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Hope as Strategy:

Initial Actions in Reforming a District's Course of Study to Clarify Pathway.

An Action Research Special Interest Group Paper

American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting 2018

By

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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

April 2018

ABSTRACT

There is a growing body of literature on the application of Hope Theory (HT; Snyder, 2002) to advance student achievement in schools. The purpose of this multi-cycle, mixed-methods, action research study was to continue exploratory investigations on *positive goal formation* and examine a district-wide innovation to reduce *pathway complexity*. Qualitative methods included document analysis and interviews of district officials and a school site principal ($n = 4$). Quantitative methods were utilized to examine the district Course of Study. Results included four qualitative themes and a reduction in systems complexity. Scientific significance included how practitioners can utilize action research and theoretical frameworks at the district level as means of organizational improvement in the pursuit of educational excellence for all students.

Objectives and Purpose

Action research (AR) is a reflexive and cyclical process (Branbury, 2015; Mertler, 2014). This study built upon my previous cycles of AR and studied the introduction of my first district level innovation to clarify pathway as an aspect of Hope Theory (HT; Snyder, 2002). In my reconnaissance cycle, I conducted document analysis of district and state documents and found that course offerings and policies may not meet the intent of the district strategic plan. In Cycle 0, I continued my document analysis and conducted interviews to identify problems of practice for future cycles of AR. In this cycle, my study had four primary objectives: (a) to extend my exploratory critical inquiry; (b) to introduce Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a communication strategy for change; (c) to utilize quantitative techniques to support a reduction in systems complexity; and (d) to inform future cycles of my AR.

Purpose and positionality. The purpose of my Cycle 1 was to address a practical problem of practice while extending my exploratory critical inquiry. *The problem of practice was that systems complexity at the district level may have been obscuring a clear pathway to post-secondary success and preparation for college and career.* I found that the Course of Study (CoS) had not been updated in over a decade (USD CoS, 2015) and therefore had information that may have been obscuring the HT concept of *pathway*. In California, the CoS is a legal document containing all course offerings and sequencing of the district (CA EDC § 51040, 2016). Outdated information may lead to systems complexity resulting in scheduling and reporting errors with in the student information systems. In this study, I was a district executive overseeing educational innovations and reported directly to the superintendent (USD Report Chart, 2016). In meeting with the superintendent, it was agreed that the CoS would be the focus of an innovation for this research cycle.

The innovation. The introduction of an innovation has been described as a communications process (Hall & Hord, 2015; Rogers 2003). To reform the secondary school CoS, I established a Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC; $n = 10$) under my direction. My CAC was a governance structure that was charged with overseeing all aspects of the CoS. I utilized a PAR format with the CAC to increase communication structures. This innovation was implemented to clarify elements of pathway (Snyder, 2002). The CAC conducted an audit and review of the CoS to recommend initial and follow-up actions.

Research Questions. I developed two research questions for my study. The first question was in support of my ongoing critical inquiry and the second was developed to examine the actions of the CAC.

RQ 1: What were the perceptions of post-secondary student preparedness as expressed through graduation requirements?

RQ 2: How, and to what extent, might the CoS be a barrier to establishing pathway?

Theoretical Perspective and Framework

Theories may be mental models that guide our assumptions and influence our data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A theoretical perspective is a philosophical disposition that guides the logic and assumption of the researcher (Crotty, 1998). The theoretical perspective should align with the methodology, methods, and research questions (Koro-Ljungberg, Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009; Crotty, 1998). I have summarized my theoretical alignment guiding my study in Table 1 (see Appendix A).

To examine the complexity of the systems we are subjected to, I adopted Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST; 1994; 1977) for this study. As a model of child and human development, EST has been widely used in studying learning environments (Burns, Warmbold, & Zaslofsky, 2015; Wicks & Warren, 2013; Brendtro, 2006). In EST, there are five nested systems that are situated in proximal processes to the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; 1977). From innermost to outermost these are *microsystems*, *mesosystems*, *exosystems*, *macrosystems*, and *chronosystems* (Appendix B).

Hope has been described as an ontological requirement for educators working in communities of poverty (Freire, 2014; 2011). There is a growing body of research that suggests that hope is an important factor in student academic achievement (McCoy & Bowen, 2015; Lopez, 2013; Webb, 2013; Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Lopez & Calderon, 2011; Duncan-Andrade, 2009). However, hope on its own does not provide a mechanism for praxis (Freire, 2011; 1970). Hope Theory (HT, Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon 2005) is the operationalization of hope. HT has three interacting elements: (a) *goal* setting, (b) *pathway* thinking, and (c) *agency* thinking (Appendix C).

My theoretical model of how HT may interact with EST is summarized in Table 2 (see Appendix D). I argue that HT holds promise in navigating EST to break cycles of oppression that are nested and institutionalized within our society. In my model, goal formation may occur and interact with each of the ecological systems. However, sub-goals manifest themselves in different ways in the other system levels. Pathway and agency thinking may also span across EST. From broadly based belief system at the lowest levels of proximal process, to those involved in setting daily goals at the highest levels of proximal process in the classroom, each of the environmental systems have a process for pathway and agency thinking.

Methods and Data Sources

This study was a concurrent multi-strand mixed-methods AR design (Ivankova, 2015). A planning table guided my work (Appendix E). The quantitative portion of this study was conducted on data retrieved from the SIS. Comprehensive high school principals ($n = 3$) were the focus of new interview requests in one participating. For my analysis I added the new interview to those of senior district administrators ($n = 3$) from my cycle 0 study which utilized the same interview questions.

Context, setting, and participants. The Unified School District (USD) of this study was in a metropolitan area in Southern California. It was comprised of 23 schools serving approximately 19,500 students and 2,000 employees (USD Staffing Report, 2015). The district served a student body that was 78% Hispanic/Latina/o, 11% White, 5% Asian, and 4% African American. For the 2015-2016 school year, 81% of students were considered high needs (Dataquest, 2015). American Community Survey (2012) data indicated that 22.5% of the local adult population did not completed high school.

The settings of this AR were the offices and conference of the participants. Participants in the qualitative study ($n = 4$) had high school principal experience. Appendix F outlines the composition of the CAC ($n = 10$). This was a district approved AR study (Appendix G) and participants were paid employees that participated during work hours.

Data sources. Data gathered in an AR study should address a local phenomenon (Creswell, 2015) and be used to initiate change (Miller, 2011). In a concurrent multi-strand mixed methods study, data analysis is conducted separately and then combed to create meta-inferences (Ivankova, 2015). Data collection and analysis was conducted throughout the study.

Validity of findings was increased using member checks, triangulation, and critical friends (Mertler; 2014).

Qualitative data collection consisted of interviews that utilized six questions (Appendix H). I transcribed all interviews ($n = 4$). Data analysis was conducted using a constructivist grounded theory approach (Saldaña, 2016; Charmaz, 2014). I used HyperRESEARCH during initial coding in support of developing analytics memos and axial categories. From these categories I developed themes.

Quantitative data collection to guide the actions of the CAC was extracted from the SIS. This extraction was comprised of 25 variable fields from the 1,750 course numbers within the SIS. Data analysis to guide the actions of the CAC included sorting, duplicate cases reviews, and descriptive statistics (Green & Salkind, 2014). For this study, the CAC used Excel and I used SPSS to validate information.

Results

Analysis of information from the SIS provided insights to guide the actions of the CAC. Sorting the information began with identifying active and inactive courses which I have summarized in Table 4 (see Appendix I). All courses that were found to be inactive were voted for removal from the CoS. Next, data was analyzed of the remaining courses ($n = 987$) to look at course numbers that students had not been enrolled in in the last five years which I have summarized in Table 5 (Appendix J). These courses were examined by a CAC sub-committee and were recommended for removal from the CoS.

Our opening actions recommended the removal of a total of 1,124 course numbers, a reduction of 64.8%. The remaining enrolled active courses ($n = 615$) were analyzed in SPSS for duplicative course names ($n = 78$) and sorted into courses within the grade span 9-12 ($n = 427$). These courses were sorted for college preparatory status ($n = 196$) and then sent for future review by curriculum specialist. The remaining non-college preparatory course numbers ($n = 231$) were to be reviewed by the CAC in a future cycle.

Qualitative data analysis of the interviews ($n = 4$) generated 84 initial gerund codes (Charmaz, 2017). Analytic memos supported the development of six axial codes (Appendix K). Using the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2014) I developed three themes: (a) *current graduation requirements neither align to the intent of the strategic plan of the district nor do they systematically support student post-secondary success*; (b) *district systems and policies can support raising adult school site expectations, but are not a requirement for doing so*; and (c) *the knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential* (Appendix L).

Scholarly Significance

I met my four objectives by: (a) developing three qualitative themes to extend my exploratory critical inquiry; (b) introducing PAR as a communication and change strategy; (c) providing quantitative findings to guide actions; and (d) collecting data to inform future areas for AR. My study suggests three areas for future cycles of AR: (1) the introduction of an innovation to address positive goal setting; (2) an exploratory phase of research to examine agency thinking; and (3) making continued revisions to the CoS to further clarify pathway. Here I argue that this study has three primary areas of scholarly significance: (a) the use of AR and PAR at the district level to implement and guide innovations; (b) practitioner use of theoretical models; and (c) the importance of an aligned theoretical perspective.

In educational setting AR has been represented by scholars as being a means of instructional improvement at the classroom level (Ivankova, 2015; Mertler, 2014; Mills, 2011). This study used AR and PAR as systematic means for organization development at the district level and to communicate changes to stakeholders. The act of initiating a change process may raise the concern levels (Hall & Hord, 2015) within the system. The innovation of the CAC had unanimous agreement for the reduction over 68% of the CoS and provided direction for the remaining courses.

In my study, I proposed a theoretical model whereby HT was utilized as a ground level change theory to span the system theory of EST. In a review of the literature and through theoretical modeling, I created a system that provided an ongoing mechanism to support my AR and guide my actions. The focus of this cycle of action was based upon the HT concept of pathway while my exploratory aspects of AR looked at goal formation and agency thinking. This

created a systematic approach to deconstruct and examine district level barriers to student achievement.

Finally, in this study I have presented an aligned theoretical perspective as recommended by scholars (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009; Crotty, 1998). This philosophical framework aligned with my systems theory of EST, change theory of HT, and my educational philosophy of *Reconstructivism* (Gutek, 2004). This framework provided me with a clear and grounded thought process that focused on the creation of systems that would emphasize a “re-solving” process (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160) while using AR as my method for praxis. In this way, AR provided an apparatus that bridged the two definitions of *ontology*, whereby we can accept our current state as one of *being* (Crotty, 1998) while we engage in praxis (Freire, 2014; 2011) that focuses on *becoming* (Gray, 2013).

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APPENDIX A

THEORETICAL ALIGNMENT OF RESEARCH

Table 1

Theoretical Alignment of my Research

Ontology	Epistemology	Theoretical Perspective	Methodology	Method
Idealism	Subjectivism	Critical Inquiry	Action Research Participatory Action Research	Interviews Document Analysis Field Notes CoS Quantitative Review

Notes. CoS = Course of Study.

APPENDIX B

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY REPRESENTATION

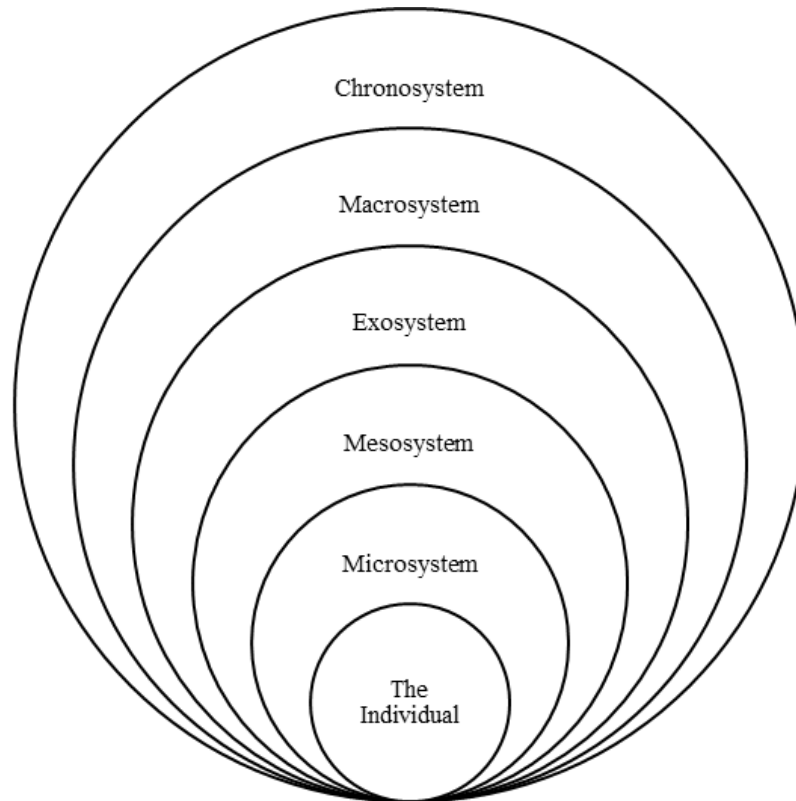


Figure 1. Nested diagram of the five EST environmental systems

APPENDIX B

HOPE THEORY REPRESENTATION

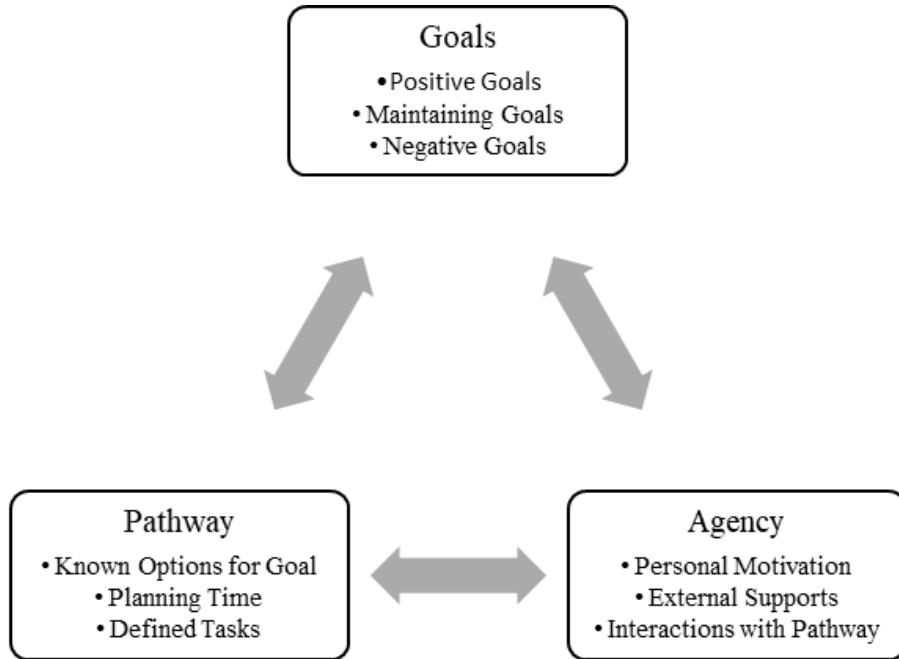


Figure 2. The interactions of Goal, Pathway, and Agency in HT.

APPENDIX D

THEORETICAL MODEL OF HOPE THEORY
TO SPAN ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Table 2

My Theoretical EST and HT Model

Proximal Process	Environmental System	Goal Formation	Pathway/Agency Thinking
Lowest	Chronosystem K-12 Education	High School Graduation	Graduating Knowing What Is Next, Belief in a Better Future
Low	Macrosystem Community Influence	College and/or Career	Knowing the Difference, Commitment to Positive Goal Attainment
Medium	Exosystem District Systems	District Graduation Requirements, School Expectations	Course of Study, Graduation Rates
High	Mesosystem School	Unit Accrual, Grade Point Average	Course Choice, Commitment to School Work
Highest	Microsystem/ Classes	High Scores for Assignments	Skills to Complete Assignments, Motivation to Do Well

APPENDIX E

ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE/WEEKLY PLAN TABLE

Table 3


Action research plan for Cycle 1.

Cycle/ Week	Strand 1 Exploratory	Strand 2 Action in Course of Study
Reconnaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct policy analysis, document analysis, and what 	-
Cycle 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue recruitment and retention letters ($n = 4$), generation of initial themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First review of the Student Information Systems
Cycle 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action to be taken by Course of Study (CoS) review team
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue recruitment and retention letters ($n = 4$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of team to review targeted areas of the CoS
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct first series of interviews Transcribe interviews ($n = 4$) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate meeting materials
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct second series of interview Transcribe interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First committee review of Course of Study
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct final series of interview Transcribe interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Committee review of Course of Study Committee forms first action recommendations
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code transcriptions Develop memos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make formal recommendations to the Superintendent
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review new artifact data and compare to previous artifact data on the COS
7 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflections and formal write up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop next actions to be taken Reflections and formal write up

APPENDIX F

CURRICULUM ADVISOR COMMITTEE CHARTER

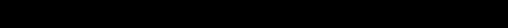
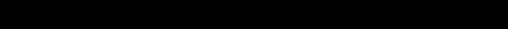



Unified School District Curriculum Advisory Committee**Purpose:**

The purpose of the  Unified School District Curriculum Advisory Committee (CAC) is to review and make recommendations on: (a) requests to pilot a new course; (b) results of courses piloted; (c) submitted course attribute changes; (d) proposed substantive changes to approved courses; (e) requests to establish school/college partnerships; and (f) conduct structured audits/reviews of the course of study and provide recommended changes. The CAC may also be called upon to undertake special assignments from the Superintendent that have implication to policy, regulations, or practices that impact student achievement. The Chair of the CAC takes the recommendations of the committee to the Superintendent and the Board of Education. The Chair of the CAC is responsible to communicate the decisions of the Superintendent and Board of Education and provide direction on those decisions.

Governance Structure:

- Formal Agenda
- Formal Meeting Minutes
- Agenda Posted Online
- Robert's Rules of Order

Membership:

- Executive Director, 
 - Executive Director, 
 - Executive Director, 
 - Director, English Learner Support Services
 - Director, Assessments
 - Coordinator, Student Information System
 - Instructional Specialist, Secondary Teaching and Learning
 - High School Principal
 - High School Counselor
 - High School Registrar
- 

APPENDIX G

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL OF STUDY



March 30, 2016

To: To Whom It May Concern

From: [Redacted]

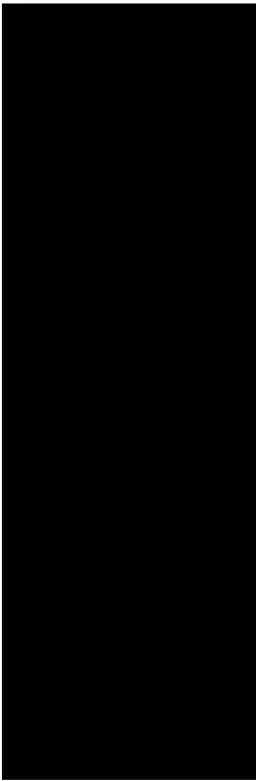
Re: Letter of Support/Research Request

[Redacted] Unified School District has reviewed the research request submitted by Shawn Loescher. I would like to inform you we fully support his research study at Arizona University regarding perception of post-secondary student preparedness as expressed through graduation requirements.

The district is granting Shawn Loescher permission to proceed with this research request.

We believe the objectives of the research are important and consistent with the vision of [Redacted]

Sincerely,



APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do you believe that current district graduation requirements are philosophically aligned with the strategic plan? Please explain.
2. What role do you believe graduation requirements may play in setting expectations for what it means to fostering hope for a better life after graduating from school? Can you give a specific example from your experience?
3. Do you believe that there are disconnects between the coursework provided to students and what they need to be a success after graduating from high school? Please explain.
4. What barriers prevent students from meeting graduation and/or UC “a-g” requirements?
5. What current school-based factors do you believe help students stay on track for graduation and/or to meet UC “a-g” requirements? What new school-based factors do you believe could further help students stay on track?
6. Is there anything that you would like to add about your observations about district graduation requirements, student preparedness, and student expectations?

APPENDIX I

COURSE FREQUENCY REPORT ACTIVE VERSUS INACTIVE

Table 4

Course number frequency analysis: Active versus inactive.

Course Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Active	987	56.4	56.4
Inactive	138	63.6	100.0
Total	1750	100.0	-

APPENDIX J

COURSE FREQUENCY REPORT FOR ENROLLMENT

Table 5

Course number frequency analysis: Courses not enrolled in for the last five years.

Course Type	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Enrollment	615	62.3	62.3
No Enrolment	372	38.7	100.0
Total	987	100.0	-

APPENDIX H

GERUND CODES AND AXIAL CATEGORIES

Acknowledged Disconnections

Acknowledging organizational goals code
 Acknowledging disconnections code
 Adding requirements code
 Asking for clarification code
 Changing of the guard code
 Expressing nostalgia code
 Fostering low expectations code
 Getting confused code
 Relinquishing ownership code

group

Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections
 Acknowledged Disconnections

Belief Systems

Addressing higher order change code
 Caring matters code
 Changing belief systems code
 Developing mindset code
 Educating parents code
 Fostering hope code
 Including stakeholders code
 Involving parents code
 Raising awareness code
 Raising expectations code
 Understanding equity code

group

Belief Systems
 Belief Systems
 Belief Systems
 Belief Systems
 Belief Systems
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 Belief Systems
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 Belief Systems
 Belief Systems

Coursework

Becoming college ready code
 Developing literacy code
 Grading on opinions code
 Grading practices code
 Developing soft skills code
 Developing units' code
 Dishonoring non-university pathway code
 Including certificate programs code
 Lacking standards code
 Limiting curriculum code
 Not meeting rigor code
 Not preparing students code
 Preparing students for the past code
 Providing relevant connections code
 Struggling with career readiness code

group

Coursework
 Coursework
 Coursework
 Coursework
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 Coursework
 Coursework

Known Issues

Identifying expectation gaps code
 Identifying impacts to status quo code
 Identifying inequities code
 Identifying known issues code
 Identifying pathway code
 Identifying set-backs code
 Identifying social capital code

group

Known Issues
 Known Issues
 Known Issues
 Known Issues
 Known Issues
 Known Issues
 Known Issues

Identifying social barriers	code	Known Issues
Identifying solutions	code	Known Issues
Labeling students	code	Known Issues
Lacking knowledge	code	Known Issues
Lacking systems	code	Known Issues
Maintaining the status quo	code	Known Issues
Messaging low expectations	code	Known Issues
Remediating courses	code	Known Issues
Policy and Operations		group
Bridging policy to reality	code	Policy and Operations
Misaligning with mission/vision	code	Policy and Operations
Monitoring for grades	code	Policy and Operations
Providing equitable opportunities	code	Policy and Operations
Resourcing restrictions	code	Policy and Operations
Using graduation requirements	code	Policy and Operations
School Site Culture		group
Becoming inclusive	code	School Site Culture
Championing students	code	School Site Culture
Connecting resources	code	School Site Culture
Connecting with school	code	School Site Culture
Counseling	code	School Site Culture
Developing competitiveness	code	School Site Culture
Developing culture	code	School Site Culture
Developing positive goals	code	School Site Culture
Developing programs	code	School Site Culture
Developing relationships	code	School Site Culture
Facilitating learning	code	School Site Culture
Finding success	code	School Site Culture
Learning communities	code	School Site Culture
Maintaining focus	code	School Site Culture
Making connections	code	School Site Culture
Mentoring of student's	code	School Site Culture
Motivating students	code	School Site Culture
Providing interventions	code	School Site Culture
Providing planning time	code	School Site Culture
Reviewing a-g requirements	code	School Site Culture
Scaffolding for student's	code	School Site Culture
Setting expectations	code	School Site Culture
Supervising students	code	School Site Culture
Supporting friends	code	School Site Culture
Teaching matters	code	School Site Culture
Tracking students	code	School Site Culture
Training teachers	code	School Site Culture
Weeding out students	code	School Site Culture

APPENDIX L

AN OVERVIEW OF THEME DEVELOPMENT

Current graduation requirements neither align to the intent of the strategic intent of the district nor do they systemically support student post-secondary success. This finding was supported in answers given to questions one, two, and three. Responses fell within the categories of acknowledging disconnections and known issues. For example, Interviewee 2 stated the “knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential.” Interviewee 4 commented that in the development of the strategic plan that he/she did not know “to what degree they looked at graduation requirements” and went on to explain that if there was any alignment it would have been by “chance.” Interviewee 1 stated that “the current district graduation requirements are not well aligned with the current values, mission, vision, and district strategies.” All four interviewees noted that this misalignment was likely due to process gap in the development of the strategic plan. However, one interviewee stated that this part of a strategic process with the development of new graduation requirements represented a “second order change” to be addressed in the future.

Several of the interviewees felt that the graduation requirements were representative of different philosophical positions and a different era. All four interviewees generated a gerund code of “changing of the guard” representing the change of administrative direction and expectations of current administrations. There was an agreement that there were several areas that were represented in the categories of known issues that lead to students not being positioned for post-secondary success. Interviewee 4 stated that there should be attention focused on “service components” and systemic implementation of the district “10-year plan.” Interviewee 2

acknowledged the coursework category in stating that “there is a paradigm shift in what is happening in what needs to be successful in career” and supported this statement by saying “the coursework is the biggest indicator that we struggle because we are stuck perhaps, often times, in coursework that was successful for us and our generation that has since left us.” Interviewee 1 stated that “things have changed so dramatically in the past 15 or 20 years” and felt that the district graduation requirements needed to be updated. Interviewee 3 felt that the graduation requirements were low and stated that “the expectations are not as high as they should be.”

District system and policies can support raising adult school site expectations but are not a requirement for doing so. Questions two, three, and four were used in developing this theme. The categories of school site culture, policy and operations, and known issues were represented in the development. This was supported in Interviewee 1 stating that “I think that even with our graduation requirements not being as rigorous and strong as I think they should be, I don’t know that really has limited any of the kids from being successful, in terms of their own personal expectation.” Interviewee 4 felt that the school site should develop systems for supporting higher expectations and expressed that students “in a pathway or academy” would “have the best chance to stay on track for graduation and meet” college entrance requirements. Interviewee 2 felt “I think that beyond the graduation requirements setting the expectations for success, it is the people that we are there championing causes for our students.” Interviewee 3 said, “I think there is a disconnect between the students and the expectation of graduating because the curriculum is not meeting the rigor as they graduate from high school.”

Each of these statements was in support of systems and policies that could be conducted at the district level but were fully within the capacity of the schools to control. For example, while the district has recommended curriculum, it does not have mandated curriculum with

schools free to choose from approved coursework. Pathway and academy development is the prerogative of the school site to develop. Graduation requirements represent baseline standards and schools are free to establish higher expectation levels. Interviewee 1 shared from his/her time as a principal that often there are unintended messages of low expectations that are sent to students in what a school offers. She/He stated:

None of that had anything to do with graduation requirements, what that had to do with was the message that our school was sending to the kids that we expected less of them so therefore we did not need to offer more AP courses because clearly, we probably didn't have any kids that would do well in them.

The knowledge and beliefs of adults working at schools are critical to setting expectations and guiding students to meet their fullest potential. This theme was supported by answers given to questions three, four, five, and six. The answers fell within the categories of school site culture, coursework, and belief systems. Interviewee 4 shared his/her own personal story of belief system break through:

it wasn't until I truly realized that it is much better for you to be exposed to that rigor and be exposed to those expectations, and then us put scaffolding in place to help you to stay "a-g" eligible . . . you are going to do better in college and you're going to stay in that "a-g" track. And so, it was a huge big kind of aha, big awakening for me because under that old belief, that "oh no," that elitist kind of belief.

Interviewee 2 stated "I think that students will be as prepared as we prepare them" and shared that in her/his educational journey it was school counseling that had made the difference. There was also an acknowledgement that knowledge of what is required to be a success outside

of school needed to be addressed. Interviewee 3 stated “I think that is a fair assumption when you talk with any teacher I don’t think they can tell you what it takes to graduate.”

APPENDIX M

IRB APPROVAL OF STUDY



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Michelle Jordan
 Division of Teacher Preparation - Tempe
 480/965-9663
 Michelle.E.Jordan@asu.edu

Dear Michelle Jordan:

On 2/22/2016 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Perceptions of Post-Secondary Student Preparedness as Expressed Through Graduation Requirements.
Investigator:	Michelle Jordan
IRB ID:	STUDY00003952
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interview protocols, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Shawn Loescher Recruit Consent Form Administrators Draft 2.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Shawn Loescher IRB Protocol Draft 3.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Shawn Loescher Recruit Consent Form Parents Draft 1 (1).pdf, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/22/2016.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,