduation. This chapter examines the theoretical framework and research tradition used for this study. The setting for the research was a charter high school located in a low-income area of Southern California. Explanations as to how students and staff were selected to participate in the study, as well as specific details about the types of participants in the study and considerations for privacy and confidentiality are also included. The chapter also addresses the research procedures, data collection, data analysis, the role of the researcher, summary, references, and appendix.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory originated in the late 1960's to transform the relationship between race, racism, and power during the Civil Rights movement (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Ladson-Billings (1998) utilized CRT to examine educational institutions and structures and identified racial disparities regarding curriculum, resources, funding and facilities. Ladson-Billings (1998) states, "if we look at the way that public education is currently configured, it is possible to see the ways that CRT can be a powerful explanatory tool for the sustained inequity that people of color experience" (Ladson & Billings, 1998, pg. 18).

CRT in education is a theoretical framework that challenges the dominant discussion of

race and racism in schooling and examines existing power structures which are formed on white privilege and the marginalization of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1998). Education scholars Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) state that “when civil rights leaders of the 1950s and 1960s built their pleas for social justice on an appeal to civil and human rights, they were ignoring the fact that the society was based on *property rights*” (p.16). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) are connecting the amount of funding given to schools in different districts and socio-economic areas and connecting it to the property values of the communities in which they resides. Urban school districts are often underfunded and under resourced, therefore, making it difficult to for those schools to provide equal education for their students.

Charter organizations have had the reputation of being involved in low-income areas and at times attempt to engage with the surrounding community with mixed results (CDE, 2012; Vanourek, 2005). Buras (2011) describes the charter school movement after Hurricane Katrina and states “in New Orleans, white entrepreneurs have seized control of a key asset in black communities—public schools—and through state assistance, charter school reform, and plans for reconstruction, have built a profitable and exclusionary educational system that threatens to reinforce rather than challenge the political economy of New Orleans” (p. 304). Orfield, Gumus-Dawes and Luce (2013) found that scholars were concerned that charter schools in Minnesota were highlighting racial segregation, and that students of color were more likely to attend low-poverty schools. Here are just two example of a complicated relationship between race, racism, and charter school education.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) connect the quality of school curriculum to the property value of the community. By doing so, they reveal that curriculum development must

not be based on the national education standards, rather the perception of the community from which the students derive from; "...as critical race theory scholars we unabashedly reject a paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 25). Clapp, Nanda and Ross (2008) agree with Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and further point out the relationship between schooling for students of color and property value, they state: "Hispanic students in a district leads to lower property values in Connecticut. Specifically, the census tract fixed effect models imply that a one percent increase in percent of students African-American or Hispanic leads to a decrease in property values of 0.36 and 0.31 percent, respectively" (p. 11).

Schools in predominantly African American and Latina/o neighborhoods are often judged due to the demographic makeup of the community. In the book *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*, Diane Ravitch (2013) states "our urban schools are in trouble because of concentrated poverty and racial segregation" (p.4). As traditional public schools and charter schools concentrate on low-income neighborhoods, the question remains whether or not they are adding to the racial segregation, or are they changing the philosophy of education for students of color?

Given the aforementioned, it is key to evaluate the extent to which an institution is evolving to meet the needs of the community it serves. One of the goals of CRT is to change the ideology and action of an institution (Iglesias, 2002). By changing the ideology of an institution or an individual, it can revolutionize the interactions with people and students of color, and ultimately argues for better schools and better resources. Daniel Solorzano (1998), who is credited with establishing five tenets to describe CRT in education, believes the tenets

are the root in the connection between education and inequality. The five tenets are: 1) The intercentricity of race and racism, 2) the challenge to dominant ideology, 3) the commitment to social justice, 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective.

The first tenet, the intercentricity of race and racism, helps us analyze how race is central in both charter school and community college structures, policies, and admissions. Historically, both these institutions were developed by Whites and now they both serve primarily students of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Ravitch; 2012; Ravitch, 2013). This disconnect is something that CRT can help us critically examine. The second tenet, the challenge to dominant ideology, allows us to look deeper at the discourse surrounding charter schools and analyze how and if their mission aids education reform. Most notably, the dominant ideology states that students are academically better off at charters and that four-year college admission is the only definition for college access. However, research shows that most students perform the same or even worse at charters, and that many students attend community college post-graduation. (Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2013; Valencia, 2010).

The third tenet, the commitment to social justice, helps us consider that social justice can be achieved with both these institutions that serve primarily students of color, especially African American and Latina/o students, and that they should be offered socially just choices in terms of college choice and access. By centering experiential knowledge, tenet four, it was important for me to hear directly from charter school students and those who educated them to find out about their views on community colleges; therefore I spoke with school administration, teachers, and graduating students. As CRT provides an interdisciplinary

perspective, tenet five, it allows me to look at how race and racism intersect with charter schools and community colleges through other disciplines such as history and sociology.

Through these tenets I examined the contemporary marginalization of African American and Latina/o students in charter schools and the college access they are provided. One of the goals of this study is to show that critical race theory can offer practical ways to aide the educational pipeline for African American and Latina/o students through educational practice and college access. CRT offers a captivating theoretical framework for analyzing the academic gaps for secondary and post-secondary education. CRT not only serves as a method for evaluating schools, but it helps to evaluate the teacher education.

Solorzano and Yosso (2001) define CRT in teacher education as “a framework that can be used to theorize and examine the ways in which race and racism impact on the structures, processes, and discourses within a teacher education context” (p.2). By looking at the practices of teachers in low-income areas, primarily those who teach African American and Latina/o students, educators can create measures to ensure that all of the practices in an educational setting are created with the success for all students. CRT encompasses a commitment to develop and transform schools to acknowledge that each student has a value regardless of their race (Yosso, 2005). CRT “refutes dominant ideology and White privilege while validating and focusing on the experiences of people of color” (Yosso, 2005, p. 69). Hearing the experiences of African American and Latina/o students at charter schools will allow educators to better comprehend how predominately white charter school personnel are influencing the college aspirations of their students.

This study is different from other educational studies due to its emphasis of charter

school personnel and how they define college access for African American and Latino/s students and community colleges. With CRT, I attempt to unify the similarities between charter school students' college access and community college through a racial lens. I explored how race affected and impacted the information that students received regarding college and how their decisions for post-secondary plans were made. The following section will thoroughly explain the methods that I used in order to recognize whether charter school personnel view community college as a successful post secondary option.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to examine how charter school staff and teachers define college access and how this definition racializes the experience for African American and Latina/o students. Specifically, I explore how choosing to enroll in a community college fulfilled a charter schools vision. Holland and Farmer-Hinton (2009) define college culture as:

“environments that are accessible to all students and saturated with ever-present information and resources and on-going formal and informal conversations that help students to understand the various facets of preparing for, enrolling in, and graduating from postsecondary academic institutions as those experiences specifically pertain to the students' current and future lives” (p. 26).

Holland and Farmer-Hinton (2009) argue that it is necessary for all students to be prepared for higher education. The academic preparedness and information about the transition from high school to college, allows for them to be organized and equipped to make the decisions necessary for life after high school. For many students, attending a school where college

information and resources is not common. Huber et al. (2006) state that “As the Latina/o population increases, more students fall through the cracks in the educational pipeline and the disparity in attainment continues to grow” (p. 3), especially if those students are in African American, Latina/o and/or low-income communities.

I was interested in understanding how college access was defined if students choose the community college path, rather than the expected four-year institution enrollment. As a high school counselor, I wanted to understand the educational pipeline for African American and Latina/o students who attended a charter school and were interested in pursuing a community college pathway. Through the experiences of students and staff, I hoped to discover the college expectations that educators had of their African American and Latina/o students. I attempted to answer the following questions through a critical race theory lens.

Research Questions

The research conducted examined the following questions:

1. How is college access defined in a charter school context?
2. How do charter school personnel perceive community colleges?
3. What are the postsecondary aspirations for graduating African American and Latina/o charter school students? How do charter school personnel influence these aspirations?

Research Design and Tradition

This qualitative research was conducted as an ethnographic case study.

“Ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, interaction, and communication among members of the culture-sharing group” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 12). According to Rossman & Rallis (2003) case studies “seek to understand the larger phenomenon through

close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular. Case studies are descriptive, holistic, heuristic and inductive” (p. 104). A case study allows researchers to focus on a specific group and describe the whole experience while focusing on the specific insight of the group (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The case study approach allows “in-depth and detailed explorations of single examples (an event, process, organization, group, or individual)” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 103). Case studies allow for researchers to understand data through a real world perspective and to understand social occurrences (Yin, 2014).

The focus of this case study were the views that charter school personnel have on college access for their students, and specifically if they define community colleges as a legitimate post-secondary option for African American and Latina/o students. The case study was a bounded group of people, and was not focused on the school as a whole. The participants in the study included low-income African American and Latina/o students who attended a charter school, and who were beginning their transition into a post secondary institution. I also examined charter school personnel of various cultural backgrounds and studied their views on community colleges. Through the lens of the charter school personnel and African American and Latina/o students, I was able to understand how charter school personnel view college access for their specific students. The voice of the participant is the central frame of analysis for CRT. Storytelling is an important part in African American and Latina/o cultures and is essential for their survival and liberation (Solórzano & Yosso, 2007). The data collected, allowed me to tell the stories of African American and Latina/o students and to reveal their racial constructions.

The “boom” in charter school growth has led educators, families and students to

believe that it offers a better quality of education for the communities they serve (Finn et al, 2000). The smaller learning environment, as well as the mission and goals of the charter schools are usually geared towards higher education. However, due to my experience working of in a charter school, I have observed that community colleges are not included in that vision of being a credible pathway to post secondary success. Through descriptive research, interviews and an observation of charter school personnel and students, it allowed for a better understanding of what staff members expected of their students and how the information was given to them.

By conducting an ethnographic study, I was able to focus on the culture of charter schools and the perceptions that both personnel and students have regarding college. As an ethnographer, it was my duty to better understand college access, college choice, and the college going culture of the charter school. It was my responsibility to immerse myself within the interaction and communication that was occurring between charter school personnel and African American and Latina/o students.

Due to the fact that there is a paucity of research that has been done to examine the linkages between charter schools and community colleges, it is important for educators to examine the impact, or lack thereof, that charter schools make on students' post secondary attainment. This study will allow readers to better understand, through experiential knowledge, what differences are occurring when college access and educational information is given to students in a smaller learning environment that is well resourced.

Research Setting and Context

Data for this ethnographic case study was collected at a California Distinguished

School located in South Los Angeles. According to the California Department of Education (2012), California Distinguished Schools demonstrate exemplary educational programs, Academic Performance Index, and Adequate Yearly Progress. Central Charter High School (CCHS) is a public charter high school that belongs to a prominent charter organization that has pioneered charter education in Los Angeles and has served as a national model for education reform. As the third school formed in the district, the school opened in the summer of 2006 with 145 freshmen. Central Charter High School currently has 580 students enrolled, 99.1% are on Free/Reduced Lunch, has an Average Daily Attendance rate of 95.1% and has a population of 97% Latina/o and 3% African American students at their school.

According to the 2011 census, the Central Charter High School is located in a community where 90% of its residents are of Hispanic/Latino descent and 9.2% are Black - the rest is a mixture of ethnicities (US Census, 2011). Similar to the demographics provided by the US Census, CCHS's student population mirrors that of its neighborhood. With a teaching staff of 27, the School Accountability Report Card reports that 24 of its teachers are fully credentialed, one is not fully credentialed and two teachers are not properly assigned, meaning that they are currently teaching a course in which they are not yet credentialed for (GreatSchools, 2013). The district in which it resides in currently serves over 10,000 students and is made up of 18 schools in the Los Angeles area. Due to its high quality education offerings, the school has been able to close the application process every year and has created a waiting list for each grade level.

The school is located on the corner of a residential area and is housed in a warehouse that has been converted into a small learning community for its students. The outside of the school is divided by black gates, small patches of grass, scattered benches and the majority of

the open space is used as a parking lot for teachers and staff. The inside of the building is extremely clean. Its classrooms are small, but large enough to house nearly twenty-five students. The doors to the classrooms are big windows that allow anyone walking through the hallways to look inside. Each classroom has a sign that reads “The Road to College starts here” and the hallways are decorated with honor roll lists, student college maps, announcements, and reminders of rules and procedures.

This site was appropriate for this ethnographic case study because of its exemplary way of teaching and the high rates of students’ academic success during and post high school. The California Department of Education carefully examines the growth of its students through its yearly standardized testing. Each year, schools are defined by a score that takes socio-economic status and demographics into consideration; it is known as an “Academic Performance Index” (API) (California Department of Education, 2013). According to the California Department of Education, “State legislation, the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) of 1999 (Chapter 3, Statutes of 1999), established the Academic Performance Index (API), which summarizes a school's or a local educational agency's (LEA) academic performance and progress on statewide assessments” (CDE, 2012).

Central Charter High School has increased its API score at least 10 points every single year since 2009 (California Department of Education, 2011). Its base API score for the 2011-2012 school year was 794, while the maximum score that any school can receive is 1,000; the target API score for the 2012-2013 school year is 799 (California Department of Education, 2011). This API score is higher than the other non-charter schools in the area.

As a counselor in the same district, I work closely with the counselors at the site,

collaborating throughout the school year and have become familiar with each of the high schools in the district. I understand that administrators, counselors and teachers are a big influence in student aspirations and it was important to comprehend their thoughts and practices. Data sources for this study include one counselor, the principal, one assistant principal, a college knowledge teacher and eight students. According to Bloomberg & Volpe (2012) qualitative researchers use purposeful sampling in order to derive understanding of the material that is being explored. As an ethnographer who is examining the connection between charter school personnel, community college and college access, choosing the most appropriate type of sampling strategy is key. It was important for me to ensure that all of my data sources understood that my purpose was to explore whether or not charter schools are tailoring their education to all students and providing the correct path for them. Glesne (2011) states that in order to add extra scopes to the research, it is important to build a good affiliation with those involved in order for the data to continue to develop.

Data Sources and Sampling Strategies

In studying charter school personnel, I used interviews, interview transcriptions and audio recordings as my data instruments for this ethnographic case study, in an effort to connect charter school personnel's view with the tenets of critical race theory. I interviewed charter school administrators, a counselor and one teacher, as well as eight students in order to gather information about how educators define college access for African American and Latina/o students. Through Solorzano's (1998) fifth tenet of critical race theory in education, centrality through experiential knowledge, I connected the lived experiences of the African American and Latina/o students in order to understand and analyze their experiences about racial subordination in their educational setting (Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998; Solorzano

& Yosso, 2000).

In order to begin the sampling process, I spoke to the principal at the high school and briefly mentioned that my research focused on the college access that was provided to the students at his high school. I described to him what the process entailed for each participant involved in the study. I communicated to the counselor that I was interested in having a wide range of students who were both eligible and not eligible to attend a four-year school and let her know that I would need her help in identifying the students. By working with a mixed group of students, I hoped to garner a better understanding of the type of college information that was being disseminated to students throughout their high school experience, whether inside or outside of the classroom. According to Bloomberg & Volpe (2012) qualitative researchers use purposeful sampling in order to derive understanding of the material that is being explored; therefore, by having a mixed group of participants, I was able to gather all of the information needed in order to conduct my research successfully.

Criterion sampling states “all participants must meet one or more criteria as predetermined by the researcher”(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 248). The criteria used for school personnel participants were that they needed to be employed at the school and fulfill the roles of principal, assistant principal, counselor or guidance teacher. The criteria for student participants was that students needed to be African American or Latina/o, needed to attend Central Charter High School at the time of the research, be seniors and eligible to graduate June 2014, and to be eligible to attend a community college and/or a four-year institution. By using this strategy, it was imperative that I create a good rapport seeing as though everyone involved had been specifically chosen. Once my data sources were established, I was able to begin initial discussions, set up a schedule, and determine the

meeting room for my interviews to take place.

As snowball sampling strategy (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) was used during this study, I convened with the counselor so that she would be able to guide me to the students that fit the criteria for my study. In order for students to be eligible to participate in the study, they had to be current senior students at Central Charter High School, were eligible to apply to a community college or a four-year institution, and must be African-American or Latina/o. Once connected with the students, it allowed me to link the perceptions of the charter personnel, and their views of post-secondary attainment. In addition to interviews with students; I interviewed the school administrators, a counselor and a college knowledge teacher.

School Personnel

I conducted one 45-60 minute face-to-face interview with the school principal, the assistant principal, one counselor, and a college knowledge teacher, totaling 4 staff members, in order to learn about their views on college access and their connection to community colleges. The administration at the research site was composed of one principal, one assistant principal. The counselors at the school site as the individuals that facilitate the college going culture; therefore, it was imperative to gain the insight of those specific individuals. The school underwent a huge turnover since the beginning of the school year and they lost one assistant principal and one counselor, therefore, the sample was much smaller than anticipated. Although there was change within the staff I chose those particular group of people because they were the gatekeepers to the college information.

Students

I spoke with the school principal in order to inform him about the criteria for the students that I was recruiting for my study. I spoke to him about the IRB process at my institution and checked with him to see if there was a separate process that I needed to go through within the district, fortunately, there was not. Although he agreed to help with the selection of the students, the counselor was the primary individual in helping me select the students who would participate in the study. The counselor originally aiding me in data collection resigned from her position at the end of the first semester, therefore, her replacement became my contact person and helped with the communication of the students.

The schools counselor hand delivered my research invitation and flyer to the entire senior class during their guidance class. Student participants who were interested in partaking were given instructions to speak to the counselor who would then get them in touch with me. All of the students who decided to participate were given the Bill of Rights for their participation, a participant informed consent form, and a parent consent form. I conducted one 45-60 minute face-to-face individual interviews with eight students. Ten students originally responded to the invitation, however, only eight continued with the research. Due to the fact that all students were still in high school, and most likely under the age of 18, I also gave them a parental consent form, which was also translated in Spanish for those who needed it.

Data Collection

For my research study on charter school personnel's views of college access and community colleges, I used the following instruments to make my data collection relevant to

the gap between college access regarding community colleges and charter schools for African American and Latina/o students. The interviews that I conducted with the faculty and staff were on the school site, in a private room to ensure that all participants felt as though they were able to fully express their thoughts and concerns. The classroom observation that I conducted was during a guidance class, and was focused on how the teacher conducted the classroom and shared college options. As a counselor, it was important for me to make sure that all of my participants understood the purpose of the study: if charter schools were tailoring their education to all students and providing the correct college path for them.

Critical race theorists are committed to social justice and the empowerment of students of color. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) state “critical researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower” (p. 26). Through this research, it was important for me to examine how charter school personnel were either oppressing and marginalizing or emancipating and empowering their students through the college choice process. By building relationships, the participants in my study were able to collaborate in order to fully understand their commitment to social justice. The staff members who participated were able to understand how their students’ post secondary options were being oppressed due to their racial backgrounds and to analyze whether or not the school was promoting social prosperity for all and providing equal goals for their African American and Latina/o students, like other schools who catered to a different population.

One of my concerns about interviewing students, was the fact that I am a school counselor. In a school setting, a student does not always feel comfortable with the adults in the school, and I was worried that they may not have felt comfortable sharing information

with me knowing that I hold that role elsewhere. It was important for me to have them understand that although I too am in the education field, the ultimate goal of the research study was to ensure that all students were being given the correct and equal academic support. Another uncertainty that I had was that as an employee in the same district, school personnel may not feel comfortable divulging their true feelings about college access and community colleges for African American and Latina/o students. It was important for me to let them know that by them sharing their thoughts, their students would be able to receive an equal opportunity for post secondary success. I also shared with them that although I did work for the same school district, I was in no way connected to the administration at the school and that their thoughts and comments were completely confidential. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe criterion sampling as participants fulfilling particular criteria, and chain sampling, and the gatekeeper aiding in the selection of the participants. Through criterion sampling, I was able to identify eight African American and Latina/o students who may or may not be eligible to apply to a four-year school but qualify to attend a community college; Of the eight student participants, two were female African American students, three were Latina and three were Latino

I began my process by hand delivering and emailing all potential participants an invitation letter, which described the type of study, what was required of each participant, and why they were an ideal candidate for the study; the form, which they received, was titled “Invitation to participate in Charter Schools, College Access and Community Colleges research study.” In addition to this invitation, because I was interested in speaking to both adults and minors, I distributed two different types of consent forms to my participants. The consent form that I gave to the adult participants was titled “Charter School Personnel

Consent to Participate in Research”. The consent forms that were given to students were titled “Adolescent Assent to be in a Human Research Project” and “Consent to act as a Human Research Subject Students” as well as “Parental Consent Form”. All copies of the documents given to participants in this study can be found in the Appendix section labeled Appendix A-L, with the translated documents in Spanish as well.

The student interviews were conducted at the school site in order to be able to make it a comfortable setting for all participants. During our interviews, I tried to make it as comfortable for them as possible by introducing myself, beginning with the purpose of the study, and sharing with them how important their participation was. I encouraged them to be honest and reminded them that all of the information that was shared with me was completely confidential. Once the interview was conducted and I completed collecting my data, I thanked them for their participation and let them know about the time frame before I began my data analysis. I also let them know that they were able to verify all comments made through my transcript analysis.

In order to protect human research subjects, I used an interview protocol. Due to the fact that I was conducting two different types of interviews, I had two different types of documents. I conducted individual one-on-one interviews with the school personnel, that required me to have the “Charter School Personnel Interview Protocol” and conducted interviews with the students, which required me to have the “Charter School Student Protocol.”

Similar to the criterion and chain sampling that took place for the interviews of students, I once again worked with the school principal and counselor in order to identify and

contact the assistant principal, and one teacher that participated in my one-on-one interviews. I arranged for my interviews and observation to take place throughout a two week time period and identified the meeting place for my interviews one week prior to the date. The interviews were conducted at the school site due to the fact that I interviewed the teacher during her “prep period” and both administrators and the counselor were not typically able to leave their site during school hours.

As a part of their college curriculum, all teachers at the school site are assigned a college knowledge class titled “guidance” in which they educate the students on their options and the road that they will take towards their graduation and college journey. Working with both the counselor and a teacher was extremely significant to my work because they are the individuals that create and distribute the lessons for the students. Through their work and interviews, I was able to gather the information that helped me examine how charter schools educate their students on college choice and access. By participating in this type of research, they assisted in the betterment of educational success in regards to understanding post-secondary success as defined by the charter system and in connection with African American and Latina/o students.

Once I identified which school personnel I wanted to interview, I sent a personalized email and letter to them explaining the purpose of the study as well as how their contribution will aide the research study. The email and letter will proposed meeting dates and times for the interviews and observation to take place. During our first meeting, I spent a couple of minutes going over the protocol and consent, and asked any clarifying questions before beginning our interviews and observation. I asked permission to audio record the interviews and informed the participants that they had the transcription available for them to receive

within a two week time frame. At the end of our time together, I asked if they had any questions for me, and informed them as well that they could make changes to anything that was said.

Interviews

School Personnel interview protocol. The interview protocol was semi-structured which allowed me build questions in a specific order (Bernard, 1994). Using a semi-structured format allowed me to go into my interview with predetermined open-ended questions, and others emerging from the dialogue between the school personnel and myself. I conducted semi-structured interviews with school personnel in order to get their views on college access at charter schools, specifically with the connection to community colleges. Glesne (2011) states that an interview protocol creates orderly process when capturing a participant's experience. The interview protocol provided an introduction to the purpose of the study and let the participants know that their involvement was both voluntary and confidential. I asked the staff about their experiences at the charter school, their concept about college access on their campus, and their interaction with African American and Latina/o students. The questions that were created in the school personnel interview protocol, account for the intersectionality of racism, and college access within the charter school. I allowed the participants to ask questions and I also had the opportunity to probe for answers. By allowing participants to ask questions and to tell their story, I was able to see the connections to the tenets of critical race theory. The school personnel interview protocol can be found in Appendix L.

Student interview protocol. I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with

eight African American and Latina/o students. The interview protocol was composed of semi-structured questions that aimed to capture the voice of students and examine the college culture and college access that they were receiving at Central Charter High School. The interview protocol provided an introduction to the purpose of the study and let the participants know that their involvement was both voluntary and confidential. The student interview protocol asked questions about their experience at the charter high school, their thoughts about the college culture, and how college access was defined to them. In addition, they were asked about community college and their views of it as a post secondary option. Lastly, there was a section that allowed all student participants to ask questions, seek additional information, and to be able to debrief. The student interview protocol can be found in Appendix K.

Justification for Instruments used in the study. Along with the interview protocol, the invitation letter and consent forms were produced carefully following the guidelines of Human Subjects Research at California State University, Northridge (California University, Northridge, 2013). Rossman and Rallis (2003) state that in order for the data collected to connect well with the conceptual framework used, it is important to make sure that the design is the appropriate one and that they connect directly with the purpose of the study and the research question. I used critical race theory to help me analyze how the students of Central Charter High School were receiving adequate college access, and to examine how their race and ethnicity were impacting their post secondary educational options and access. Resembling the importance of the design of the study, it was also important that all protocol questions be flawless. All questions that were asked were generated in order to directly connect to the definition that charter school personnel might have of college access and

whether or not community college is a part of that definition. In order to fully grasp their thoughts and views, it was my duty to ask follow-up questions to further explain and clarify their thoughts. Before conducting interviews at the school site, I conducted a mock interview of the questions with colleagues in order to fully be prepared for the actual interviews.

Observation

As I gathered data at Central Charter High School, I conducted observations in both formal and informal places within the school. I spent two hours a week for four weeks, and an entire school day in order to ensure that both my interviews and observations took place. I made a diagram of the school layout so that I could familiarize myself with the setup of the classrooms and different bulletin boards that displayed college information. All of the classrooms had school pennants on the walls, and the majority of them solicited four-year California State schools.

I noticed bulletin boards with information about deadlines to apply to four-year schools and a posters that encouraged students to apply, as well as to reminded students about college trips that were going to occur. I stood in the school hallways and observed students wearing college sweaters that represented the University of Southern California (USC), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and California State University, Long Beach. I made sure to take notes on students apparel, body language, and tone used during oral interviews and in the general school environment. For instance, I noted that during one of the interviews a student who was on the path to attend a community college was wearing a Dartmouth sweatshirt because it was given to him as a gift, and allowed him to be able to wear non-uniform attire (students were allowed to break from school uniform if they wore

collegiate related clothing).

I observed a guidance class at CCHS in order to grasp the interaction between teachers and African American and Latina/o students regarding college access at their school site. I was interested in gathering unstructured data by being a nonparticipant observer (Creswell, 1996) and did not become involved in the activities that were taking place. The counselor paired me up with the teacher that I was going to interview in order for me to be able to observe her teaching style, the activities that were involved during the classroom period, and to decipher what type of information students were receiving about post-secondary education. The classroom that I observed was a CSU guidance class, where students who had accumulative 3.0-2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) were learning about four-year state schools, the application process and financial aid.

During the observation, I sat in the back of the classroom, observed and jotted down how the teacher was conveying the college information. The notes that I took were scribed onto a notebook, and I did not interact with any students who were a part of the guidance class. The class that I observed was focusing on a scholarship application, and I was able to review documents such as the scholarship application, as well as college curriculum information that was given to guidance classes throughout the school year. Once I finished observing the guidance class, I memo'ed my thoughts and reactions to ensure that I would accurately depict the way the guidance teacher was delivering the lesson. Participating in the observation was a supplement in gathering data to better understand college access for African-American and Latina/o students at Central Charter High School.

Data Collection Timeline

Due to the fact that the school year for districts has changed, I felt as though it was imperative for me to begin my data collection in June; however, because of the large amount of organizational change within the school site, I was not able to begin my data collection until November. I made the initial contact with the principal at the beginning of May and informed him about the IRB process and my timeline. I was in constant contact with both the principal and head counselor in June and was told to check back in with the counselor at the beginning of the school year in order to begin scheduling interviews and observation times. In September, I contacted the principal and the counselor and was not receiving a rapid response to my request of students and school personnel. In October, I was finally able to schedule an appointment with the counselor and we were able to tentatively schedule for my data collection to begin in November. Once I had all appointment times, invitations and consent forms filled out, the counselor informed me that she would no longer be working at the school and that her replacement would be my contact person from that point on.

Although there were a lot of changes at the school site, I was able to finish my data collection by the end of December. Once all interviews and the observation was completed, I thanked all of my participants for being a part of the study, reminded them about the confidentiality and their rights as a participant, and informed them of member checking.

Data Analysis

Data analysis begins from the moment that the study originates and emerges and as results begin to form. Rossman and Rallis (2009) state “analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is the process of deep immersion in the interview transcripts, field notes, and other

materials you have collected” (p.) By grasping a better understanding of the data collected, I was able to compare, contrast and ultimately draw conclusions and recommendations of all of the data compiled. From the beginning of the research process, it was imperative to begin the planning of the analytical process in order to effectively manage all of the data collected.

While reviewing academic literature about charter schools, college access and community colleges, I began to group themes and created concepts and domains that continued to appear throughout my collection of data. I also used Spradley’s (1980) observational approach, which states that as an ethnographer, you are consistently conducting descriptive observations when stepping into your research site. In examining literature regarding charter schools and community colleges and in researching and observing the school site and participants, it was apparent that there was a gap between charter schools and community colleges. To date, there has not been a study done to examine how charter schools define college access in regards to their students post secondary enrollment in community colleges. Through analytical data analysis, Glesne says that “making comparisons is an analytical step in identifying patterns within some theme” (2011), and therefore, by comparing charter school staff members and high school students, I was able to encompass the different roles that personnel may or may not exude regarding college access and community colleges.

In order to efficiently and consistently reflect on the data that is being collected, Glesne (2011) believes that creating a reflective log in order to clear thoughts, biases and perspectives is a great way to capture analytical thoughts, therefore, I created qualitative memos. Creating qualitative memos also allowed for me to be able to analyze information based on categories and themes that formed throughout the process; memos are defined as:

“analytical files help you to store and organize your own thoughts and those of others” (Glesne, 2011, p.191). That was an ideal way for me to organize my sections and reflect on the themes that I was beginning to create. Creating memos was a good way to document initial thoughts when conducting my one-on-one interviews, and during the observation that I conducted. I was able to jot down thoughts as I sat with both staff members and students about what they were wearing, body language and other details that I may have forgotten if I did not write them down at that moment.

By creating the themes and patterns, and focusing on the different roles, I began to code my data and was able to “figure out what is the core of that code” (Glesne, 2011, p. 187). Once my interviews and observation were conducted, I analyzed the codes created through Dedoose, a computerized data management tool which aides in the coding process (Dedoose, 2014). Participants had the opportunity to review the transcription of their interview within one month of participating, in order to ensure that the information that I had gathered had the correct interpretation. Some of the codes that I used were 1) relationships with school personnel, 2) guidance class, 3) charter schools, and 4) community colleges. Some of the sub-codes that I created were 1) differences in guidance class, 2) charter school vs. traditional high school, and 3) relationships with counselors.

Centered on the themes and codes that I created, I better understood whether or not I needed to make revisions to my subsequent interviews on the field. Once I organized my data, and I immersed myself in it, I began to thematically analyze it by developing themes that helped me understand how critical race theory informed my findings. Critical race theory influenced the approach and design of my study by examining how education could change to include a form of social justice and as a forum for civil engagement. CRT helped me look

at how race, if at all, intersected with college access information, especially regarding community colleges. By creating roadmaps and a list of themes, I was able to ensure that I have either established a relationship with the research questions about how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students and community colleges, or not.

The voice of school personnel and students revealed how each individual perceived college access at charter schools in regards to community college, and whether or not it affects the educational pipeline. The views of school personnel and charter high school students whom participated in this study will assist in the gap of information that circulates the charter school mission and how they view community colleges in regards to post-secondary attainment.

Role of the Researcher

As a school counselor at a public charter school who serves underrepresented students in Southern California, I felt as though I definitely had a degree of subjectivity in the research that I was conducting. I chose to research charter schools and their missions specifically because I believe that while they provide a different type of education, they often do not truly understand their students and their needs. Many charter schools are servicing students of low-income neighborhoods and are not providing the approach necessary to prepare them for life outside of their neighborhood and into schools such as four-year college or university or community colleges. I am also a first generation college student, and as a current doctoral Latina student, researching charter schools and college access, gives me the drive to want to find out more about the goals of organizations who are supposed to be

providing quality education and opportunities for students of color. I attended a private school, which was small and prided themselves on providing college access to all of their students. I was an average student who was not given the academic attention I deserved because I was not in the top percentile of my class. I resorted to learning about the college application process by myself and was able to successfully maneuver through it. The experiences that I had are similar to students who I interviewed, therefore, it was important for me to understand the injustice that continues to be given to students of color.

Although I strongly believe in the charter schools system and the quality of education that it provides for students, I do have biases on the type of help that they provide in terms of college choice and college access. I believe that each student has a unique road to success and it is important for us to help him or her find it. Having worked in a community where a college-going culture is not the “norm” and expectations of a white-collar future are stagnant, it was important for me to examine the types of resources that are available to students of low-income communities so that changes can be made, and education can thrive.

In order to fully examine my area of interest and gather data that would not only benefit my work as a counselor, but most importantly education reform; it was important for me to strategize how data was collected and who was included in the process. Working for one of the most well-known charter organizations that has dedicated itself to change public education in Los Angeles, I was confident that gathering data from one of its high performing schools would allow researchers to fully grasp how charter education is informing students about their college choices post high school.

Having attended many conferences where the standard message is to ensure that all

students are eligible to apply and enroll in a four-year institution, I wanted to examine how school personnel perceived the capability of their students and the college message that they were providing for them. How do they compare students and how do they decide who is eligible to apply for a 4-year school and who should not? Speaking to the school counselor and administrators at CCHS allowed me to better understand their students and the level of college readiness that they believe their student population has. As a counselor, this research helped me understand how students are making their post-secondary choices and how I am able to help them understand how their choices will aid their educational success.

Throughout the data collection, I needed to be completely straightforward with my expectations and my role as a researcher. Due to the fact that I was familiar with the counselors at the site, it was necessary for me to be clear that during my observation time and interviews, I was not a part of the counseling team. I did not share my experiences working with the same population and made sure to keep my biases to myself. Some strategies that I used to redirect my biases were member checks and being aware of my feelings by being neutral when asking questions, and not speaking about my personal experience. In order to make sure that the data that I was collecting was accurate, I constantly checked it with other colleagues and teachers who were not directly a part of the study. I asked about the college access procedures at their school site and wanted to understand whether or not similar techniques were being practiced. It was also important for me to understand that not everyone was comfortable working with certain communities and I wanted to ensure that my research spoke for itself. While it was impossible to leave biases behind, it was not impossible to try and minimize their existence.

Ethical Considerations

As a researcher, it was my priority to protect the identity of the faculty, staff and students that I was working with. As charter schools continue to grow and education reform is a top priority, it was essential for me to have all participants feel comfortable in knowing that their experiences and perceptions were protected. It was my duty to guarantee that all participants were fully aware of the type of research that was being conducted, the process that the research entails, and the possible effects that they were going to experience. In order for the faculty, staff and students to feel comfortable participating in the study, I made sure that it was clear that their participation was voluntary and that at any time they were able to retract from the study.

Allowing participants the ability to contribute without feeling the need to be anxious is the key to any research study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Creating pseudonyms for all of the participants, including the setting, allowed for them to continue feeling comfortable about their involvement and also assured anonymity. All of the data collected was kept under lock and key and adhered to all of the regulations that the Institutional Review Board set forth.

Summary

In this ethnographic case study, I aimed to examine charter school personnel and how they defined college access for African American and Latina/o students, and most importantly, explored how that definition involves community colleges. I recruited senior African American and Latina/o students, and school personnel through criterion and chain sampling. All participants were given an invitation letter, consent form and a bill of rights form in order to inform them about the study in which they were participating and reminded

them that although their participation assisted educational research, their participation was voluntary and that they had the opportunity to remove themselves at any time. They participated in one 45-60 minute interview that was audio recorded and transcribed. The transcription was shared with them in order to ensure that their voice had been truly captured.

Once the data had been collected from the interviews of both charter school personnel and African American and Latina/o students, I transcribed the interviews, ensured that their confidentiality was maintained, replaced the participant names and research setting information to pseudonyms. By ensuring privacy, and collecting data, I was able to add to the educational research of charter schools and hopefully connect college access and community colleges. The design and methodology integrated into the study have been outlined and described in this chapter through the research design and statement of the research questions. Chapter four presents a detailed review and description of the study's context, which includes direct quotes from interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This qualitative study examined the charter school to community college educational pipeline for African American and Latina/o students at Central Charter High School (CCHS) in Southern California. In order to familiarize the reader with the participants of this study, a participant profile and demographic questionnaire will identify all individuals in order to display the similarities and differences of both the students and charter school personnel. The major themes that resulted from interviewing participants and observing a classroom setting were: charter school influence, guidance class, a college going culture, and community college. An overview of the descriptive findings will be presented through quotes and subthemes. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the data collection.

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and were all conducted at the school site with the individual participants. Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed and were analyzed by coding data into various categories in order to identify the theme and sub-themes that appeared regarding the educational pipeline of charter school students and the college access perception of the school personnel. The themes were explored in depth in order to better understand the collective experience of all participants. The study was funneled by the following research questions:

1. How is college access defined in a charter school context?
2. How do charter school personnel perceive community colleges?
3. What are the postsecondary aspirations for graduating African American and Latina/o charter school students? How do charter school personnel influence these aspirations?

The chapter attempted to answer the research questions by providing a vivid account of the experiences of charter school personnel and their students. The students participating in the study were all seniors at the high school, either on track to attend a four-year university or community college, and were all provided college counseling both through academic advising with a counselor and through the advisory program at the high school. Chapter 4 will consist of a participant profile and a descriptive narrative of similarities between participants, qualitative findings pertaining to the research questions, and a summary of the college going culture at Central Charter High School. The analysis provided will be derived from the interview data, questionnaires and observations conducted at Central Charter High School.

Participant Profile

Participants in the study were select school personnel who currently worked at CCHS and a purposeful sample of Black and Latina/o students who were currently enrolled in their last year at the high school. In order to protect and maintain confidentiality, as well as anonymity, the names of all participants were changed to pseudonyms. A demographic questionnaire consisting of 6 questions for the school personnel, and 11 questions for the students was administered to all who participated in the qualitative ethnographic case study. The questionnaire was issued in order to acquaint the reader on trends between all respondents, and in addition, to get a better understanding of the educational and familial background of the students and charter school personnel.

This qualitative study was composed of 8 students and 4 charter school personnel. The participant profiles varied in questions depending on whether they were staff members

or students at CCHS. The students consisted of 3 Latino students, 3 Latina students, and 2 African American female students all of whom were on track to graduate from Central Charter High School in Los Angeles, California in 2014. Table 1 represents all of the student participants and shares unique characteristics for each of them.

One hundred percent of the participants completed a pre-college and demographic background questionnaire. All of the students were first generation college students, as well as first generation to be born in the United States. Six out of eight students revealed that their household income was \$39,999 or lower, which mirrors the economic census of the community around the school. The student grade point averages (GPA) varied between 1.88 and 3.96, which were big differences on the grading scale and determined the guidance class that students would be placed in. Students with GPA's of 3.1 and above were placed in the UC guidance class, while students with GPA's between 3.0 and 2.0 belonged to the CSU guidance class and students with a GPA of 1.99 and below were grouped in the community college cohort. One student who was enrolled in the CSU guidance class, had a 3.0 GPA and had her heart set on attending USC, one of the toughest private schools to get into. Based on the information that each student provided, I was able to better understand the academic background and post secondary aspirations of the individual student participants. Table 1 provides detailed information about all student participants.

Table 2 represents the educational and professional background of the charter school staff members who participated in the study. Participants were asked questions regarding the type of schooling they received before entering the education field and their experience with community colleges. Out of the four school personnel that were interviewed, only one participant was fluent in Spanish. Considering the fact that the student population was made

up of 99% Latina/o students, having school personnel who are fluent in Spanish is imperative for the communication between the school and parents; it also allows for students to feel comfortable knowing that there are school personnel who are from backgrounds similar to theirs (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). One out of four participants taught the academic advising class, which helped students through the application process during their senior year at CCHS. Although only Jane, a CSU guidance teacher, taught the academic advising class which met three times a week, Maria, the counselor, consistently met with her and other teachers to ensure that all students were receiving accurate information regarding the transition to college such as college applications, scholarships and financial aid.

The school personnel participants were between the ages of 25-35, which parallels the age group of the entire school personnel at CCHS. Three out of the four participants were a part of a nationally known teacher program recognized as Teach For America. The program commits two years of service in under-represented areas to ensure quality education for all students (Teach for America, 2014). Of the three school personnel who participated in the study and were a part of Teach for America, 100% of them had fulfilled their two-year service requirement and were committed to working in an urban setting to provide quality education for all students. All but one school personnel participant shared that their college experience was different than their students' experiences. Charles revealed that he attended a community college for two years before transferring into a four-year school and felt that his experience allowed him to be able to share his positive experience with his students and their families.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Student Participants

Name	Adrian	Carla	Emily	Gloria	Jose	Lily	Nelly	Noah
Age	17	17a	18	17	17	17	17	17
Ethnic Identity	Central American	African American	Latino	Central American	Mexican	African American	Hispanic	Central American
Place of Birth	Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles, CA	Inglewood, CA	Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles, CA	Los Angeles, CA
GPA	2.86	3.96	3.4	3.5	1.88	3	2.7	3.25
SAT Score	Unknown	1670	730	1450	None	Unknown	700	1445
Family/Parent Income	40,000-59,000	Under 20,000	20,000-39,999	Under 20,000	20,000-39,999	Unknown	Under 20,000	Under 20,000
Mother's educational attainment	Some College	Some College	No School	Some High School	High School	Some College	High School	Unknown
Father's educational attainment	High School	High School	Some College	Some High School	High School	Some College	Unknown	Unknown
Guidance Class	CSU	UC	UC	UC	Community College	CSU	CSU	UC
Number of Siblings	1	1	2	4	5	6	2	4
How many sibling have attended college	1	1	1	3	0	2	0	0
Types of college sibling have attended/are attending	CSU & Community College	Community College	CSU	CSU & CC	N/A	Community College	N/A	UCI
College planning to attend	CSUDH	Undecided	Undecided	CSULB	Le Cordon Bleu	USC	CSUN	Undecided

Table 2

Demographic Information of Charter School Personnel

Name	Charles	Jane	John	Maria
Age	35	25	34	28
Ethnic Identity	Chinese & Thai	Western European	White	Mexican American
Years of Educational Experience	11	2	13	1
Position at School Site	Assistant Principal	Teacher	Principal	Counselor
Attended a Community College	Yes	No	No	No
Type of Four-Year School	Out of State School	University of California	Private School	University of California
Teaches a Guidance Class	No	Yes	No	No

Qualitative Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine college access and the charter school to community college educational pipeline through a critical race theory (CRT) lens. Critical race theory aims to understand the nature of race and racism and how it is maintained in a society where white norms are engrained. Ladson-Billings (1998) states that race has played a substantial role not only in society, but in education as well. CRT helps us uncover the way in which policies, guidelines and knowledge construction is influenced by white norms and racism. The data analyzed from this study was examined through a critical race theory lens and observes the college access information that is being provided to students at a

multicultural charter high school and whether or not that access includes community colleges for its African American and Latina/o students.

Charter schools were created as an additional support for education reform (Ravitch, 2012; Ravitch, 2013; Witte, Weimer, Shober & Schlomer, 2007). As public education continues to show signs of decline and charter schools are continuing to build their foundation, understanding how charter school personnel influence their students and how college access is formulated is necessary. The staff members are students provided detailed stories regarding their experiences and perceptions of the college access that students receive at their school site. The findings suggest that students believed school personnel were a big part of their school life and college culture as well as informing them about their college options.

Charter School Influence

Charter schools have become a large part of education reform and continue to grow each year (Smith, 2009). The structure of charter schools and organizations allows for the school size to be small which creates an intimate environment between students and faculty members. Many of the participants noted that they had built a good relationship with teachers and staff members at their high school. Although all students mentioned the relationships that they built with staff members on campus, the relationships with their counselors encompassed the importance of their role at Central Charter High School.

Carla, an African-American student with a GPA of 3.96, stated “ I feel like this school is different from a lot of schools because it's smaller so we have a more close relationship with our teachers and administrators.” Noah, a Latino who had a 3.25 GPA and

the third highest GPA score, also provided an example of his feelings toward the school and how it allowed him to create relationships; He stated, “This school is very unique because they have a really in-depth process on how to get into college, compared to others round here. It's small, its compact, you get to know people a lot faster, people are more friendly around here, I enjoy it.” Noah felt safe at CCHS and believed that the school prepared him to make informed decisions about the college going process and made relationships with him.

Emily, a Latina with a high GPA but a very low SAT score of 730, also described her feelings about the high school, she mentioned:

In the beginning I didn't even like it because it's a small school. In movies, you always want to experience that high school, that big high school and everything, but I got used to it. You get close to everyone. You don't know everyone's name but you know everyone who's a student. That's what I like about it.

Like Noah, Emily believed that the small environment attributed to her success. Although she was not thrilled to be attending the charter school during her ninth grade year, she knew that getting accustomed to the environment and building relationships helped her graduate and have a good high school experience.

Jose, a student of Mexican descent with a GPA of 1.88, shared his thoughts about the small environment by saying, “they're really helpful. They make you feel at home, at times. They're really strict about certain things. I get the benefit as students here. Like to feel safe, and like not feel threatened around here and stuff like that. They really make you feel secure.” All of the students spoke highly about the safety at the school and the relationships that were built. They enjoyed going to school everyday not only because of the friends that

they were making, but also because of the lessons and structures that were being instilled in them through the charter school norms.

Carla, who had a GPA of 3.96, shared her interaction with a teacher and reflected on his willingness to help students by saying “he helps look up colleges. I'm not sure if you're familiar with the Lion program. It's a college that's not really from the area, but they look for diversity so they send students out mostly free or low cost, and he was really helping a lot of students look for programs.” She continued sharing her thoughts about another teachers and said:

There was a rumor that she's a superhero, and I know that's true because she has an AP class and she has other English core classes and a Guidance class. She's reading essays, and essays, and personal statements. She does a lot, but she's never in a bad mood. I have never seen her take anything out on a student and just going to her class is a pleasure.

In addition to students acknowledging that the small school size has allowed them to build relationships with both students and staff, school personnel also shared their thoughts about their school environment and the relationships they have built with their students. Maria, one of the counselors at the school, shared, “ it stands out as a safer school and I feel size does matter. I feel like when it's smaller, there's more one on one interaction, although sometimes it can be difficult. But it's easier to see and target the problems than when it's compared to a bigger school.” Jane, a guidance teacher, added to Maria's thoughts about her students by saying:

My students are so motivated. They definitely have that motivation. You definitely

can see how proud they are with their grades. They try so hard the rest of the whole year. I think the school does a really good job at keeping the kids motivated and pushing them to do well and do their best. I think that's a really positive thing.

Maria's radiance exuded as she spoke about her students, and during the interviews with student participants, many of them attributed their knowledge about the college going process to her.

Emily, who was undecided about which school she would attend in the Fall, agreed that students build relationships with the school personnel at her school. She shared:

Everybody that I know, they're really nice. They're never rude to you. If something happens in class they do give you consequences and everything. But they're really sweet. They always talk to you. Not only about school but life. "Oh, hey how's your boyfriend" or whatever. But yeah, they really care about you.

She shared her thoughts with excitement and was very proud to be attending CCHS. The relationships that she built with her teachers were forming into familial relationships; the bonds that were being created incorporated family into school conversations.

As an administrator, John agreed the autonomy of charter schools allows them to be able to choose their personnel and it creates a positive environment for all. He said:

For us, it's a function of the small size; it is a function of having rigorous control over the people that we can hire to be here. The kids and the parents actually may articulate that there's something different about the kids, and we see given both the data and the behavior of the eight graders who come in, that they're the same. They're

the same kids. They quickly get in line because we've got three other years of students who are expecting them to, and thirty teachers who are expecting them to.

The culture at Central Charter High School has been established by both the staff members, and as the students go on to the next grade level. According to John, having the ability to select his staff allows for him to pick and choose whom he wants to add to his team. Because the school has a great academic reputation and has policies and structures in place, hiring personnel that will fit in to the school model is important. One of the most influential roles at CCHS is that of the school counselor. They are responsible for academic and social emotional counseling, administrative duties, and most importantly preparing students for their transition after high school. Throughout the interviews, students reflected on the help that their counselors gave them and attributed much of their success to them.

Charter School Counselors

At CCHS, counselors are viewed as the individuals responsible for ensuring that all students have materials to inform them about college. There are currently 2 counselors at Central Charter High School and the counselor to student ration is 290:2, which is significantly lower than the ratio at traditional high schools. Rosenbaum, et. al (1996), in their study of how high school counselors perceived their influence on their students' college plans, found that counselors did not feel as though they were a significant addition to the encouragement of their students' college aspirations. They believed that due to the fact that all students were capable of attending college and most students were enrolling in schools with open admission policies, their advising mechanisms were not needed. McDonough (2004a) states "counselors are the logical choice to be the K-12 staff member responsible for

college access preparation and assistance and are often assumed to be handling this role, yet they are inappropriately trained and structurally constrained from being able to fulfill this role in public high schools” (p. 69). John affirmed their role by saying:

The counselors train [others] on specific skills. If there are teachers who want to be helping students complete the facts or other sorts of things that have specific technical knowledge, the counselors take the lead on that. For things like GPA and A through G requirements, that's a combination.

The A-G requirements contain coursework in content specific coursework in History/Social Sciences, English, Mathematics, Laboratory Science, Language other than English, Visual and Performing Arts and College Preparatory Electives. In order to be eligible to apply to four-year universities in the state of California, students must complete the A-G requirements.

To be eligible to attend any public four-year university in the state students, must take a minimum of 15 A-G courses—approximately two-thirds of their high school courses. Accordingly, to provide every student with the opportunity to satisfy these college eligibility requirements, California high schools must ensure that at least two-thirds of their courses meet the A-G requirements. (Fanelli, Bertrand, Rogers, Medina, & Freelon, 2010, p. 7)

In many cases, the A-G requirements are also the school’s graduation requirements because it ensures that all students are college ready and eligible to apply to four-year schools during their senior year. At CCHS, A-G requirements are graduation requirements, however, not all students are A-G ready because they received a D or lower in a specific class.

Counselors work closely with staff members who teach the lessons and are always available to answer questions that they have. Unlike the counselors that McDonough (2004a) refers to in her article, the counselors at the charter school district are prepared for the role. While the counselors at CCHS are prepared to execute their counseling duties, they are also responsible for fulfilling the additional role of academic advisor and working the social-emotional skills of student, such as learning how to deal with familial issues and conflict resolution. McDonough's role of a counselor exemplifies the function of a counselor in a traditional high school.

Ceja (2000) found that many first-generation students were frustrated due to the fact that they were not able to get adequate counseling and did not have enough information to make informed decisions about college planning. Most of the student participants were first generation students, yet they felt as though they were receiving adequate advising from their counselor. Lily expressed her gratitude for Maria by saying "she helped me through and she'd tell me step-by-step [how to apply for college]. She explains everything."

Farmer-Hinton and McCullough (2008) state "since the limited access to and quality of college counseling is related to schools' organizational structures, the charter school framework serves as a potential solution to inequality in college counseling for underserved students of color" (p.82). Central Charter High School is not perfect and still has limited resources such as not having a computer lab or not having enough staff members for all students. Maria reflects on her role as a counselor and from her point of view, there is still not enough being done:

I'd love to have a third counselor. At least one more. I'd have a counselor able to

dedicate themselves only to seniors, and then have two break out between 9,10th and 11th. Yes, one more personnel would be ideal, and it [would be] more effective in the sense of for the college applications.”

John, principal at CCHS, states that students are often times aware about the type of school that they attend, and the quality of education and college counseling that they are receiving. He said, “I think the students are aware that they go to a school that is not the same as their other options. I am not sure if they would attribute that to the same factors as I would.” He spoke about the traditional public schools in the area and the difference in school structures, curriculum and staff and continued by saying:

They may say, "It's because we go to a charter school," and they may say, "It's because we go to [this districts] school." They may say, "It's because we go to Central Charter High School, and that's just the way it is." They definitely see the focus on academics being much more prevalent here than it was at their middle school, and more prevalent than their friends are telling them it is at the school down the street.

Central Charter high school is located 1 mile away from a traditional comprehensive public high school that has an Academic Performance Index (API) score of 469 and has a dropout rate of 50%. As a reminder, Central Charter High School’s API score is 794.

Counselors in low-income areas such as CHHS, continue to build relationships with their students and many times are the only individuals who inspire them to apply to four-year schools. Nelly, a Latina with a GPA of 2.7, reflected on her communication with her counselor as the application process continued. She said “they told us what website to go to

and how to do it [apply to college]. They were helping us a lot. If we needed any help with the application, they revised our work.” It was evident that the counselors worked very closely with their students in order to ensure that all applications were done properly. Nelly continued sharing her experience with both her counselor and the application process by saying, “if we had to correct something, they told us what not to put on it and what to put. When the college representative comes to our school, they offer us during lunch if you want to go, and you can go, you can go to a class and speak to the college representative. They will prepare you for everything.”

The counselors at the school were very diligent with their work and spent the majority of the fall semester ensuring that all students who were eligible to apply to four-year schools completed and submitted their applications on time. In the counseling office hung a white board that had the number of students that were eligible to apply to Cal States and UC’s. Below that, they tallied the number of students who had submitted their application, and circled the number of students who were still left. Maria, the counselor, shared with me that it was extremely important for them to be able to track who had applied and who didn’t. They wanted to verify that all students would submit their applications by the deadline.

Jose, a student who was on track to attend a community college, mirrored the support that he received from the counseling department at CCHS:

They're the ones that are helping me with the college. They're like, "what do you want to do?" I tell them I want to be a chef. They're like, "OK, these are the different schools." Like how to get into it. Whenever anything pops up, a couple of months ago they were telling me, "It's going to be at this college fair where you can go. There's

going to be this spot where a chef's going to go, demonstrate stuff." They're always telling this is going to happen over here.

This means that the counselors are involved in their students college choice process and are helping them make their choice by providing them with any type of information that they need. The students attributed their knowledge about college, their options and the process to their counselor and teachers. For example, Nelly mentioned "I like how it's small because they concentrate more on you and how they teach you about colleges because, well, my experience is that I have a cousin and who went to a big school and they didn't teach her anything. She had to do everything by herself." Gloria, a Latina with a GPA of 3.5, also explained, "from what I've heard, our school is one that takes initiative with college stuff. I have friends that go to Southern High and their school, yeah, they have more money, but it seems kind of unorganized. I think that having a big school kind of disconnects everyone." Adrian, who described himself as Central American and had a GPA of a 2.86, also eluded on his thoughts about college access at CCHS by saying:

The school does a good job of preparing us for, not only college, but after college. They don't baby us, if that makes any sense. They want us to do things on our own but help us every now and then. I think that's helpful because, when we get there, we won't have anyone to help us. We'll be prepared for that.

Adrian mentioned that he felt as though CCHS was preparing its students to be able to navigate through higher education on their own. While that may be the case for some things, I believe that there is still a deficit in how the counselors and teachers at the school are preparing their students. Jane, a CSU guidance teacher shared, "They'll be surprised when

they go to college. Here it seems very safe, very controlled. I think the African American students they feel they're getting the same education, same everything, because I haven't ever heard them say anything different. I don't know if they were put into another environment, like a college environment, where it is way more diverse, I wonder how they would react to that.” Her concern about the students not being prepared to adjust to life outside of their school is concerning. Students should be taught about the differences that they will face once they leave Central Charter High School. They should receive coping strategies and tools in their guidance class, in order to be able to understand the differences in society and the campus racial climate in higher education.

Guidance Class

Burkhardt (1999) states that advisory programs have common attributes among each other that include staff members sharing the responsibility of advisors, regular meetings between the staff member and a small group of students, most importantly ensuring that each student has the individualized attention which they deserve. Although counselors are often given the task of college and educational counseling (Oakes, 2003) for their students, schools who have implemented advisory programs provide staff development opportunities in order for new teachers to become familiar with how to be an effective advisor (Burkhardt, 1999). The advisory class, labeled guidance, at Central Charter High School is the fundamental college advising class at the school. It is what all students mention as the important piece in learning about their college options and their transition to higher education.

School personnel and students mentioned the importance of enrolling into college once they graduated high school. The constant reminders in the curriculum and around the school, such as pennants and banners in the classroom, as well as college day attire days,

urge students to make a decision about the type of higher education institute they will be attending and send a message that college equals post secondary success. Research suggests that low income and minority students often do not have the appropriate guidance and access for four-year institutions (Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel 2003; McDonough 1997; Person and Rosenbaum 2006). Most of the research done has been at traditional high schools where students do not receive the guidance necessary to go through the college application process. Research that has been conducted on college access in charter schools, has found that the small learning environment has helped students receive college information and make informed decisions.

CCHS has an advisory program in place, which allows students to familiarize themselves with high school graduation requirements and to receive personalized advising through a class known as guidance. Successful advisory programs are paralleled with the mission and vision of the school and have clearly defined outcomes for their students (DiMartino & Clarke, 2008). The purpose of the senior guidance class at CCHS is for students to receive the academic information needed to successfully transition into college and to monitor academic achievement. John, the principal, described the guidance class by saying “here every student is getting college counseling, either through the counselors or through the advisory program where we train teachers on how to do some of the college counseling steps”. The guidance class is the foundation of the college going culture at the high school, and it is structured, for seniors, based on the cycle of the college admission process.

Maria, one of the counselors at CCHS, added to John’s description by explaining “once the school year starts, first semester, it’s already college application oriented, with the

UCs, the CSUs, the private schools, before that doing their research on schools they want to apply to.” In order for advisory programs to be successful, it is imperative that all stakeholders are invested in the material that is being taught to their students (Tocci, et al., 2008). Although Maria shared what guidance classes focused on in the fall, she did not share much about how community colleges were implemented into the curriculum. John, the principal, explained that all staff members have the common goal of believing in their students and shared “every student is being told that college is an option and expectation for them, and we value all colleges. We don't look down on community colleges.” While the principal believed that the school incorporated community colleges into their college for certain motto, not all students felt the same way.

All of the student participants shared the thought that their guidance class was the primary source for learning about post secondary options. Noah, who would be the first of his siblings to attend a four-year school, revealed that all of the college information, which he received, stemmed from his guidance class. He stated “it teaches us how it [college] goes, the systems, application process, what they require to get into college, GPA, recommendations, SAT scores, all those things.” Nelly, who would also be a first of her siblings to continue onto college, added to the description of her guidance class by explaining that during the class, they take the time to research colleges and learn about the specific characteristics of different schools. Emily, the oldest of the student participants, echoed Nelly's thoughts and said:

That's the main point of guidance. Every week they give you your grade report. That way, you can know where you need help. Don't get distracted and everything. Once you talk about your grades, you have your teachers and they'll help you go to college.

That's the whole process of it.

Adrian, who had one parent attend some college and who was planning on attending a Cal State, was very excited when he described his guidance class. He mentioned:

Guidance has always been about helping us by discussing what we can do to help us in school. Then, as you go on through the years, what we can do to start preparing you to go to college. They tell us to do things, like do more for ourselves. They give us suggestions, as well. They're not saying, "You have to go do this." They're just saying, "It'd be good if you did this and not overall."

Most of the students shared how guidance class taught them about college and how it ensured that they were aware of their grades throughout the school year. However, some of the students shared their sentiments about students who were enrolled in a different track other than theirs and believed that they were in the "lower" classes.

While most of the students described what guidance taught them, Carla explained more about the type of class, which she belonged to and how students were placed; she said:

I'm a part of the UC Guidance. Which means my senior year, based on the classes you've passed and if you've passed the CAHSEE, and stuff like that, you're put into a Guidance class that matches your GPA and how many people are in your class.

The separation between guidance classes is something that is widely known around the school. Charles, the assistant principal, described the guidance class by explaining the dynamic of the class:

They're catered to specific kids. I mean the reality of it is kids who have a GPA of 3.5

or above, have a better shot at an opportunity to apply for UC or private school than a kid with a 2.0 GPA. In that class we're talking about community colleges, trades, vocational things like that as well, or Cal States, those things are there. No matter what, we're having all kids apply somewhere.

Charles ensured that all students were being educated about the options that were specific for them and that would allow them to be successful, no matter what their GPA and grades were. When John, the principal, was asked about the makeup of each guidance class, he explained how students were separated and why they believed that was the best way to communicate the goal of the class to each student. He said:

The separation only happens in the twelve-grade year. All the other years, all the students are always mixed, but in the 12th grade year we separate students by what their data points basically say their fifth year option is. The first thing that we do is we explain to the students why they're there, and what the higher and lower limits of their options seem to be, given the rules of the game.

According to this quote, John's feelings towards the guidance classes seems to be that throughout their high school years, students are given the opportunity and expected to success academically; however, some students do not do well and it is unfortunate that they are then placed on a community college path. Sharing the separation of the guidance classes allowed John to reflect on how academic and college information was presented to all students, regardless of the guidance class, which they belonged to.

As he continued to speak about the make up of the class, John revealed:

I'm not sure how much they know about the other groups. Partially because we have

so few minutes with them that I don't know if that's related to the topic. We do run into issues around when we're not careful with our messaging.

Here, John mentioned that the messaging that they are providing to the students about their specific college option is important. This means that students who are in the community college cohort need to receive a well thought out message in order for them to feel as though they are receiving the same information as the other groups.

In addition, staff members who are teaching the UC and CSU cohort must be aware of how they are presenting their information because it can create a sense of separation between the students. The school prides itself on having a “college for certain” motto, yet being worried about the messaging of information within the cohorts should not be the case because the information that is being provided to students should be equal. He continued to share that it has created anxiety within their school community by saying:

We will have parents who are panicking because they have heard, or they've been told that all the applications were due on November 30th. Their student is on track to apply to East LA Community College, and that application isn't even available yet. We've gotten better, and more targeted at making sure that each parent hears the message that's correct for their student, but we also don't want overload kids with too much information that doesn't apply to them. Because we want to make sure that they're really putting into use every bit that we're giving them about the application process.

While the school administration strongly believed that the separation between guidance classes were necessary and was working well for their students, Jane, a senior

guidance class teacher, shared her thoughts on the separation between students. During her interview she seemed nervous sharing her real thoughts about the structure of the guidance classes and was hesitant at first. As I walked into her classroom, there were Cal State pennants hanging on the wall, but not too much college information displayed. When asked what she thought about the guidance class separation, Jane automatically said, "it's strange. I really think that's strange. I almost think it kind of creates this idea that for kids in that class that "I'm a failure anyway. I screwed up ". Her sentiments would pair up to what some of the students also shared about classmates who were in the community college cohort.

As the interview continued, Jane added to her thoughts by giving an example of a student who worked hard to make up classes that disqualified him from being placed in the CSU class and therefore was enrolled in the community college class. She recalled, "he didn't want to be there. Now, he is in the CSU since he got his act together. He was like, "No, I want to do this." And they put him with my class." She also mentioned that during one of her CSU guidance lessons about community colleges many students were questioning why they had to learn about community colleges. She said, "when I first put up the PowerPoint, it was a negative reaction. "Why are you telling us to apply?" They're all going to have to apply to community college, but some where like ""I'm not going to go there, I don't want to do it".

When asked why she thought her students had those views she said:

I think its just like a stereotype or it may be from people that they know who are in community college [who] aren't as prepared for a career as they assume themselves to be, I guess. I'm not really sure, where it stems from though. I think it's just that they are all trapped, which is the thing. There's the UC kids who consider themselves

smart, then there's my kids who are in middle and then they have the community college classes. Even when references are made to community college its like 'Oh those are the kids that are like failing, or the mess ups, or the behavior problems.'

Jane described that both staff and students at CCHS had a perception about students who were enrolled in the community college cohort and were believed to be the students who were on the lower end of the educational trajectory. While the schools continued to boast about their college-going culture, there was a clear gap between what was being claimed and what was felt in the school. Although Jane felt as though tracking the students based on their GPA and their grades was unusual, she agreed with other school personnel and recapped that for some of their students, beginning their college life at a community college is the best option due to their skills, home life and financial difficulties.

Students were asked to share their experiences with their guidance class and what they believed they were being taught. Carla, an African-American female with the highest GPA in the group, said "they tell us the differences between the different types of colleges; two-year college, universities, if you want to go into the work force." Lily, an African-American student who had hopes of attending a high profile four-year university but was not enrolled in the UC guidance class, added her view of guidance by stating:

We just research different colleges. Community colleges first, to see what they have to offer us and when we can apply for the fall. Sometimes we read books about college. Every group has a different section of the same college, but we read different sections of the book. We find the main idea, we annotate, we dig deeper.

While Lily and Carla stated that they were taught about the different types of colleges, Jose, who was enrolled in the community college guidance class, stated, "the kids that are in the

learning four-year college process, I think they have more detailed information about the four-year colleges.” During the interview it was unclear whether or not Jose felt prepared to transition into the community college, however, it was evident that he sensed he was not getting the same information that other students in the senior class were.

Gloria, a Latina with a GPA of a 3.5, shared a different sentiment than Jose:

For me, particularly they don't mention community college. I don't even think I'm applying there. They separated us into classes in our senior year, and I think there's a class for people that are on the path to community college.

The fact that Gloria was not fully aware of the community college cohort and stated that she was not informed about community colleges, adds to the inequity that all students at CCHS were facing. Students in the community college cohort were seen as students who were not college ready and were not up to par with the rest of the school.

The stigma about being in the community college guidance class was prevalent among the students who were in the Cal State and UC classes. Most students who were enrolled in the community college class believed that they were receiving most of the same information that the rest of their peers were obtaining. Although students who were enrolled in a community college guidance class, were told by their teacher that attending a two-year school was the right choice for them, students who were in other guidance courses seemed to paint a different picture.

The students shared their experience in their classes and almost always felt that attending a community college was seen as a lower step and not as successful as attending a four-year institution right after high school. Lily, who was enrolled in a CSU guidance class

shared “ I learned that it's not a bad thing if you go to a community college first. You could go some years and you could transfer. Some students, some seniors, we were all in the meeting, they were saying they don't want to look like a dummy going to community college first. They want to go straight to university”. While Lily didn't agree that attending a community college was a lower step, she shared that other students at CCHS did.

Most student participants believed that the students attending CCHS received the same college opportunities. Those students believed that the school shared their mission of college for certain with all students, and it was up to the student to decide how they would perform in their classes and what grades they received. Nelly was very vocal about students who chose to “slack off during” their ninth-eleventh grades and shared her sentiments about students who were on the community college track by saying:

They don't really try. Probably they get less information because they don't have the grades. They still get taught. Because of 9th, 10th, 11th they get taught on what they need to do, and what their grades need to be. It's their fault they don't really try. They get a pamphlet on community college. Either way they get information on a community college. They probably do not get as much information as we do about the UC's and Cal States.

Adrian, who was enrolled in the CSU guidance class, reflected on the way he thought school personnel viewed community colleges and the message, which they were giving their students; he said:

They try to stress to us that community colleges aren't bad and that no matter who goes there, eventually it's the same path as if you went to a four year. In some ways, I

feel that they still see them as the below average schools, the ones where the under achievers go to. I wouldn't say that's a bad thing. I feel that's the mentality that most people have when they get to high school.

His thoughts concluded with “they see the communities [those enrolled in the community college class] as the losers, the ones that aren't going to do anything in life. I disagree with that, but that's how I see it.” His statement vocalized what seemed to be the view of some of the guidance teachers, as well as students who were not enrolled in the community college guidance class.

The mission of the charter school is being upheld because all students are given the opportunity of college options, including community colleges. While all students receive information about their choices, it seemed as though attending a community college after high school is sending students the mixed message that only if they are academically prepared, they will succeed, regardless of the transitional aide they receive from the high school.

Guidance class is the primary source for college advising at Central Charter High School. The counselors are very involved in the planning of the curriculum and are constantly visiting classrooms to answer questions about college applications, scholarships and emails that students receive from colleges. During my observation of a guidance class, the teacher was conducting a scholarship workshop and was delivering step by step instruction of the requirements and helping students formulate the essay needed to apply. One of the school counselors was traveling from class to class, answering questions that both the teachers and students had. Some of the students wondered whether or not they were

missing any forms, asking if she had time to help them check their college portals, and staff members were making sure that they were conducting the activity correctly.

Teachers are given classes of 20-26 students and are required to provide their students with the necessary tools needed in order to apply to four-year schools or community colleges. While they are given the lesson plans and are expected to convey them properly, teachers are not necessarily comfortable or prepared each time. Jane, a CSU guidance teacher, reflected on being equipped to teach the college information and said that although she feels comfortable delivering the lesson, she always looks to the counselor for more knowledge and to make sure that she is giving her students the correct information. The school administrators were focused on ensuring that their students were given the necessary tools to transition successfully into the college of their choice.

John, the principal, recounted what he believed every student is conscious of at his school:

I think that they are aware of the focus on academics, and the focus on pushing every kid to college is, while it's not unique in LA, it's different between the schools they are in, and the default option that they would have had.

John provides us with the perspective that due to the fact that his students attend a charter school; they are able to receive catered information about what the best higher education option is for them, in comparison to a traditional high school. The students at Central Charter High School attribute much of their success to the relationships built at the school and the information received in their guidance class. Guidance class heavily influences students at Central Charter High School and is an intricate part of their college going culture.

College Going Culture

Oseguera (2013) suggests that high schools with a college-going culture ensure that as students graduate, they are able to maneuver and have the skills necessary to successfully transition into their post secondary decision. Oakes (2003) recommends seven conditions in order to understand and achieve a college going culture for multicultural students and to create a successful environment for their transition from high school to college, which include a rigorous academic curriculum, qualified teachers, intensive academic and social supports, opportunities to develop a multicultural college going identity, and connections among families, neighborhoods and schools around college going. Interviewing both students and charter school personnel, it was evident that college access at Central Charter High School is a common goal and that students are consistently reminded about their expectation of continuing their education once they graduate high school.

John, the principal at CCHS who has been with the charter district for 6 years and helped establish the school, shared his thoughts about how his staff consistently reminds students about the expectations of attending college:

Our students are exposed to the requirements and the benefits of enrolling in college. We spend the ninth and tenth grade building interest and in building the reasons why they would want to go college, and then 11th and 12th grade actually walking them through the process of enrolling. We try to make thousands of baby steps instead of just saying push them.

John continued to share ways in which he felt his students were exposed to a college going culture. He shared that many of the students were first generation college students and often

times attending college was not a goal that was expected of them and at many times seemed unattainable:

It's positive peer pressure around exploring college options and enrolling in college. Every student goes on two field trips per year to a college campus. In addition to that, we take another hundred or so kids on overnight college field trips to universities that are further away. There's a lot of exposure. There's a lot of this positive talk about college.

John pondered about the college going culture at his school and he recalled his earlier days in education at a traditional high school that was not college focused. He remembered the struggle that some of the faculty and staff shared when encouraging their students to graduate high school.

Although the school in which he worked before was considered a “dropout factory” by the school district, he felt that many times he was the only staff member to speak to his students about college during the day:

I was an AVID teacher before I came here. Avid is all about four year colleges and I think some of that messaging sometimes becomes unintentional bad mouthing for community colleges. We want kids to push as hard as they can, but we also have the opportunity to be the ones who push that first kid in their family to ever go to college, and many of that will happen at a two-year school, and that's admirable as well.

While John enthusiastically shared his thoughts about CCHS and the college culture, he cautiously shared his opinion about the higher education preparation that was given to students as they embarked on their last year of high school. He stated:

We've worked backward to these things we want the kids to be able to do without us, by giving them opportunities and giving chances to practice while they are still here with us. I think our kids have the opportunity to be successful. Some of them are ready, and some of them aren't, but I don't think academics is what is standing in the way right now.

As John reflected on the academic ability of his students, he felt comfortable knowing that the schools had prepared them by insisting that college was the next step for them. It appeared that the school had created a “college for certain” culture for all and continuously provided all students with the opportunity to learn about transitioning to their post secondary option.

According to Martinez and Klopott (2005), students are not persisting to postsecondary success nor attaining it, due to their lack of preparedness in high schools. Students are not being taught the necessary tools and steps required to be able to make their own decisions and to transition into their new role as a college student. CCHS has included many, of what they believe, are the necessary methods to successfully attain post-secondary success in college. John shared, “we've created a list based on some research of 15 things that college ready seniors should be able to do, and some of them are, ‘write a research paper on their own,’ and some of them are, ‘schedule and attend a study group without a teacher making you do it at all.” While some of the students are able to do some of the things on the list, not all of the students are able to do them all and some of them are unaware that a list even exists.

Maria, one of the counselors at CCHS grew up in the neighborhood and went to a

traditional high school whose community was similar to that of the charter school. She reflected on how she constantly reminds students that they need to learn how to do a lot of the things that they help them with at school:

I feel like because of the academic rigor in this school they are prepared. We tell them, you know, 'guys get in the habit of whether reading these type of books, write this amount of writing, taking these rigorous courses. Because you're going be expected to do this once you go off to college!

Maria shared the same sentiment that John shared in her belief that the students were academically challenged during their time at CCHS. She realized the importance of reminding students about what is expected of them once they graduate high school and creating tools to ensure that students were transitioning successfully.

Jane, an English teacher who is responsible for a cohort of the Cal State students and who believes in the academic ability of all of her students, echoed Maria's concern about their students not being fully prepared once they left high school. She stated, "I would say that, for most part, the majority of them are prepared, in particular, in my CSU class and in my guidance class. I am aware that a lot of their writing is not what I thought when I was in high school. It's a lot lower, unfortunately." The school personnel at CCHS encourage their students to think about post-secondary success as college.

While John reiterates that "college for certain" is the logo of the school, he also said:

Academically, they are prepared; it's not going to be easy. Emotionally, and maturity level wise, some of them are going to be up to the challenge, and some of them may not be up to the challenge. I think our senior teachers have done a good job to really

try and give kids those opportunities to struggle and build that independence.

Just like John, Maria and Jane realized that their school is providing students with the academic preparedness to apply to school but need to enhance their transition support, as a current high school counselor at a charter school, I understood them and the importance of incorporating programs that will help students succeed. It appears that this charter school is working closely to build academic rigor in their curriculum and are continuously building programs to aide in the transition once students graduate high school.

Most charter school counselors and other personnel believe that in order to create a college going culture, it is important to infuse college everyday (Farmer-Hinton and McCullough, 2008). Charles, the assistant principal of the school, reflected on the college culture at CCHS:

They get exposed to different levels of culture, whether in their guidance curriculum and doing basic research of colleges around the nation. Actually, applying for colleges, for FAFSA, for private schools or any types of things like that and they are exposed to that, on all grade levels.

He continues explaining how college is infused at CCHS:

You have banners around, it's just that teachers talk about it as well. We have days, like college day, where teachers come out in their Alma Mater shirts. One part of our dress code is that you have to wear a black sweatshirt or a black collar shirt. The only exception is if you have a college sweatshirt, any type of college or university. I think our goal was to expose them as much as possible to those different opportunities but also our teachers and the content that they teach. We're pushing them; we're looking

at that whole common core thing. What it means to teach skills versus just content.

Whatever it is you hear lifelong skills.

Charles solidifies that at CCHS a college culture is evident. Not only are students exposed to different colleges through banners in classrooms, they are also allowed to wear college gear at school and to promote their goals for higher education. The push for college is unmistakable at CCHS, however, it is important to view how community colleges are exposed to the student body, if at all.

Central Charter High School is committed to instilling the idea that college should be the aspiration post high school for its students. Carla, a senior at CCHS, is the youngest member of her family and will be the first to go on to a four-year university. She is one of the top students in her class and works in the main office of the school helping staff members as a teaching assistant. Carla shared “ I wouldn't say college is mentioned every day, but we know every day that we're working towards something that's going to help us in college. That's been our objective.” She continued by saying “this school is very pro college. They really encourage everyone to do well in school so they can have the choice to go wherever they want to go.” Carla seemed like a very shy and timid young girl and was described to me by her counselor as one of the top students in her class. Because she was in the UC cohort and was expected to apply and go to either UC or a private school, I believe that she was groomed to believe that all students were taught the same and had the same academic options.

Noah is of Guatemalan descent and has seen his sibling graduate high school and attend a University of California school. As a senior with a high GPA and good SAT test

scores, Noah confirmed Carla's sentiment about the college culture at CCHS and said:

College is a very important thing here. Every year when the seniors are about to go, they put a wall about all the seniors that graduated. They have a little poster about the senior and what college they went to and the reason why they went there.

The poster, which Noah referred to, made up a large portion of a wall where all students at CCHS walk through. I conducted this study during the Fall semester and as seniors were receiving their acceptance letters, not as students were deciding which school to attend. As I walked the halls, I did not notice community colleges on the wall.

Like Noah, Emily also had the privilege of seeing her siblings graduate from high school and attend college; one attended a Cal State while the other attended a community college. She planned on attending a four-year school, but was undecided on which school she would attend and felt comfortable asking her teachers and counselors for some advice. Emily added to the enthusiasm that school personnel have regarding college by saying:

In their room [classroom] they always have up where they go. Not only where they go, but they'll have almost every college, and not every college, but the college they [school personnel] think is interesting. They always talk about their experience and what college they went to. Seniors are always asking, "what is college like?" So they tell us.

Emily shared that she built relationships with many of her teachers and felt confident that she learned a lot about their college experiences. From our interview, it was evident that she felt as though she had a vision of what college life would be. She referred a lot to her sisters' experiences and was excited to embark on a new academic journey.

The college-going culture was apparent in the school and staff members believed that it was important to showcase colleges and universities. It seemed as though having the students see the names of different schools and being exposed to it everyday, created a conversation of colleges between the students and staff. Emily continued to speak about her experience with the school personnel:

Ever since ninth grade they talked about college; college this, college that. Every year they talk about it so that you don't mess up in school. So that you can get into the best college you can. They always mention that, every day, because they want to just teach it to you.

Lily, who was one of two African American females interviewed, reiterated Emily's sentiment about how often college is mentioned and intertwined in the school day and said "Twenty-four/seven. It's all over the board. [laughs] That's how I feel about it. We talk about college almost every day." It seemed as though CCHS was committed to incorporating the idea of college in their curriculum and school culture, and through student interviews, it was apparent that the students appreciated the encouragement they were receiving from the staff members; they were being motivated to achieve their dreams and were being reminded that college was not a far grasp.

One of the questions asked to the school personnel who participated in the study was whether or not they believed that the students who attended their school received the same type of education and college access, regardless of their race and ethnic background. Charles, the assistant principal at the high school, described the school by saying, "it's 99 percent Hispanic, one percent African American, and 99 percent of them are on Free-Reduced

Lunch.” John, the principal, agreed with Charles’ description and added:

If we're talking in census data, we're not terribly diverse. We're overwhelmingly Latino, and overwhelmingly free and reduced lunch. We go out of our way to try and value everybody. Not all Latinos are the same, and we have students from...whose families come from several different countries. We have students who've been here for several generations, and those who are the first of their generation to go to school in this country.

In order to be eligible for free and reduced lunch, a student must be a part of a family with income between 130% and 185% of the poverty level (National School Lunch Program, 2014). CCHS did not only comprise a large number of students of color, they also accommodated a large number of low-income students as well.

Students were asked whether or not they saw a difference in the way which they received college opportunities. Nelly, a seventeen-year-old Latina who had the lowest SAT score of the students interviewed said, “None of the teachers act racist. I mean some people say that 'oh yeah only because I'm Mexican' or 'only because I am black' only because I am this you know.” Race did not seem to be an issue in the classroom from the perspective of the students. All of the students believed that they were receiving the same type of information and did not question whether race played a factor in their education. While school personnel also believed that all students were treated equally and fairly, they did recognize that students were being sheltered from the dominance of white privilege, and that they would be shocked as they transitioned to college in the fall.

At CCHS, counselors walk students through the application process and all students

receive help through a class that is designated to teach college knowledge. Maria, the school counselor, stated that at CCHS going to a four-year school right after high school is what is expected. She said:

Yeah, I feel like it's more toward the push for the four-year course and we're so heavily invested...I'm not saying that I haven't any investment in community college. It's just the four-year students take a little bit longer. They seem more invested because of their personal statement, and their grades and putting that applications, we're teaching that in the school. That takes more of our time and seems to take more of our priority. Both colleges should be our priority, [including] the community college. Yeah, we would wish all our students would be on track, get perfect grades but it does not happen because each student's situation is different.

Here Maria validates that while the vision of CCHS is to send all students to a four-year school, the reality is that not all students are prepared and some will attend a community college, or have other plans for their future. As Maria made the statement that students who were applying to four-year schools had more of the attention of the counselors, it was evident that she hoped to make a change and be able to provide the same time commitment to all students. By providing the same amount of time to all students, they would all receive adequate information and not feel as though their college track was less important than the other. Central Charter High School continued to add to the large number of African American and Latina/o students who graduate from high school; similarly they are also labeling community colleges as a deficit option for college enrollment.

Community Colleges

School personnel agree that community colleges are positive choices for some of their students. Maria said “We try and pull out the mission to our students and then have them go to four-year school but we also are aware that community college is a great option for them. It's a really good option.” Jane added her perception of a two-year school and how it is framed to their students by saying:

If they still want to stick with that four-year slogan, then I think they could say, ‘two-year community college to a four-year university.’ I always tell them, ‘boost up your GPA! Use community college as a way to boost your GPA, then transfer to a top UC.’ Maybe highlight more of those tracks. I don't know, because it is just so, "Four-year University, four-year University, four-year University." That's it.

As Jane continued to share her views on community colleges, she shares that she was worried about their persistence and retention when enrolling into college. She said “for most part, the majority of them are prepared, in particularly in my CSU class and in my guidance class. I am aware that a lot of their writing is not what I thought when I was in high school. It's a lot lower, unfortunately”. Her concern for their writing skills added to her concern about being able to maneuver through the college transition on their own.

Jane provides us with the perspective on how the school almost always refers to college as a four-year school. Through her statement, she encourages CCHS to change the motto so that it includes community colleges. Jane reflected on her students and whether or not attending a four-year school, is in fact the best route for them. She mentioned:

If they go to a four-year school and they graduate, then it will open up a lot more job

opportunities. Strengthen the skills that they are starting to build. I just wonder though how many are going to make it through the four years. I think a lot of them will get in because their GPA's are very high, but I don't know.

While community colleges are seen as a positive post secondary option for the students at CCHS, the students and school personnel still have mixed feelings about attending a community college. Jose, a Mexican-American senior student with the lowest GPA, mentioned:

The teacher that I have right now, she gives us a deeper prospective into community college. She tells us that you can have a more secure way of getting into a four year college, if you want to go deeper into studying that [attending a four-year school].

They really push you into either pushing for the four-year, or doing two year until you can get yourself another understanding, if that's what you want to do. They really get you thinking about that.

Jose continued by saying “four-year college is for people that can get into it. Community college is for people who are in the lower state of education.” Through those statements, Jose let me know that community college was seen as a deficit. While school personnel spoke positively about students attending a community college, perhaps their views were not being properly communicated to their students.

Jane expressed how she believes colleagues at the school site view community colleges and the students who are eligible to attend them:

It's almost seen as like, "You're going to community college!?" It's a fail. It's like the school failed in their mission or something. Even the teachers that see the community

college schools will be like, "Well, we've had the rowdy kids." It's just like they're just identified as the ones that are not going to succeed in life, unfortunately.

Jane demonstrated the complex feelings about community colleges that some staff members at the school site had. The comments that Jane made reflected the feelings that Gloria shared. The fact that staff members felt that students who were on a community college path were the least successful students, it created a sense of separation between the student body.

The student, which I interviewed and who was on the community college track, did not share as much information about their college experience like the students who were on track for a four-year school. He spoke about their goals, but it didn't seem as though his plans were solid; he had vague thoughts about how he would achieve his dreams of higher education. Students who were on track to attend a four-year school were asked about their views on community colleges and almost all believed that it was a better choice than not continuing their education.

Carla, an African American student, believed that school personnel did not try to make students who were planning to attend a two-year school feel bad about their choice. Lily, an African American student who was on track to attend a Cal State, also agreed and stated that she was made aware of the fact that if students start at a community college, they could still transfer to a four-year school. Emily, who was on track to go to a four-year school, said, "they might not be going to a UC, but they're at least going to a community college. It's something. Better than not going to college." From the statements that were shared, I would say that half of the students saw community colleges as a positive route and half saw it as a negative option; however, student opinions could have been influenced by the guidance class,

which they belonged to.

School personnel reported that “college for certain” is the goal of the school and students acknowledged that both four-year and community colleges were a part of the messaging that was given to all. John, the principal, was very specific in the school philosophy and college culture by saying:

I guess I would define it, just like, kids having college in mind. Teachers have the goal of sending kids to college and preparing them for college, so learning about college courses, everything that helps to prepare them for it. So, as far as here, I think we have a pretty good college kind of culture. I mean if you would ask kids "What are your goals? What are you going to do after high school"? I'd hope they'd say, “go to college”.

While John hoped that all students were excited to attend a higher education institution, he was aware that it was not the plan for everyone, but also acknowledge that community college was the backup to their plans. He said:

There are other students who find that by the end of four years they don't want to be the classroom anymore and decide that school is not the thing they want to do. Many of them tell us later on that they go back and enroll in a community college after taking a year or two to work.

Due to the fact that some students have shared that community college is an option years after graduating high school, sharing information about community colleges to all cohorts is essential. There are students who could have been in a CSU or UC cohort and decided they did not want to enroll, having learned about the community colleges would allow them to

have the information needed to apply and enroll once they decided to go back to school.

Charles, the assistant principal echoed John's sentiment about community college and made it clear that it was important for students to have a goal before entering. He said:

I'm OK with it as long as you have goals in mind, because my fear is that they get stuck. And they're like, "Oh, I'm taking one class." And then, "Well, I started with two classes, at first." I'm like, "Great, great." Then the next time I see them, "Oh, I'm taking one class." It's like, "Really, just one." They're like, "I had to take care of my mom at home," or whatever it is. You're not going to be able to have too many opportunities to find a job that pays past a certain amount. And then the cycle continues. How do you break that piece? That's my view, I guess, as the administrator charged with that. We do push it, but I do understand that there are nuances to it and that the reality of our community shows that it doesn't allow for that to happen in some cases.

Charles hoped that as a school they taught to their students the importance of having a set plan in order to be able to either transfer to a four-year school or to graduate and be able to find a job. Through his statement he made it clear that some of the students aren't able to pursue their educational dreams due to other obligations and many times having to provide for their family, or help their parents care for the rest of their family members. According to Huber, Huidor, Malagon, Sanchez and Solorzano (2006) "for Latina/os, the pursuit of higher education can be limited when specific critical factors that influence students' transition through the educational pipeline are ignored (p.4). Many of the students at CCHS had other obligations that hindered their academic goals. Jane described factors that affected a

students' college decision by saying:

[students say] I don't have a GPA high enough to the school that I actually want to go to. Definitely GPA stands in the way, finances, family stands in the way. We had the Dream Act. so that wasn't too big of a problem, but there's a lot of information that they need that their parents just don't have access to. Their parents don't have a social security number, things like that that have been issues”.

For Jane, not being able to help her students through their undocumented immigration barriers, created a sense of helplessness. She explained that sometimes she did not feel comfortable asking those questions to her students, and did not have the resources to help them if they needed it.

Overall, the college culture at CCHS is strong and discussions about the different types of colleges are common in the classroom. While college access to all post secondary institutions seems positive, the main component of the college culture at CCHS is their guidance class, which tracks their students by their GPA and the type of college, which they believe their students, should apply to. The way in which the guidance class is set up is an obstacle in the college culture at CCHS. It creates a separation between students and allows them to have superiority over students who are in lower guidance classes. While the school continues to support students through their college aspirations, it continues to add to the thought that community colleges are a deficit option in higher education.

College Choice Update

Although the data collection ended during the fall semester of the senior year for the students who participated in this study, I was able to continue to keep in touch with the

counselors at the school site throughout the year. This section provides an update of all student participants regarding the choice that they made for their home campus in the fall. Knowing what students chose as their post-secondary option adds to the importance of ensuring that all students were receiving equal college information and access to all sectors of higher education.

Table 3 shows the GPA, SAT scores, guidance class enrollment and the initial and final college choice plan for all students.

Table 3

College Choice Update

Name	Adrian	Carla	Emily	Gloria	Jose	Lily	Nelly	Noah
Age	17	17	18	17	17	17	17	17
Ethnic Identity	Central American	African American	Latino	Central American	Mexican	African American	Hispanic	Central American
GPA	2.86	3.96	3.4	3.5	1.88	3	2.7	3.25
SAT Score	Unknown	1670	730	1450	None	Unknown	700	1445
Guidance Class	CSU	UC	UC	UC	Community College	CSU	CSU	UC
College planning to attend at time of interview	CSUDH	Undecided	Undecided	CSULB	Le Cordon Bleu	USC	CSUN	Undecided
Intent to Enroll Submitted to	CSULA	UCSD	CSUN	CSULA	El Camino College	El Camino College	CSUDH	UC Merced

Lily, who was enrolled in the CSU guidance class and had plans to attend private school USC in the fall, will be enrolling at El Camino Community College. Gloria, who was enrolled in the UC guidance class originally had plans to attend Cal State Long Beach but decided to attend Cal State LA. Jose, who was enrolled in the community college cohort and had plans to attend culinary school, decided to attend El Camino Community College. Nelly,

who was enrolled in the CSU guidance class, originally wanted to attend California State University, Northridge but changed her plans and will be attending California State University, Dominguez Hills. Adrian, who was enrolled in the CSU guidance class, had plans to attend California State University, Dominguez Hills, but committed to attend California State University, Los Angeles. Emily, who was enrolled in the UC guidance cohort, was initially undecided about her college plans; she decided to attend California State University, Northridge. Noah, who was enrolled in the UC guidance class decided to enroll at University of California, Merced. Carla was enrolled in the UC guidance class and was undecided about his college plans; she decided to attend University of California, San Diego.

It is important to note that all of the students who participated in the study chose to continue their education after high school. It is interesting that some of the students who were enrolled in UC guidance classes decided to attend Cal States, and that one student who was enrolled in the CSU class and thought she would attend a private institution decided to attend a community college instead. Although the plans changed for all students, higher education continued to be their goal and resonated with the college culture at Central Charter High School.

Summary

The overall findings suggest that African American and Latina/o students at Central Charter High School are provided with college information throughout their four years at the school. The college access provided to the students is taught through a guidance class that is instructed by teachers and supported by the counselors. The academic support and college information ultimately leads to graduation and enrollment at a four-year or two-year

institution. The principal stated all students who graduated from CCHS last year enrolled at a higher education institution.

The findings of the study imply that all of the students attribute their academic success and knowledge of post-secondary attainment to the school personnel, specifically their teachers, counselors and administrators. Many of the students recalled specific instances in which they felt that a staff member built a relationship with them and they attributed the bond to the fact that the school environment was small. School personnel also recalled the ability to be able to connect with their students and guide them through the process of attaining their goals. Students shared that through their guidance class they were able to learn about the different types of colleges that were available to them based on their GPA and SAT scores. While most of the students did not feel that the separation of guidance class based on GPA was important, some school personnel felt that it created a separation between students and created a hostile environment among them. The teacher who I interviewed was the only staff member that shared her belief that the separation in classes was unjust for students and created a division between students who were in the class and teachers who taught the class. Other personnel believed that the separation allowed the school to be able to focus on each student's academic needs and goals, and ultimately endorsed an intimate advising atmosphere.

The focus of the study was to uncover how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students, specifically concerning community colleges. Although higher education was communicated as the paramount option for all students, it seemed as though community colleges were not perceived as being successful as four-year institutions. Students who were on track to attend a community college were seen

as unsuccessful, rowdy and not academically prepared. Students who were enrolled in the community college class felt as though they were not receiving the same information as those who were enrolled in the other classes.

Through the interviews and observation conducted at Central Charter High School it was evident that the school had systems in place to ensure that all students were being taught and exposed to college after high school. Although the school was exuding college access, it was apparent that the students were not being taught about the differences they would face when enrolling into the college of their choice. While staff members felt that all students were receiving the same college opportunities, they too agreed that once students graduated from CCHS, they would need to acclimate to a new school, new community and a less homogenous college environment. Although they were aware of the challenges their students would face, the instruction at the school did not seem to emphasize the teacher's theoretical emphasis on multicultural teaching and institutional discrimination and not preparing its students for the college campus racial climate that they would face.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This ethnographic case study explored three research questions to better understand college access for charter school students in a low-income community. The three research questions that this study attempted to answer were: 1) How is college access defined in a charter school context? 2) How do charter school personnel perceive community colleges?; and 3) What are the postsecondary aspirations for graduating African American and Latina/o charter students? How do charter school personnel influence these aspirations? Through the data collected, I sought to understand how African American and Latina/o students were provided with the necessary information to make informed decisions about their post secondary options, and whether or not the message provided to them included community colleges. In addition to the information given to the students, it was important to understand how school personnel developed and supported the college going aspiration of their students and the vision and mission of the school. Ultimately, it was imperative to comprehend how critical race theory could inform college counseling at a charter school which was 97% Latino.

I collected data through semi-structured interviews with school personnel and students, as well as observed a senior CSU guidance class. The data was collected, transcribed and coded into thematic results in order to understand how charter school personnel defined college access for African American and Latina/o students at a charter high school. Central Charter High School underwent staff turnover during the time in which I was collecting my data and had to deal with obstacles such as a teacher passing away, losing an assistant principal and counselor midway through the school year. Although many

changes were taking place in the school, the dedication of staff members shined through and the students continued to feel the tightknit community that they believed aided in their academic success. Four themes emerged in the study: (1) Charter School influence, which was prevalent in how students described their relationships with their teachers, administrators and counselors, (2) Guidance Class which was the primary focus for where college information was derived from, (3) College going culture, which was felt by both the staff and the students, and (4) Community College, which was described both as a positive and negative option for charter school students. The four themes allow educators to better understand how college access in low-income communities for African American and Latina/o charter school students is.

Colorblindness

Colorblindness can be defined as not acknowledging a person's race or ethnicity, but rather professing to only see individuals as part of the "human race" (Shields, 2004). Atwater (2007) states how this approach impacts individuals in the classroom: "the color-blind perspective is relied upon because of its seeming advantages: when there is fear of classroom or school conflict, or a fear of appearing prejudiced, the "race does not matter" approach can offer a paradigm of easy escapism to avoid dealing with the cultural reality" (p. 3). Educators often share their colorblind perspective because they do not want to seem as though they are not sensitive to others' cultural needs, or perhaps they realize that race does exist, yet do not want to create a classroom or school-wide conflict (Atwater, 2007).

While the school personnel at Central Charter High School acknowledge that their students' upbringing, culture and race were all very similar at the school, their inclination to

discount their student's racial heritage and not to disseminate any college information that was tailored to their backgrounds reinforces the notion and operation of a color-blind ideology. Segregating students into guidance tracks racialized all students at CCHS based on their GPA, instead of their want to continue onto higher education. The voices of the students who participated in the study provided a look into the racialized experience of African American and Latina/o students at CCHS and also recognizes how racial constructs have shaped their experience in high school.

DeCuir and Dixson (2004) argue that adopting a colorblind approach does not equate the removal of inequity and oppression for people of color. This study's findings examined the subtleties of the charter school to community college educational pipeline for African American and Latina/o students taught and administered by a predominantly white staff. According to Bonilla-Silva (2013) racism is often undetected by the dominant group and argues that color-blindness is the new racism. The color-blind ideology rationalizes that white individuals do not acknowledge race and color, which in turn promotes racial inequality and white dominance (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). Charles, an Asian American male and the Assistant Principal at the school, shared his hopes for school personnel and their views on race. He said:

I hope that we hire teachers who don't take that into account. Naturally, they're going to see, "There's one African American student in my class. The rest are Latino," or whatever -- they're going to notice those things. But our hope is that they're not singling out any kids for those kinds of things. My hope is that they have the same experience.

Although Charles is of Asian descent, he is an administrator at a charter school with a white

principal, and although their school educates students of color, they do not acknowledge that racism is a national issue and that they need to prepare their students about race-related matters that will affect them once they leave their high school.

The colorblind philosophy is consciously or unconsciously used to maintain racial order and preserve white privilege; although whites express color-blindness more frequently than other races (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). Central Charter High School services African American and Latina/o students in a neighborhood which houses the same racial backgrounds, yet there is a serious lack of acknowledgement of what it means to be an African American or Latina/o student who is applying for colleges.

Charles conveyed that all students at CCHS would realize racial and cultural differences once they graduate from the school. He said:

They're smart kids. They're aware of their communities here. They're aware that the minute they step out, what it looks like. I'm pretty sure, if you were to ask them, they would know that some of the four year universities, you're not going to see a lot of your race there. So, I hope that they...they're going to be a culture shock for them, no matter what.

Despite the fact that all students were being prepared to graduate and transition onto higher education, it was not evident that they were being prepared to what their college experience would be like, in particular the racial campus climate they may encounter. Charles continued by saying "it won't be as much of a culture shock if they went to the community colleges though. It's just the reality of the system that we have so far." Although the students at CCHS may feel more comfortable at a community college due to the

similarities in student demographics, the majority of their students are attending a CSU, UC or private institution. Ceja, Solorzano and Yosso (2008) describe campus racial climate as the racial environment on college campuses. They argue that in order to effectively examine college access and persistence is it essential to understand the racial climates and racial conflicts of postsecondary institutions (Hurtado, 1992). If students are not being educated and prepared on how their experience may differ once they leave CCHS, this can affect how they experience the racial climate at the higher education institution where they will enroll.

The second tenet of critical race theory, the challenge to dominant ideology, examines the claims that institutions offer equal opportunity and a color-blind approach for all students (Yosso, 2005). Critical race theorists argue that schools that offer a neutral environment are in fact camouflaging the self-interest of the dominant group, and that race matters in education (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Students at CCHS were not given nor taught the tools needed to be able to understand the culture outside of their high school and were not prepared for the change that they would soon be in. Looking through a CRT lens, CCHS claims to offer students of color equal education, yet limits their ability to share their diverse educational experiences.

Review of Chapter 4

Chapter four discussed the stories of school personnel and senior students at Central Charter High School. The findings in the chapter answered all three of my research questions and provided information regarding charter schools and their vision of college access. The participants in the study reflected on the college-going culture at their school and the relationships built between school personnel and staff members. Community colleges were

discussed and points of views were shared regarding what school personnel thought about attending community college as an option, and how they messaged the success of students who enrolled in them. This study and findings demonstrate that community colleges are a part of Central Charter High School and its college-going culture, however they are positioned as a deficit choice. The discussion provided in this chapter brings to light how school personnel view community colleges and allows charter schools to tailor their college access approach for all students and all post-secondary institutions.

Charter School Influence

Students who participated in the study attributed much of their success to their small school environment and the relationships they built with the charter school personnel. The relationship that students and school personnel created, small classrooms and counselor load, were all essential in the student success at the Central Charter High School. The second research question that I sought to answer was to understand how school personnel shaped higher education aspirations. Staff members emphasized that they wanted their students to be successful post high school and they understood that in order for them to be prepared, the curriculum at the school needed to empower them academically and emotionally to ensure a positive transition.

The school personnel at CCHS had consistent and high expectations of all of their students in regards to applying and attending college after graduation. They supported and encouraged their students through both formal and informal conversations and activities and conversations, which lead to creating meaningful and positive relationships with their students. Students were positively influenced and were acculturated into the idea of college

very early on in their education at CCHS. Due to the fact that a positive message was conveyed to all students, all of the student participants were on track to graduate from the high school and had plans to continue their education; three students were planning to attend a CSU, two students were planning to attend a UC, two students were preparing to attend community college and one student was going to enroll into culinary school.

The counselors at CCHS were pivotal players in the success of their students. They aided in the promotion of the college going culture at the school and were the primary source of information for both teachers and students. The counselors were responsible for ensuring that all students were receiving the correct information about college in addition to providing social emotional counseling and academic advising. The teacher and administrators reinforced the students' thoughts about the counselors and were adamant that the counselors' role was important for the mission of their charter school.

Guidance Class

The students at CCHS were separated into three different college tracks depending on their grades and cumulative GPA their senior year; the information that they received about higher education was tailored specifically to their group. Although the message at CCHS and the communication between school personnel and the students seemed like a positive support system, it was evident that successful college aspirations were identified as four-year aspirations. All students who were enrolled in the CSU and UC guidance classes were required to apply to a minimum of four CSU's and four UC's. Students who were enrolled in the community college cohort were not guided through the CSU or UC application process and were not encouraged to apply due to their low grades and test scores. Students revealed

that the information provided through their guidance class differed between cohorts and it was evident that a separation was created not only between the students, but also how school personnel viewed students enrolled in the different cohorts.

College Going Culture

Through a classroom observation and dialogues, the participants revealed that a college-going culture at Central Charter High School was evident. The first research question that I sought to answer allowed me to understand how charter school personnel defined college access for their students. I discovered that the staff and teachers at CCHS developed an expectation since the ninth grade that all students would graduate and continue onto higher education. All students were expected to participate in college tours, and other college readiness activities; which educated them on the types of higher education institutions, as well as the required coursework to graduate and apply to the college of their choice.

Central Charter High School's motto of "college for certain" was clear to all students, specifically as they entered their senior year of high school. Teachers were selected to provide senior students, through a guidance class, with information that would guide them through the application process, and prepare them to graduate and successfully enroll into college. School personnel at CCHS incorporated college activities into their course assignments and casual conversations about college. They spoke to students about college entrance exams, application requirements and financial aid, as well as celebrating students for applying and being accepted into four-year schools. Staff members ensured that college was represented around their classrooms by posting pennants and posters, as well as wearing college gear to spark conversations about different schools. As I stepped into classrooms, I

saw pennants from various UC's and Cal States as well as private schools such as Dartmouth and New York University. Although while I was there I did not see anyone wearing a college t-shirt, all of the participants mentioned that there are certain days where staff members wear college gear.

Community Colleges

Central Charter High School's personnel supported student's enrollment in community colleges and often times believed that it was a more adequate placement for certain students. In this study I wanted to understand how charter school personnel viewed community colleges and essentially how students were educated about the community college path. Throughout the interviews it was evident that although personnel believed in the positivity of community colleges, that the curriculum and separation in guidance classes created a disconnect between students. School personnel emphasized the importance of college for everyone and made it clear that attending a community college was still a successful path; yet they believed that some students were not academically and emotionally prepared for a four-year school transition.

The perception of community colleges amongst the staff, which was almost all positive, created a similar opinion among the students as well. All of the students agreed that attending a community college was an adequate choice for students who were not prepared to attend a four-year school. Many of the students believed that students who did not have a successful academic high school career would benefit from attending a community college because of the remediation that they would receive. Although the students believed that attending a community college was still seen as a triumph, one Latina student believed that

all students should be able to attend a four-year school.

She stated that all students at CCHS were given the same educational opportunities and it was a student's fault for not being able to complete their academic careers with high grades and sat scores. Although her perception put blame on the student for not completing classes and being ineligible to attend a four-year school, the charter school created a perception that being in the community college cohort meant that they were in a lower academic bracket. Some students "looked down" at other students in the community college cohort and felt that they did not need to receive information on community colleges because that is not where they were going to be attending.

As mentioned in chapter 4, the charter school influence has been a prevalent part of the higher education aspirations of the students. The college tracks set the tone of how students perceive college and about their transition into their postsecondary plans. In addition to discussing college options, educating students about the campus racial climate that they will be exposed to, should be an important piece of their guidance class curriculum.

Contributions to Theory

This study attempted to analyze how critical race theory could be used as a method to examine African American and Latina/o students' experiences with college access at a charter high school. CRT challenges educators to "look for the many strengths within students and communities of color in order to combat and eliminate negative racial stereotypes" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 7). School personnel at CCHS must not only say that they believe in the ability for all of their students to succeed, but they must end the marginalization of their students.

The stories shared by both the school personnel and students at Central Charter High School are essential in examining the charter school to community college pipeline in critical race theory and color-blindness literature. Through a critical race theory analysis, the students who participated in the study were able to lend their voice and share their experiences about the college access provided and views of community colleges amongst the school personnel. CRT ideology asserts that race and culture are imperative mechanisms to be considered when educating and providing college access for students of color. Giroux (1997) suggests that the forms of multicultural education in place are not sufficient enough to promote social justice and to uncover white racism in schools. The fact that white developers of the charter school movement serve students of color and are creating schools in neighborhoods of color, could be seen as a way to promote social justice; however, the fact that students of color are not reaching and graduating from higher education institutions, is questionable through the critical race theory framework.

Through the CRT lens, we can uncover the injustices and the lack of preparation that students are receiving to enter a white privileged based society, and not being allowed to move through the educational pipeline. Charter schools and community colleges are analyzed through a crt lens and it is palpable that deficit messages are still being given to high school students at the charter high school, and can be due to the fact that community colleges are still very racialized. Charter schools and community colleges serve the same type of students; nevertheless hold a different value within the educational pipeline.

Contributions to Practice

This study found that students at Central Charter High School were embedded with a

“college for certain” idea and were exposed to higher education early on. While all students were consistently told that higher education was a form of post secondary success, it was evident that some students felt different about the types of educational institutions and what equaled educational achievement. At CCHS school personnel consistently incorporated college into their lessons and in their conversations with students, however, during their senior year, students were only able to apply to schools and receive information about college based on their guidance class and academic achievement throughout their high school career. The personnel understood that it was their responsibility to provide students with the necessary academic ability and tools to be able to successful in their post secondary education.

All of the students that were interviewed acknowledged that a college culture was evident at their school and that all students were afforded the opportunity to grow academically. All students were taught about college differences and the academic record that they needed to have in order to be able to apply to four-year schools. Although the students were provided with the information and assistance needed to apply to a post-secondary institution; the school was defeating students by not allowing them to receive equal information overall. Due to the fact that students were tracked into specific guidance classes not everyone was being taught the same material at the same time. Community college students shared that they somewhat received information about four-year schools, while CSU students were not able to apply to UCs or private schools; this in turn impacts transfers later on in the educational pipeline.

The school environment at CCHS articulated the message that attending college was considered post-secondary success. The school did a great job of placing college signs and

banners and posters that showed students on campus where seniors were being accepted. The poster area should also showcase the community college choices of students who choose to attend community college first. The school administration should ensure that teachers are also highlighting community colleges with their classroom pennants. The school counselors should match the four-year college representative speakers that present to the students, by also inviting community college representatives to educate students on their schools and the transfer options.

Tracking students during guidance class allows the counselors to be able to manage student applications and provide specific information to their target group and it also creates a sense of separation between students. Desegregating the students in the guidance classes would minimize the feeling of separation between them, end all forms of subordination, and would allow for all students to receive the same college information and support throughout their senior year. Students who were eligible to apply for CSU's and UC's could make an appointment with the counselors in order to submit their applications. In addition to counselor appointments, groups could be created and called out of class in order to complete the applications. Creating those groups would allow students who were eligible to apply for four-year schools the intimate assistance needed in order to complete their applications. Creating the non-tracking guidance classes would also encourage teachers and staff members to have high expectations for all of their students instead of feeling as though their students are academically segregated.

In addition to integrated guidance classes, incorporating Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) into the curriculum is crucial. All students who were on track to attend a four-year school were required to complete a

California State or University of California application. Because the school is made up of African-American and Latina/o students, it is imperative that they understand the existence of schools that cater specifically to students who are similar to them. The school has a college tour set in place for juniors where they visit different schools in California and the East Coast; including an HBCU and a HSI college tour would allow students to see the difference between colleges and determine what suits them best.

Lastly, college transition information is necessary for the students to grasp the change in which they are about to embark on. Presenting students with a realistic approach about the adjustment with cultures and communities would allow students to be prepared for their college experience and for a hostile campus racial climate. The relationships built with the school personnel at CCHS were very significant to the academic achievement of these students. Informing them that the level of communication between them, counselors or advisors, and teachers may be different than high school is imperative. Allowing them to see the differences would paint a picture for the importance of embracing the tools taught to them such as checking their email and making phone calls by themselves. If students were able to understand the importance of the life skills being taught to them, it would allow them to be prepared for their future home campus.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many opportunities for further research regarding charter schools and community colleges. This study allows educators to understand how community colleges are incorporated in the message about college access in charter schools whose mission is to prepare students for college, leadership and life. This study was conducted at an

academically successful start up charter school located in a predominately Latino area. The school is considered a start up charter school because it did not exist as a part of a previous school before. The findings from this study may have been different if the location of the school was different and if the charter school was a turn-around school. Further research may include the perspectives of students enrolled in different types of charter schools with a variety of academic backgrounds. Including the different participants would allow for a broader perspective from students and school personnel who are in different environments and whose academic rigor differs.

A future study could explore students who graduated from a charter school and who enrolled at a community college. Students would be able to share their experience as they move from high school to community college and share whether or not the information and tools given to them at their charter high school were sufficient in their transition; The same could be done with students who matriculated to a four-year school. The data collected could be examined in order to understand how students who attended community colleges were prepared in comparison to those who attended four-year schools, and how they perceived their academic and transitional preparation.

Another study could examine the curriculum at different charter high schools and comprehend how that influences the college-going culture at their schools. In addition to understanding how a college-going culture affects the academic success of students, it would also be beneficial to examine how community colleges are incorporated in their college message and if it is seen as a successful post-secondary option. The college-going culture at the school studied was prevalent among the staff and students and it was evident that the school personnel influenced the students' vision of college and post-secondary success. The

objective of this study was to understand how charter school personnel defined college access for their students and whether or not community colleges were established in that message. The results highlighted that while community colleges were seen as a positive road for some students, the successful post-secondary plan was considered a four-year school.

Conclusion

This study revealed how the structure of charter schools allows students to learn about post-secondary options and provides them with the necessary support needed to apply and transition during their senior year of high school. All of the school personnel expressed the importance of education and the significance of post-secondary attainment for their students and their families. All students who participated in this study chose to continue their education after high school and shared that they understood the correlation between education and success. Although the access provided to students at CCHS was significant, it was evident that the students were not prepared to assimilate to their life after high school because they were not provided with the necessary tools to adapt to new communities, structures, and cultures. The colorblind approach that the school was adopting will not help them with future diverse campuses.

Community colleges are the largest growing sector in education and are effective learning institutions for many students. The enrollment at the community college level mirrors the enrollment at Central Charter High School and therefore it is important to understand how educators are preparing their students to be successful and to transition. CCHS' college preparatory mantra was successful because of the behaviors that were exuded through the leadership and school personnel. All of the activities and messaging circulated

back to college and the mission and vision of both the school and the district. Although the school continued to provide a positive college message to its students, incorporating community colleges and a culturally relevant curriculum into its college-going behaviors is necessary because attending a community college is also an academic success. College access must be tailored to the population of the school and it was evident in the findings that communication about race and ethnicity needed to happen.

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Appendix A

California State University, Northridge **ADOLESCENT ASSENT TO BE IN A HUMAN RESEARCH PROJECT**

Charter Schools and Community Colleges: How educators define college access for African American and Latina/o students.

We would like to invite you to participate in a research project. Participating in this project is your choice. Please read about the project below. Feel free to ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A person connected to the research will be around to answer your questions.

Informal title of the study: How Charter Schools and Community Colleges are connected for African American and Latina/o students.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:

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Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Dimpal Jain

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Study Location(s): Central Charter High School

WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?.

This project studies how school officials in charter schools prepare students for life after high school for African American and Latina/o students, and most importantly how they are given information about community colleges. They want to see if you would like to be in this project so that you can be a part of ways to help community college awareness.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE PROJECT?

These things will happen if you want to be in the study:

1. You will participate in a personal interview.
2. You will be audio recorded so that all of the information that you share will be correct.
3. Your name will not be mentioned and will be changed during the project.

4. You might get bored
5. You might be embarrassed to share information
6. You might be concerned to share information.

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT TO YOU AND OTHERS

This study will be a possible benefit to society by providing information about charter schools, college access and community colleges for African American and Latina/o students. The study will provide insight into charter schools and community college access. While your child may not directly benefit from the study, the school personnel may adjust their college knowledge curriculum in order to ensure that all students are receiving adequate information regarding all of their options after high school. This study will also provide insight into how charter schools, a new education reform, are defining college access for under represented

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT?

You can ask questions any time. You can talk to the researchers, your family or someone else in charge, before you decide if you want to participate. If you do agree to participate, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. If you have questions about the study please contact a member of the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

If you want to be in the study sign your name below.

Signature of Adolescent	Age	Date
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Signature of Researcher	Date
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Signature of Individual Obtaining Assent If different from researcher	Date
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Appendix B

Universidad Estatal de California, Northridge
**CONSENTIMIENTO DEL ADOLESCENTE PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN
PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN HUMANA**

" El Movimiento de Escuelas Charter y Colegios Comunitarios: Examinando el acceso a la universidad para los estudiantes afroamericanos y latinos"

Nos gustaría invitarlo a participar en un proyecto de investigación. La participación en este proyecto es su elección. Por favor, lea sobre el proyecto a continuación. Por favor, lea la siguiente información y haga preguntas sobre cualquier cosa. Una persona relacionada con la investigación van a estar para responder a sus preguntas.

Título oficial del estudio: Escuelas Charter y Colegios Comunitarios: ¿Cómo definen los educadores acceso a la universidad para los estudiantes afro-americanos y latinos?

EQUIPO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Investigador:

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Ubicación Estudio (s): Central Charter High School

¿Qué es este proyecto?

Este proyecto estudia cómo los funcionarios escolares en las escuelas autónomas preparan a los estudiantes para la vida después de la escuela para estudiantes afro-americanos y latinos, más importante en la forma en que se les da información acerca de los colegios comunitarios. Quieren ver si le gustaría estar en este proyecto para que pueda ser parte de formas de ayudar a la conciencia colegio comunitario.

¿CUÁLES SON LOS POSIBLES RIESGOS O MOLESTIAS DE ESTAR EN ESTE PROYECTO?

Estas cosas sucederán si desea participar en el estudio:

1. Va a participar en una entrevista personal.
2. Va a ser de audio grabado para que toda la información que usted comparte serán correctas.
3. Su nombre no será mencionado y se cambiará durante el proyecto.
4. Es posible que se aburren
5. Usted podría estar avergonzado de compartir información
6. Usted podría estar preocupado de compartir información.

¿A QUIEN SE LE DIRA LAS COSAS QUE OBTENEMOS DE USTED EN ESTE PROYECTO?

No vamos a decirle a nadie lo que usted nos dice en este estudio sin su permiso. Pero, si usted nos dice que usted está en peligro, o que alguien está o ha estado haciendo daño, tal vez tengamos que decir que a las personas que se encargan de proteger a los niños. Ellos se asegurarán de que está a salvo.

Reporte Obligatorio

Bajo la ley de California, se requiere que el investigador a denunciar los incidentes que se sabe o se sospecha razonable de abuso o negligencia de un niño, adulto o anciano dependiente, incluyendo, pero no limitado a, el abuso o el descuido físico, sexual, emocional y financiero. Si cualquier investigador tiene o se le da esa información, que puede ser necesaria para informar de ello a las autoridades.

BENEFICIOS DEL PROYECTO PARA USTED Y OTROS

Este estudio será un posible beneficio para la sociedad, sobre las escuelas autónomas, acceso a la universidad y los colegios comunitarios para estudiantes latinos o afro-americanos. El estudio proporcionará información sobre las escuelas charter y acceso a la universidad de la comunidad. Usted no puede beneficiarse directamente del estudio, sin embargo el personal de la escuela pueden ajustar su curriculum de el conocimiento universitario con garantizar que todos los estudiantes reciban información adecuada sobre todas sus opciones después de la secundaria. Este estudio también proporcionará información sobre cómo las escuelas charter, una nueva reforma de la educación, definen acceso a la universidad para los estudiantes bajo representados.

¿TIENE ALGUNA PREGUNTA SOBRE EL PROYECTO?

Usted puede hacer preguntas en cualquier momento. Usted puede hablar con los investigadores, su familia u otra persona a cargo, antes de decidir si desea participar. Si decide participar, se puede cambiar de opinión y retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin penalización alguna. Si usted tiene preguntas sobre el estudio por favor un miembro del equipo de investigación que aparece en la primera página de este formulario de contacto.

Si tiene alguna inquietud o queja sobre el estudio de investigación, el equipo de investigación, o preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en la investigación, por favor póngase en contacto con Investigación y Proyectos Patrocinados, 18111 Nordhoff Street Northridge, CA 91330-8232, o por teléfono 818-677-2901.

Si desea participar en el estudio firme su nombre a continuación.

Firma del Adolescente

Edad y Fecha

Firma del Investigador

Edad y Fecha

**Firma de la persona que obtiene la sanción
Si es diferente del investigador**

Edad y Fecha

Appendix C

California State University, Northridge CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

“The Charter School to Community College Pipeline: Examining the College Access for African American and Latina/o students”

You are being asked to participate in a research study “The Charter School to Community College Pipeline: Examining the College Access for African American and Latina/o students” a study conducted by Stephanie Nunez as part of the requirements for the Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at California State University, Northridge. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:

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PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this case study is to examine how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students and how that definition impacts their education. More specifically, how is college access defined for those students who choose to attend community college.

SUBJECTS

Inclusion Requirements

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are a Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor, or teacher at Central Charter High School.

Exclusion Requirements

You are not eligible to participate in this study if you do not currently work for Central Charter High School, or do not hold the position of Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor, or Teacher.

Time Commitment

This study will involve approximately 1 hour of your time.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will occur: Before you begin the study you will be provided with a consent form. You will participate in a personal one-on-one interview that will be audio recorded or an observation that will not be audio recorded. Audio recording is necessary in order to ensure that all information that you share in your interview is being captured correctly.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include: embarrassment, and emotional distress.

BENEFITS

Subject Benefits

You will not directly benefit from participation in this study

Benefits to Others or Society

This study will be a possible benefit to society by providing information about charter schools, college access and community colleges for African American and Latina/o students. The study will provide insight into charter schools and community college access. While you may not directly benefit from the study, the school personnel may adjust their college knowledge curriculum in order to ensure that all students are receiving adequate information regarding all of their options after high school. This study will also provide insight into how charter schools, a new education reform, are defining college access for under represented students.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation for Participation

No compensation will be provided.

Costs

There is no cost to you for participation in this study.

Reimbursement

You will not be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses, such as parking or transportation fees.

WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. **If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the research team immediately.** The research team may also end your participation in this study if you do not follow instructions, miss scheduled visits, or if your safety and welfare are at risk.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Every effort will be taken to ensure your confidentiality as a participant in this study. No identifying information will be used, and your institution and/or program will not be identified by name in any published report.

Identifiable information obtained will be stored in a password locked computer, external flash drive and “identifiable data” file cabinet. For example, recorded interviews will be downloaded onto a computer and stored in a locked file that will require a password in order to access it. Identifiable audio-recordings collected will be transcribed and saved onto an external flash drive in a separate file cabinet and will be destroyed when I finish transcribing interviews. After interviews and observations are transcribed, all identifiable information collected will be removed and replaced with a pseudonym. Other identifiable information, such as field notes, adult consent forms, Bill of Rights forms, will be stored in the identifiable cabinet that requires a key to unlock. Those identifiable documents will be destroyed after 5 years of obtaining the information.

De-identifiable data that has been placed with pseudonyms will be kept in another external flash drive, which will be kept in a file cabinet specifically for de-identifiable data.

The researcher, Stephanie Nunez, and faculty advisor, Dimpal Jain, will have access to the study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies participants will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about the participant.

Data Storage

(1)The audio recordings will be stored in a secure computer with password protection; then

the interviews will be transcribed. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription. Transcribed interviews will be stored the external flash drive that is specified for identifiable data. Once the identifiable data is replaced with pseudonyms, those transcriptions will be saved onto the external flash drive that is designated for de-identifiable data.

(2) Any data that is printed will be kept in secured file cabinets that are locked under key. Both identifiable data and de-identifiable data will be kept in separate cabinets.

The researcher, Stephanie Nunez, and faculty advisor, Dr.Dimpal Jain, will have access to the study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies participants will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about the participant.

Data Retention

- The researchers intend to keep the research data for approximately 5 years and then it will be destroyed.
- The research data will be retained for a period of 5 years in a secure computer with password protection; also in a locked file cabinet.

Under California law, the researcher is required to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information she may be required to report it to the authorities.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you are unable to reach a member of the research team listed on the first page of the form and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

____ I agree to be audio recorded
____ I do not agree to be audio recorded

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Researcher Signature

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix D

California State University, Northridge CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECT STUDENTS

“Charter Schools and Community Colleges: How educators define college access for African American and Latina/o students”

You are being asked to participate in a research study “Charter Schools and Community Colleges: How educators define college access for African American and Latina/o students”, a study conducted by Stephanie Nunez as part of the requirements for the Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at California State University, Northridge. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:

Stephanie Nunez

Department: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

18111 Nordhoff St.

Northridge, CA 91330-8265

(323) 559-7636

snunez23@gmail.com

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Dimpal Jain

Department: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

18111 Nordhoff St.

Northridge, CA 91330-8265

(818) 677-7895

Dimpal.jain@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this case study is to examine how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students and how that definition impacts their education. More specifically, how is college access defined for those students who choose to attend community college.

SUBJECTS

Inclusion Requirements

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are an African American or Latina/o student who attends Central Charter High School, are a senior set to graduate June 2014, and

are eligible to attend a community college and/or a four-year institution.

Exclusion Requirements

You are not eligible to participate in this study if you attend a different charter high school; you are a freshman (9th grade), sophomore (10th grade), or junior (11th grade; and if you are not of African American or Latina/o descent.

Time Commitment

This study will involve approximately 1 hour of your time.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will occur: Before you begin the study you will be provided with a consent form. If you are younger than the age of 18, a parent consent form will be provided for your parents to sign. You will participate in personal interview that will be audio recorded. Audio recording is necessary in order to ensure that all information and your story is being captured correctly.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include: embarrassment, and emotional distress.

BENEFITS

Subject Benefits

You will not directly benefit from participation in this study

Benefits to Others or Society

This study will be a possible benefit to society by providing information about charter schools, college access and community colleges for African American and Latina/o students. The study will provide insight into charter schools and community college access. While you may not directly benefit from the study, the school personnel may adjust their college knowledge curriculum in order to ensure that all students are receiving adequate information regarding all of their options after high school. This study will also provide insight into how charter schools, a new education reform, are defining college access for under represented students.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation for Participation

No compensation will be provided.

Costs

There is no cost to you for participation in this study.

Reimbursement

You will not be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses, such as parking or transportation fees.

WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. **If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the research team immediately.** The research team may also end your participation in this study if you do not follow instructions, miss scheduled visits, or if your safety and welfare are at risk.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Every effort will be taken to ensure your confidentiality as a participant in this study. No identifying information will be used, and your institution and/or program will not be identified by name in any published report.

Identifiable information obtained will be stored in a password locked computer, external flash drive and “identifiable data” file cabinet. For example, recorded interviews will be downloaded onto a computer and stored in a locked file that will require a password in order to access it. Identifiable audio-recordings collected will be transcribed and saved onto an external flash drive in a separate file cabinet and will be destroyed when I finish transcribing interviews. After interviews and observations are transcribed, all identifiable information collected will be removed and replaced with a pseudonym. Other identifiable information, such as field notes, adult consent forms, Bill of Rights forms, will be stored in the identifiable cabinet that requires a key to unlock. Those identifiable documents will be destroyed after 5 years of obtaining the information.

De-identifiable data that has been placed with pseudonyms will be kept in another external flash drive, which will be kept in a file cabinet specifically for de-identifiable data.

The researcher, Stephanie Nunez, and faculty advisor, Dimpal Jain, will have access to the study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies participants will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about the participant.

Data Storage

(1)The audio recordings will be stored in a secure computer with password protection; then the interviews will be transcribed. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription. Transcribed interviews will be stored the external flash drive that is specified for identifiable data. Once the identifiable data is replaced with pseudonyms, those transcriptions will be saved onto the external flash drive that is designated for de-identifiable data.

(2) Any data that is printed will be kept in secured file cabinets that are locked under key. Both identifiable data and de-identifiable data will be kept in separate cabinets.

The researcher, Stephanie Nunez, and faculty advisor, Dr.Dimpal Jain, will have access to the study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies participants will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about the participant.

Data Access

The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you.

Data Retention

- The researchers intend to keep the research data for approximately 5 years and then it will be destroyed.
- The research data will be retained for a period of 5 years in a secure computer with password protection; also in a locked file cabinet.

Under California law, the researcher is required to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information she may be required to report it to the authorities.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you are unable to reach a member of the research team listed on the first page of the form and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research

and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

- I agree to be audio recorded
- I do not agree to be audio recorded

_____	_____
Participant Signature	Date

Printed Name of Participant	
_____	_____
Researcher Signature	Date

Printed Name of Research	

Appendix E

California State University, Northridge PARENTAL CONSENT FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

“Charter Schools and Community Colleges: How educators define college access for African American and Latina/o students”

You are being asked to consent for your child to participate in a research study “Charter Schools and Community Colleges: How educators define college access for African American and Latina/o students”, a study conducted by Stephanie Nunez as part of the requirements for the Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership at California State University, Northridge. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to allow your child to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

Researcher:

Stephanie Nunez
Department: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
(323) 559-7636
snunez23@gmail.com

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Dimpal Jain
Department: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
18111 Nordhoff St.
Northridge, CA 91330-8265
(818)677-7895
Dimpal.jain@csun.edu

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this case study is to examine how charter school personnel define college access for African American and Latina/o students and how that definition impacts their education. More specifically, how is college access defined for those students who choose to attend community college.

SUBJECTS

Inclusion Requirements

Your child is eligible to participate in this study if he/she is an African American or Latina/o student who attends Central Charter High School, is a senior set to graduate June 2014, and is

eligible to attend a community college and/or a four-year institution.

Exclusion Requirements

Your child is not eligible to participate in this study if he/she attends a different charter high school; he/she is a freshman (9th grade), sophomore (10th grade), or junior (11th grade; and if he/she is not of African American or Latina/o descent.

Time Commitment

This study will involve approximately 1 hour of your child's time.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will occur: Before your child begins the study he/she will be provided with a consent form. Students will participate in personal, one-on-one interviews that will be audio recorded. Audio recording is necessary in order to ensure that all information and your child's story is being captured correctly.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The possible risks and/or discomforts associated with the procedures described in this study include: embarrassment, and emotional distress.

BENEFITS

Subject Benefits

Your child will not directly benefit from this study.

Benefits to Others or Society

This study will be a possible benefit to society by providing information about charter schools, college access and community colleges for African American and Latina/o students. The study will provide insight into charter schools and community college access. While your child may not directly benefit from the study, the school personnel may adjust their college knowledge curriculum in order to ensure that all students are receiving adequate information regarding all of their options after high school. This study will also provide insight into how charter schools, a new education reform, are defining college access for under represented students.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation for Participation

Your child will not be paid for his/her participation in this research study.

Costs

There is no cost to you for your child's participation in this study.

Reimbursement

You will not be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses, such as parking or transportation fees.

WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES

You are free to withdraw your child from this study at any time. **If you decide to withdraw your child from this study you should notify the research team immediately.** The research team may also end your child's participation in this study if he/she does not follow instructions, misses scheduled visits, or if his/her safety and welfare are at risk.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Every effort will be taken to ensure your confidentiality as a participant in this study. No identifying information will be used, and your institution and/or program will not be identified by name in any published report.

Identifiable information obtained will be stored in a password locked computer, external flash drive and "identifiable data" file cabinet. For example, recorded interviews will be downloaded onto a computer and stored in a locked file that will require a password in order to access it. Identifiable audio-recordings collected will be transcribed and saved onto an external flash drive in a separate file cabinet and will be destroyed when I finish transcribing interviews. After interviews and observations are transcribed, all identifiable information collected will be removed and replaced with a pseudonym. Other identifiable information, such as field notes, adult consent forms, Bill of Rights forms, will be stored in the identifiable cabinet that requires a key to unlock. Those identifiable documents will be destroyed after 5 years of obtaining the information.

De-identifiable data that has been placed with pseudonyms will be kept in another external flash drive, which will be kept in a file cabinet specifically for de-identifiable data.

The researcher, Stephanie Nunez, and faculty advisor, Dimpal Jain, will have access to the study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies participants will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about the participant.

Data Storage

(1)The audio recordings will be stored in a secure computer with password protection; then the interviews will be transcribed. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription. Transcribed interviews will be stored the external flash drive that is specified for identifiable data. Once the identifiable data is replaced with pseudonyms, those transcriptions will be saved onto the external flash drive that is designated for de-identifiable data.

(2) Any data that is printed will be kept in secured file cabinets that are locked under key. Both identifiable data and de-identifiable data will be kept in separate cabinets.

The researcher, Stephanie Nunez, and faculty advisor, Dr.Dimpal Jain, will have access to the study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies participants will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about the participant.

Data Access

The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to your child's study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies your child will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about your child.

Data Retention

- The researchers intend to keep the research data for approximately 5 years and then it will be destroyed.
- The research data will be retained for a period of 5 years in a secure computer with password protection; also in a locked file cabinet.

Under California law, the researcher is required to report known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information she may be required to report it to the authorities.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you are unable to reach a member of the research team listed on the first page of the form and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** Your child may refuse to answer any question or discontinue his/her involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you and your child might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

If your child is 9 years of age or older he/she will be provided with an assent form that explains the study in language understandable to a child. A member of the research team will also read the form to your child and answer any questions your child may have. Your child will be asked to sign the form only if he/she agrees to be in the study. If your child does not wish to be in the study he/she will not be asked to sign the form. In addition, if after signing the assent form your child changes his/her mind your child is free to discontinue his/her participation at any time.

If your child is younger than 9 years then an assent form will not be provided, but a member of the research team will explain the study to your child and ask your child whether or not he/she wishes to participate. If your child declines to participate then your child will not be included in the study. Additionally, if your child says yes and declines later your child will be withdrawn from the study at his/her request.

I agree to allow my child to participate in the study.

- I agree to be audio recorded
 I do not agree to be audio recorded

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Researcher Signature

Date

Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix F

Universidad Estatal de California, Northridge

CONSENTIMIENTO DEL ADOLESCENTE PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACION HUMANA - PADRE

" El Movimiento de Escuelas Charter y Colegios Comunitarios: Examinando el acceso a la universidad para los estudiantes afroamericanos y latinos"

Se le pide al consentimiento para que su hijo/a participe en un estudio de investigación llamada " El Movimiento de Escuelas Charter y Colegios Comunitarios: Examinando el acceso a la universidad para los estudiantes afroamericanos y latinos" un estudio realizado por Stephanie Núñez como parte de los requisitos para el Doctorado en Liderazgo Educativo en la Universidad Estatal de California en Northridge. La participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Por favor, lea la siguiente información y haga preguntas sobre cualquier cosa que no entienda antes de decidir que su hijo participe. Una persona relacionada con la investigación estará disponible para responder a sus preguntas.

EQUIPO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Investigador:

Stephanie Núñez

Departamento: Liderazgo Educativo y Estudios Políticos

18111 Nordhoff St.

Northridge, CA 91330-8265

(323) 559-7636

snunez23@gmail.com

Profesor Asesor:

Dr. Jain Dimpal

Departamento: Liderazgo Educativo y Estudios Políticos

18111 Nordhoff St.

Northridge, CA 91330-8265

(818)677-7895

Dimpal.jain @ csun.edu

PROPÓSITO DEL ESTUDIO

El propósito de este estudio es examinar cómo el personal de las escuelas charter definen acceso a la universidad para estudiantes afro-americanos y latinos. Más concretamente, cómo es acceso a la universidad se define para los alumnos que opten asistir a la universidad de la comunidad.

ASIGNATURAS

Requisitos de inclusión

Su hijo es elegible para participar en este estudio si él / ella es un estudiante africano americano o latino que asiste Central Charter High School, es un estudiante de alto nivel para graduarse junio de 2014, y es elegible para asistir a una universidad de la comunidad y/o cuatro años de institución.

Requisitos de exclusión

Su hijo no es elegible para participar en este estudio si él/ella asiste a una escuela secundaria charter diferente, él/ella es un estudiante de primer año (novenno grado), segundo (10 ° grado), o junior (11 ° grado), y si él/ella no es de origen afroamericano o latino.

Compromiso de tiempo

Este estudio incluirá aproximadamente 1 hora de tiempo de su hijo.

PROCEDIMIENTOS

Ocurrirán los siguientes procedimientos: Antes de que su hijo comience el estudio que él / ella se le proporcionará un formulario de consentimiento. Su hijo/a participarán en entrevistas personales, uno-a-uno que se va a grabar por audio. La grabación de audio es necesario para asegurar que toda la información y la historia de su hijo/a está siendo capturado correctamente.

RIESGOS Y MOLESTIAS

Los posibles riesgos y/o molestias asociadas a los procedimientos descritos en este estudio incluyen: la vergüenza y la angustia emocional.

BENEFICIOS

Asunto Beneficios

Su hijo no se beneficiarán directamente de este estudio.

Beneficios para los otros o de la sociedad

Este estudio será un posible beneficio para la sociedad, sobre las escuelas autónomas, acceso a la universidad y los colegios comunitarios para estudiantes latinos o afro-americanos. El estudio proporcionará información sobre las escuelas charter y acceso a la universidad de la comunidad. Su hijo no puede beneficiarse directamente del estudio, sin embargo el personal de la escuela pueden ajustar su curriculum de el conocimiento universitario con garantizar que todos los estudiantes reciban información adecuada sobre todas sus opciones después de la secundaria. Este estudio también proporcionará información sobre cómo las escuelas charter, una nueva reforma de la educación, definen acceso a la universidad para los estudiantes bajo representados.

COMPENSACIÓN, COSTOS Y REEMBOLSO

Compensación para la Participación

No se le pagará a usted ni a su hijo/a por su participación en este estudio de investigación.

Costos

No hay costo para la participación de su hijo en este estudio.

Reembolso

Usted no será reembolsado por cualquier gastos, tales como aparcamiento o transporte.

RETIRO O TERMINACION DEL ESTUDIO Y CONSECUENCIAS

Usted es libre de retirar a su hijo/a de este estudio en cualquier momento. Si usted decide retirar a su hijo/a de este estudio usted debe notificar al equipo de investigación en inmediato. El equipo de investigación también puede terminar la participación de su hijo/a en este estudio si él/ella no sigue las instrucciones, se pierde visitas programadas, o si su seguridad y bienestar están en riesgo.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD

Información sujeta identificables

Cualquier información que se obtiene en relación con este estudio y que se puede identificar con usted, se mantendrá confidencial y será compartida solamente con su permiso o de lo requerido por la ley. Se hacen todos los esfuerzos para asegurar su confidencialidad como participante en este estudio. No información de identificación será utilizado , y no será identificado por su nombre en ningún informe publicado.

La información identificable obtenida se guardara en una computadora segura, un unidad flash externo y un gabinete de archivo marcado " datos identificable" . Por ejemplo, las entrevistas grabadas seran bajadas a una computadora segura y guardadas en un gabinete . Grabaciones identificables serán transcritas y se guardaran en una memoria externa y en un archivador separado. Esas transcritas serán destruidos cuando termine la transcripción de las entrevistas. Después que las entrevistas y observaciones sean transcritos, toda la información identificable será eliminado y reemplazado con un seudónimo . Otros datos de identificación ,tales como notas de campo , formularios de consentimiento para adultos, formas "Bill of Rights", se almacenará en el gabinete de identificación que requiere una llave para abrir . Esos documentos identificables serán destruidos después de 5 años de la obtención de la información.

Los datos identificables que han sido colocados con seudónimos se mantendrán en otra unidad de flash externa , que se mantuvo en un archivador específicamente para los datos de-

identificables.

La investigadora , Stephanie Núñez, y su profesora Dimpal Jain, tendrán acceso a los registros del estudio . Toda la información derivada de este proyecto de investigación que identifica personalmente a los participantes no se entregará voluntariamente o revelada sin el consentimiento de los participantes, salvo lo específicamente requerido por ley . Publicaciones y / o presentaciones que se derivan de este estudio no incluirá información de identificación sobre el participante .

Almacenamiento de Datos

(1) Las grabaciones de audio se guardaran en un ordenador seguro con protección de contraseña y, a continuación se transcriben las entrevistas. Las grabaciones de audio se destruirán después de la transcripción . Entrevistas transcritas serán guardados en la unidad flash externo que se ha especificado para los datos de identificación . Los datos de identificación se reemplaza con seudónimos , los transcripciones se guardarán en la unidad de flash externo que se designa a los datos de- identificables.

(2) Los datos que se imprimirán serán guardados en archivadores garantizados que están encerrados bajo llave. Tanto los datos de identificación y los datos de- identificables serán guardados en armarios separados.

La investigadora, Stephanie Núñez, y consejera de la facultad , Dr.Dimpal Jain, tendrán acceso a los registros del estudio . Toda la información derivada de este proyecto de investigación que identifica personalmente a los participantes no se entregará voluntariamente o revelada sin su consentimiento, excepto cuando sea requerido específicamente por la ley. Publicaciones y / o presentaciones que se derivan de este estudio no incluirá información de identificación sobre el participante .

SI TIENE PREGUNTAS

Si usted tiene algún comentario, duda o formular preguntas acerca de la conducta de esta investigación, por favor póngase en contacto con el equipo de investigación que aparece en la primera página de este formulario.

Si no logran llegar a un miembro del equipo de investigación que aparece en la primera página del formulario y tiene preguntas generales, o si tiene preocupaciones o quejas sobre el estudio de investigación, el equipo de investigación, o preguntas sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, por favor póngase en contacto con Investigación y Proyectos Patrocinados, 18111 Nordhoff Street, la Universidad Estatal de California, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330, o el teléfono 818-677-2901.

DECLARACIÓN DE PARTICIPACIÓN VOLUNTARIA

Usted no debe firmar este formulario a menos que haya leído y recibido una copia de la misma para mantener. La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Su niño puede negarse a contestar cualquier pregunta o interrumpir su participación en cualquier momento sin sanción

o pérdida de beneficios a los que usted y su hijo pudiera corresponderles. Su decisión no afectará su relación con la Universidad Estatal de California en Northridge. Su firma indica que usted ha leído la información de este formulario de consentimiento y ha tenido la oportunidad de formular todas las preguntas que usted tenga sobre el estudio.

Si su hijo tiene 9 años de edad o más que él / ella se le proporcionará un formulario de consentimiento que explica el estudio en un lenguaje comprensible para un niño. Un miembro del equipo de investigación también leerá el formulario a su hijo y responder a cualquier pregunta que su hijo pueda tener. Se pedirá a su hijo que firme el formulario sólo si él / ella está de acuerdo en participar en el estudio. Si su hijo no quiere estar en el estudio que él / ella no se le pedirá que firme el formulario. Además, si después de haber firmado el formulario de consentimiento a su hijo cambia su / su mente que su hijo tiene la libertad de dejar su / su participación en cualquier momento.

Si su hijo es menor de 9 años que no se le proporcionará un formulario de consentimiento, pero un miembro del equipo de investigación le explicará el estudio para su hijo y pídale a su niño si él / ella desea participar. Si su hijo se niega a participar, entonces su hijo no se incluyeron en el estudio. Además, si su hijo le dice que sí y luego declina su hijo será retirado del estudio en su / su solicitud.

Estoy de acuerdo en participar en el estudio.

- Estoy de acuerdo en que el audio grabado
 No estoy de acuerdo que el audio grabado

Firma del Sujeto

Fecha

Nombre del Sujeto

Fecha

Firma del Investigador

Fecha

Nombre del Investigador

Fecha

Appendix G

EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS BILL OF RIGHTS

The rights below are the rights of every person who is asked to be in a research study. As an experimental subject I have the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is trying to find out,
2. To be told what will happen to me and whether any of the procedures, drugs, or devices is different from what would be used in standard practice,
3. To be told about the frequent and/or important risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that will happen to me for research purposes,
4. To be told if I can expect any benefit from participating, and, if so, what the benefit might be,
5. To be told the other choices I have and how they may be better or worse than being in the study,
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study,
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment (if needed) is available if any complications arise,
8. To refuse to participate at all or to change my mind about participation after the study is started. This decision will not affect my right to receive the care I would receive if I were not in the study.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressure when considering whether I wish to agree to be in the study.

If I have other questions I should ask the researcher or the research assistant, or contact Research and Sponsored Projects, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone (818) 677-2901.

X

Signature of Participant

Date

Appendix H

Sujetos Experimentales Declaración de Derechos

Los derechos que a continuación se mencionan, son los derechos de cada persona que participa en esta investigación. Toda persona al participar en estos estudios, tiene derecho:

1. A saber que es lo que el estudio esta tratando de investigar,
2. A estar informado de lo que sucederá, los procedimientos, los medicamentos, y los dispositivos, sean ó no diferentes a los utilizados en un procedimiento normal,
3. A saber la frecuencia y/ó el grado de riesgo, efectos secundarios, ó incomodidades que sucederan en el transcurso de la investigación,
4. A saber si hay algún beneficio al participar en el estudio, y cual sería ese beneficio,
5. A saber si existen otras alternativas que puedan ser mejores ó peores que, participar en esta investigación,
6. A que se le permita hacer preguntas antes de participar en el estudio, al igual que en el transcurso del mismo,
7. A saber que tipo de tratamiento médico (si es necesario) está disponible en caso de que ocurran complicaciones,
8. A renunciar a la participación en el estudio, aún cuando ya haya comenzado. Cualquier cambio de decisión no afectará el derecho a recibir la atención que se proveya al no ser parte de esta investigación,
9. A recibir una copia firmada y fechada de la hoja donde se autorizó la participación,
10. A estar libre de cualquier presión al decidir si quiere ó no participar en el estudio.

En caso de tener preguntas, puede comunicarse con el investigador, el asistente de investigación, ó a la oficina de Research & Sponsored Projects, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street, Northridge, CA 91330-8232 ó al teléfono (818) 677-2901

x _____
Firma del participante

Fecha

Appendix I
Research Invitation

Dear School Personnel/Student,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a dissertation study that I am conducting as a doctoral candidate at California State University, Northridge in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. My study explores charter school personnel, college access and community colleges for African American and Latina/o students.

As part of the study, I will conduct confidential, personal one-on-one interviews and observations with school personnel and students in order to obtain their experiences about college access and community college, while working at or attending a charter high school. Each interview should be approximately sixty minutes in length. Responses used in the dissertation will be confidential, and your name will not appear in the study.

If you would like to participate, please contact me at snunez23@gmail.com or (323) 559-7636. Participation in the study is voluntary, and the decision to participate or not participate will not affect your standing at the school.

Thank you,

Stephanie Nunez

Appendix J

Invitación para Participar en una Investigación

Querido personal de la escuela / estudiante ,

Me dirijo a usted para invitarlo/a a participar en mi estudio de tesis doctoral que estoy realizando como candidato doctoral en California State University, Northridge. El propósito de esta investigación es examinar el personal de la escuela charter, acceso a la universidad y los colegios comunitarios para estudiantes afroamericanos y latinos.

Como parte del estudio, la entrevista de el personal y estudiante se llevará acabo confidencialmente y de persona-a-personam y observacion para obtener sus experiencias sobre el acceso a la universidad y el colegio de la comunidad. Cada entrevista durará aproximadamente sesenta minutos. Las respuestas se utilizarán en la tesis doctoral y se mantendran confidencialmente y su nombre no aparecerá en el estudio.

Si desea participar, por favor comuníquese conmigo al snunez23@gmail.com o (323)559-7636. La participación en el estudio es voluntaria y la decisión de participar o no participar no afectará su situación en la escuela secundaria charter.

Muchas Gracias,

Stephanie Nunez

Appendix K

Student Interview Protocol

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I'd like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research.

Purpose of the interview:

As we discussed, this interview is a one-on-one interview intended to collect information for a research study that explores college access for under represented students in charter schools, specifically looking at community colleges. During this interview, we will talk about your experiences at a charter school and attitudes about the access that is being disseminated towards your students.

Confidentiality:

Any information that you share with me today will be used for research purposes only. Personally identifiable characteristics, such as your name and school, will not be used to identify you in any report or document. Today's interview session will be audio-recorded. I will also be taking notes of the conversation. The audio recordings may be transcribed for analysis. The audio recorded file, transcribed file, and notes will be stored securely in a password-protected laptop of the principle investigator until completion of interview analysis. Upon completion of analysis, files and notes will be destroyed. Only the researchers identified in the Consent to Participate will have access to the files and notes. The files and notes will be accessed and analyzed in strict confidentiality. Finally your name or personally identifying information will not be used in any published or public reports.

Informed consent:

This consent notice summarizes information from the Consent to Participate in Research and communicates the procedures, potential risks and discomforts for participants, potential benefits to participants, payment to participants for participation, participation and withdrawal, and rights of research participants. Procedures in this interview are limited to semi-structured personal interview sessions. Because the study deals with issues that are sensitive, some interview questions may involve issues of a personal nature. You may feel uneasy about answering some of these interview questions. You may elect not to answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy and still remain as a participant in the study. You may not benefit personally from your participation in this study. However, findings from this study may provide insights into college access, charter schools and community colleges, and may contribute to our knowledge on the subject. Interview participants will not be paid for their participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any question or to discuss anything that you are not inclined to answer or discuss. You can skip any question, or any part of any question, and will not face any penalty for answering, or not answering, any question in any way. You may ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time

and/or may leave the interview at any time for any reason without consequences of any kind. You may withdraw consent at any time and discontinue participation without interview. You can halt your participation in the interview at any time. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this interview.

Identification and contact information of principal investigator:

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about this research and your participation in this study, you may contact the following: Stephanie Nunez via email at snunez23@gmail.com or telephone at (323) 559-7636. In addition, you may contact the following: Dr. Dimpal Jain via email at dimpal.jain@csun.edu or office telephone at (818) 677-7895.

Timing:

Today's interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

II. Interview Session

Main Questions:

1. How would you define yourself if someone were to ask you what your ethnicity is?
How do you racially/ethnically identify?
 - a. Do you teachers/counselors/administrators identify you in this way?
2. How would you describe your academic experience related to college advising while attending this school?
3. How would you describe the faculty and staff?
4. Is there one faculty or staff member in particular that has made an impact on you?
5. How would you describe the word "college"?
 - a. What colleges are you interested in attending? Why?
 - b. How do you think charter school personnel view community colleges?
6. How would you define college culture?
 - a. How would you define the college culture at your school?
 - b. What are some ways in which the faculty and staff have shown college spirit?
7. Describe your college knowledge class.
8. Do you feel that you are prepared to go through the college application process? Why or why not? How, if at all, do you receive information about the community college application process?
9. Do you feel as though everyone at your school has the same college opportunities?
10. Describe the person who has been the most helpful to you in regards to college information.
11. What are some programs that you are a part of at the school?
12. What are some ideas that you have that can help Latina/o / African American 9th-11th graders learn more about college?

Closing Questions:

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help us examine these issues.

Before I end today, is there anything that I missed?

Do you have anything else to add at this time?

Have you said everything that you wanted to say but didn't get a chance to say?

Have you shared everything that is significant about these experiences with me?

If there's anything else that you recall after our interview session, I invite you to share it by contacting me.

III. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing

Thank you for participating in today's interview session. I greatly appreciate you taking the time and sharing your ideas with me. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?

Appendix L

School Personnel Interview Protocol

I. Pre-interview Session: Introduction/Background

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I'd like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research.

Purpose of the interview:

As we discussed, this interview is a one-on-one interview intended to collect information for a research study that explores college access for under represented students in charter schools, specifically looking at community colleges. During this interview, we will talk about your experiences at a charter school and attitudes about the access that is being disseminated towards your students.

Confidentiality:

Any information that you share with me today will be used for research purposes only. Personally identifiable characteristics, such as your name and school, will not be used to identify you in any report or document. Today's interview session will be audio-recorded. I will also be taking notes of the conversation. The audio recordings may be transcribed for analysis. The audio recorded file, transcribed file, and notes will be stored securely in a password-protected laptop of the principle investigator until completion of interview analysis. Upon completion of analysis, files and notes will be destroyed. Only the researchers identified in the Consent to Participate will have access to the files and notes. The files and notes will be accessed and analyzed in strict confidentiality. Finally your name or personally identifying information will not be used in any published or public reports.

Informed consent:

This consent notice summarizes information from the Consent to Participate in Research and communicates the procedures, potential risks and discomforts for participants, potential benefits, payment for participation, participation and withdrawal, and the rights of research participants. Procedures in this interview are limited to semi-structured personal interview sessions. Because the study deals with issues that are sensitive, some interview questions may involve issues of a personal nature. You may feel uneasy about answering some of these interview questions. You may elect not to answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy and still remain as a participant in the study. You may not benefit personally from your participation in this study. However, findings from this study may provide insights into college access, charter schools and community colleges, and may contribute to our knowledge on the subject. Interview participants will not be paid for their participation in this interview. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any question or to discuss anything that you are not inclined to answer or discuss. You can skip any question, or any part of any question, and will not face any penalty for answering, or not answering, any question in any way. You may ask that the audio recording be stopped at any time and/or may leave the interview at

any time for any reason without consequences of any kind. You may withdraw consent at any time and discontinue participation without interviewing. You can halt your participation in the interview at any time. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this interview.

Identification and contact information of principal investigator:

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about this research and your participation in this study, you may contact the following: Stephanie Nunez via email at snunez23@gmail.com or telephone at (323) 559-7636. In addition, you may contact the faculty member supervising this research at: Dr. Dimpal Jain via email at dimpal.jain@csun.edu or office telephone at (818) 677-7895.

Timing:

Today’s interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

II. Interview Session

Main Questions:

1. How would you define the term “college culture?”
2. How would you describe the college culture at your school?
 - a. What are some ways in which you have seen this in your colleagues?
 - b. What are some ways in which students have displayed this?
 - c. How, if at all, is this different than a “traditional” high school?
3. How would you describe the college knowledge lessons at your school?
 - a. Do you feel that they entail enough information for students to make a solid choice for college? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you feel that the lessons are beneficial to your students?
 - c. How prepared do you feel you are in order to disseminate this information to your students?
4. What is the college application process at your school?
5. How would you describe how prepared your students are for attending a four-year school?
 - a. Where did this preparation come from?
6. What are your views on community colleges?
 - a. What are your students’ views on community colleges?
 - b. Do you consider community colleges as part of a college access plan?
7. How was your personal college application experience?
 - a. How long ago did you go through the application process and attend college?
 - b. Did you feel that you had enough information to make a decision?
 - c. How does that affect the way that you help your students?
8. How would you describe the diversity at your school?
9. How would you describe the academic experience of African American students?

10. Do you believe that African American students experience the college culture differently or the same from other students at the school? Why or why not?
 - a. How would you describe their college application process?
11. How would you describe the academic experience of your Latina/o students?
12. Do you believe that Latina/o students experience the college culture differently or the same from other students at the school? Why or why not?
 - a. How would you describe their college application process?
13. How much do you feel your students can benefit from a four-year college?
 - a. What about a community college?
14. What are some programs that students are provided with in regarding college?
 - a. What are some ways in which you incorporate parents?
15. How do you think students can make more informed decisions about attending college?
 - a. What are some ways that your school personnel can aide in this?
16. What do you hope to do differently in order to help your students make an informed decision about their college choice?
17. What ideas do you have for improving your students' knowledge on community colleges and four-year schools?
18. How does your role as charter school personnel shape how you define college access?
19. How does the mission of charter schools impact how you advise students regarding college choice?
20. What are the perceptions of community colleges in this school? How do other personnel view African American/Latina/o students who opt to attend a community college post graduation?

Closing Questions:

I would like to give you a final opportunity to help us examine these issues.

Before I end today, is there anything that I missed?

Do you have anything else to add at this time?

Have you said everything that you wanted to say but didn't get a chance to say?

Have you shared everything that is significant about these experiences with me?

If there's anything else that you recall after our interview session, I invite you to share it by contacting me.

III. Post-Interview Session: Debriefing and Closing

Thank you for participating in today's interview session. I greatly appreciate you taking the time and sharing your ideas with me. I also want to restate that what you have shared with me is confidential. No part of our discussion that includes names or other identifiable characteristics will be used in any report or document. Finally, I want to provide you with a chance to ask any questions that you might have about this interview. Do you have any questions at this time?