A BOURDIEUSIAN CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIVIST STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF LOW SOCIOECONOMIC, PRIVATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SERVICE-LEARNING COURSES FOCUSED ON SERVING LOW SOCIOECONOMIC POPULATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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A Bourdieuian Critical Constructivist Study of the Experiences of Low Socioeconomic, Private University Undergraduate Students in Service-Learning Courses Focused on Serving Low Socioeconomic Populations (281 pp.)

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Social class stratification in higher education has increased; however, socioeconomic status (SES) continues to receive less targeted focus by higher education policy and practice than do race, ethnicity, and gender. Despite the challenges, low SES students are attending college but are not having equivalent experiences or outcomes to their higher SES peers. The rise in the numbers of low SES students on campuses has caused increased attention from federal lawmakers and higher education professionals, alike. New policies and practices are being proposed in order to better support this growing student group. One promising pedagogical practice for low SES college students is service-learning. This critical constructivist study draws upon Bourdieu to analyze the academic and social experiences of low SES students attending a selective, private university and enrolled in service-learning classes in which the population being served was also of low SES.

This study had three main findings. First, low SES students practice passing behaviors to cover their low SES. Second, participating in service-learning can reinforce the practice of passing or chameleon behaviors. Third, this may contribute to questioning instructor authority, both of which can negatively impact social and academic
experiences, thus inhibiting the acquisition of social and cultural capital. I advance recommendations for how campuses can create environments that embrace socioeconomic diversity and work toward creating opportunities for low SES students to develop the social and cultural capital they seek via private higher education.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My first full-time professional position at a higher education institution was at a small, private, liberal arts college as the director of service-learning and community service. The service-learning office was only five years old, but had a supportive faculty base and aligned well with the institutional mission. The institution was considered slightly selective and while competitive with local peer institutions, it was still considered expensive. This perception was likely exacerbated because the institution was situated within the poorest city within the county. So while the majority of the students attending the institution were middle to upper class, they were surrounded by people living in poverty.

Close to the beginning of one fall semester, I was attending a meeting of a teacher education course which incorporated service-learning. The instructor had asked me to attend in order to give an introduction to service-learning and to go over the necessary paperwork students would be required to complete. This was not an unusual request, so I anticipated a fairly routine experience. After entering the class I sat with the students and listened while the professor began to describe the local school system and the environment that students could expect to experience. The professor described the environment within the city schools as if it was one these student teachers had never been in before. He told them that they would be “shocked” because of the poverty, but that they would need to learn how to interact with “these types of kids.” It was not anything I
had not heard before, but that day his way of discussing the service sites struck me differently and I began to get uncomfortable, embarrassed, and then angry.

On this particular day I sat next to a student I knew, Yvonne. Yvonne had been to see me in my office a few days prior seeking information on the local women’s clothing closet. This wasn’t unusual; students stopped by my office all the time looking for volunteer opportunities. However, Yvonne wasn’t interested in volunteering at the clothing closet. She needed professional attire for her service-learning class; this class. Yvonne was a local girl who grew up poor. She was attending the institution through the support of scholarships, loans, federal financial aid, and she still worked twenty hours a week at the local pizza place that she had worked at all through high school. However, she did not have enough money to afford the required professional clothing she needed for pre-service teaching, including this particular service-learning class.

As I listened to the instructor describe the kids in the local schools and the schools themselves, my eyes kept drifting to Yvonne. I realized that he was talking about her school and kids just like her. I began to wonder how that made her feel and if she was angry or embarrassed like I was. How would it feel to have your life discussed and analyzed in class like that; to be the class project? I expected her to speak up, to say something about her experiences, to correct the instructor on his assumptions that this would be a new and shocking experience for all of his students. But she didn’t do any of this. She remained silent, even nodding in agreement at some of the instructor’s statements. At the time I couldn’t fathom why she would do this.
As I reflected on this experience later I began to wonder if Yvonne’s silence may have been calculated. For the most part it was assumed that if you were attending the institution where I worked, you were wealthy. It is an expensive institution, so the community at large and even the majority of the student body seemed to make this assumption. Yvonne looked like an average student. She dressed in similar fashions. She lived on campus. She had a meal plan. She even participated in some campus life activities. I began to wonder if her silence in class was a way of fitting in. I began to wonder if Yvonne (and other students like her) was passing as a higher social class than she was by employing these types of behaviors and if this were the case, what was that experience like for her both academically and socially on a small, private college campus. This experience happened many years prior to the start of this dissertation research, but it’s when the research questions began to germinate in my mind.

**Problem Overview and Significance**

Classism is pervasive in the United States, existing in all forms of U. S. society, including higher education (hooks, 2000; Steinmetz, 2008). Issues related to social class are often considered under the more general category of multiculturalism, but are “rarely addressed as phenomena parallel to other forms of oppression” (Martin, 2015, p. 471). Social class stratification in higher education has greatly increased in recent years in spite of the widely held belief that education is the great equalizer, a system based on meritocracy that can eliminate class boundaries (Lederman, 2010). However, low socioeconomic status (SES) students may not have access to this avenue of upward social mobility in the same way that their SES privileged peers do (Martin, 2015). While many
higher education institutions have been willing to address issues dealing with racial and
ethnic equality, similar efforts aimed at addressing the unique needs of students of lower
socioeconomic status have been lacking (Kahlenberg, 2014). This is in spite of the fact
that the most consistent factor related to a student’s academic achievement is her or his
socioeconomic status (Howard, 2001). In spite of this correlation, “For almost 50 years
socioeconomic diversity has been higher education’s disfavored stepchild in comparison
with racial diversity” (Kahlenberg, 2014, para. 5). Bowen, Kurzweil, Tobin, and Pichler
(2005) illustrate this point, writing that being Black or Latino/a could increase the
chances of college acceptance to selective institutions by as much as 28%. For the same
institutions, being of low socioeconomic status did not increase chances of acceptance at
all.

Poor and working-class students are less likely to attend college than their middle
to upper class peers. They are also less likely to complete degrees, finish in four years or
less, or go on to graduate or professional schools (Howard, 2001). The majority of low
income students attend nonselective four-year and two-year colleges, and these students
are disproportionately represented at these schools (Lederman, 2010). This phenomenon,
referred to as under-matching, can significantly impair the success of students and is
linked to high school advising practices, higher education recruitment practices, and
social class specific behaviors and expectations (Hoxby & Avery, 2012). Carnevale and
Strohl (2010) found evidence of this inequality, reporting that within higher education,
socioeconomic gaps are now much wider than racial gaps. For example, while White
students are overrepresented at the most selective U. S. institutions by 15%, high SES students are overrepresented by 45% (Carnevale & Strohl, 2010).

Low SES students bring differing needs with them to college than do their middle to upper class peers. Most low SES students receive little to no encouragement from parents in areas of education or careers. This may be due to lack of knowledge as well as financial support, but the end result is a lack of cultural capital in both choosing and being successful at a higher education institution (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; McDonough, 1997; Miller & Kastberg, 1995). Many low income students are also first generation college students, and therefore, may not have a parent or guardian that can advise them on issues of college choice, college application, financial aid, or program of study. Hoxby and Avery (2012) found that financially disadvantaged students are unlikely to have met a teacher, counselor, or older student who had attended a selective institution and that this impacted low SES students’ postsecondary aspirations and application behaviors. Additionally, low income students are often academically unprepared for college and may have even had their poverty mistakenly diagnosed as a learning disability (Howard, 2001). Once on campus, these students often experience a profound sense of being an outsider in the academy and have difficulty forging connections with faculty, staff, and peers. This feeling is typically coupled with an estrangement from friends and family due to loss of commonality, a feeling of fitting in nowhere, and of being in the borderlands of two worlds (Miller & Kastberg, 1995). This disconnect, in addition to the added demands of financial stress and needing to work, can
result in low income students being less involved on campus than their peers, and campus involvement is important for student success (Barratt, 2012; Spangler, 1979). Faculty and staff are rarely trained to deal with the distinctive needs of low income students (Barratt, 2012; Howard, 2001; McGuire, 2014). Exacerbating the problem further is the reluctance of Americans to discuss or disclose social class (hooks, 2000). hooks (2000) writes “it is fashionable to talk about race or gender; the uncool subject is class. It’s the subject that makes us all tense, nervous, uncertain about where we stand” (p. vii). Ortner (2006) agrees stating that class is “not a central category of discourse in America,” but that when it does come up, the majority of Americans describe themselves as “middle class” (p. 24). Ortner (2006) goes on to state that:

because hegemonic American culture takes both the ideology of mobility and the ideology of individualism seriously, explanations for non-mobility not only focus on the failure of individuals…but shift the domain of the discourse to arenas that are taken to be locked into individuals—gender, race, and ethnic origin. (p. 26)

In other words, discussions of class are often veiled in American culture as discussions of other social differences and lack of social mobility is blamed on the individual and not on the cultural and structural barriers which exist. In addition to the U. S. cultural reluctance to discussing social class differences, the relative invisibility of social class may also contribute to the lack of targeted focus and dialogue on class issues (Espenschied-Reilly, 2012; Kahlenberg, 2014). Social class, unlike race, gender, ethnicity, and sometimes even sexuality, can be easily covered by altering dress and behavior (particularly for White students), and many students choose this covering or
passing behavior in order to “blend in” with their peers (Miller & Kastberg, 1995; Steinmetz, 2008). By covering their social class identity, low SES students may add to the U. S. assumption that everyone is middle class. However, the middle class is slowly being eliminated in the U. S., as the poverty and working classes grow in size. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important for higher education personnel and faculty to learn how to best support these students through targeted student services and alternative pedagogies. This revision of educational practices will require increased focus and dialogue on the issues of social class (Kahlenberg, 2014; Ganaposki, 2001; McGuire, 2014; Rendon, 1996). One such alternative pedagogy that may show promise is service-learning. Research has shown that service-learning improves academic achievement, campus and community involvement, peer connections, faculty connections, and persistence in low income students (Conley & Hamlin, 2009; McKay & Estrella, 2008; Reed & Butler, 2015; Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeirer, & Benson, 2006; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Winans-Solis, 2014; Yeh, 2010).

Most of the service-learning literature to date has focused on the perspective of the traditional White, middle class college student being given the opportunity to encounter her or his own privilege (Chesler & Vasques Scalera, 2000; Winans-Solis, 2014; Wylie, 2014). This is a fundamental assumption within the field of service-learning, namely that the “ideal type” of service-learning student is a full-time, White, young, single, childless, economically advantaged college student (Butin, 2010). The majority of research assumes this “ideal type” student and service-learning programs are constructed around this assumption. “This assumption situates border-crossing and
bridging divides as a primary pedagogical goal of engaged learning. Implied within this paradigm is the construction of those served as outsiders and thus the bearers of difference and otherness” (Wylie, 2014, p. 53). However, some researchers have begun to examine the perspectives of students of differing races, ethnicities, genders, and socioeconomic statuses (Chesler & Vasques Scalera, 2000; Cohen, 1995; Coles, 1999; Conley & Hamlin, 2009; Lee, 2005; McKay & Estrella, 2008; Reed & Butler, 2015; Scales et al., 2006; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Warren, 1998; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Winans-Solis, 2014; Wylie, 2014; Yeh, 2010). It is necessary to continue these investigations in order to hear the voices of all students and to improve teaching methods for diverse classrooms. If social stratification in colleges and universities is going to continue to increase, then as professionals, we need to become equipped to best instruct and support students of all social classes.

**Research Purpose**

The purpose of this critical constructivist qualitative study was to determine how low SES undergraduates at a selective, private institution interpreted their service-learning experiences when the target population for the service was low SES individuals. In essence, what happens when service-learners serve *their own*? The research setting – a selective, private university - was chosen because of the still small set of low SES students at many such institutions and because of the lack of additional targeted services provided to support and aid these students in becoming socially and academically engaged in the campus (Howard, 2001). Additionally, service-learning is frequently credited as a counter-normative pedagogy with many positive academic and personal
outcomes for students (Eyler & Giles, 1999); some studies claim that these positive outcomes may be enhanced for marginalized student groups (Chesler & Vasques Scalera, 2000; Reed & Butler, 2014; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Winans-Solis, 2014). Service-learning may empower marginalized students through enabling self-direction and the development of a critical consciousness through accessing subjugated knowledge, which shifts the dynamics of learning space, power, and authority (Winans-Solis, 2014). This empowerment may be due to the “outsider-within” status some marginalized students may hold when involved in service-learning targeting people within their ingroup.

“Occupying the margins can be a source of power that gives a lens by which we can view and critique the world” (Nicol & Yee, 2012, p. 174). This study aimed to determine if service-learning courses, particularly those targeting low income populations as service recipients, were beneficial to the academic and social success of low SES students in a private institution setting. Service-learning may be an area where selective, private institutions could provide extra support for their low SES populations when other resources, such as support offices and programs, may be limited by budget and staff concerns. Additionally, service-learning may be an area of support which doesn’t need to target or identify low SES students. If institutionalized, such engaged critical pedagogy touches all students.

**Research Questions**

My research questions were:

What are the academic and social experiences of low SES students at their service site for a service-learning course?
What are the academic and social experiences of low SES students in the classroom for a service-learning course?

How successful do low SES students feel they are at translating their academic and social experiences into classroom assignments?

What does the term “social class” mean to low SES students, and how do they feel that their social class status impacts their academic and social experiences in colleges?

**Theoretical Framework**

I approached the understanding of this research inquiry through the use of a critical constructivist framework. Through the worldview of social constructivism, researchers strive to understand the world through developing subjective meanings of lived experiences. “These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). Constructivist studies rely primarily on the participants’ views and impressions of their experiences with the intent to interpret and understand their meanings (Creswell, 2007). Constructivists are concerned not only with the knowledge possessed by individuals, but equally with the processes through which certain knowledge becomes validated (Kincheloe, 2005). The world is socially constructed, and this process involves a knower and what is to be known. How individual knowers construct the known is what can be thought of as each individual’s reality. All knowers and the knowledge that they produce are impacted by history and society. Individuals both operate and construct life and reality on particular social,
cultural, and historical fields (Kincheloe, 2005). The processes through which knowledges are constructed and validated are heavily influenced by power and capital. Because of the influence of power and capital, these processes of constructing and validating knowledge (understanding reality) privilege some individuals while marginalizing others (Kincheloe, 2005). This renders some knowledge as dominant and some as subjugated. Marginalized groups may have a “distinct view of the contradictions between the dominant group’s actions and ideologies” (Hill Collins, 1990, p. 11-12). Because of this distinct viewpoint “subjugated knowledges…develop in cultural contexts controlled by oppressed groups. Dominant groups aim to replace subjugated knowledge with their own specialized thought because they realize that gaining control over this dimension of subordinate groups’ lives simplifies control” (Hill Collins, 2009, p. 5). I attempted to access the “subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1976; Hesse-Biber & Leavey, 2006; Hill Collins, 2009) of a marginalized student population (e.g. low SES university students), through my employment of constructivism utilizing elements of critical theory. Critical constructivists strive to uncover new and diverse ways of seeing and constructing the social world and within “this context they come to value knowledges and forms of meaning-making traditionally dismissed by dominant culture” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 4). Such knowledge is not valued or viewed as valid by dominant social agents and is therefore subjugated. Through this critical constructivist epistemological framework, I hoped to create transformational tension in order to inform and potentially alter traditional practice (Hesse-Biber & Leavey, 2006) by striving to create space for counter normative knowledge production through the voices of low SES college students.
I employed this epistemological framework through the use of the work of Pierre Bourdieu, renowned French philosopher and sociologist.

Bourdieu passed away from cancer in 2002, but he left behind a great legacy of work. He is probably best known for his work on capital, habitus, and field – components of a metatheory that he applied to a variety of topics but most importantly for this study, to social class and education. He developed the concept of cultural capital in order to “explain differences in educational performance and cultural practices that remained unexplained by economic inequalities” (Brubaker, 2004, p. 41). Because of the established use of this metatheory and these thinking tools for qualitative research related to education and social class, I chose to apply Bourdieu’s methods in my research in order to help understand and explain my findings.

**Key Terms**

Social class is the classification of individuals into a hierarchy or class system, based on specific criteria such as income, occupational prestige, education, and some other characteristics (Barratt, 2012). Social class is an abstract group phenomenon which is systemic in that in is viewed by societies as structures and processes that both reproduce and reinforce the current social class structure (Barratt, 2012; Bourdieu, 1986). Because individuals view social class hierarchy as reality, they unknowingly participate in the reproduction and validation of the system. Social class is often closely linked to and often used interchangeably with the following term, socioeconomic status (as they are in this work).
Socioeconomic status (SES) is a measure of a person’s work experience and economic and social position related to others (APA, 2007). It is a combination of both social and economic status; social status being typically seen as prestige and economic status typically seen as wealth (Barratt, 2012). While not solely based on income, income is a prime component of a person’s SES, and because of this, the terms low SES and low income are often used interchangeably (as they are in this work). Additionally, because these measures are so closely related, this work follows the practice of using research dealing with income level and research dealing with socioeconomic status to complement and support each other. The definition I followed for low socioeconomic status in this research was a person living at or below 150% of the current federal poverty guidelines and coming from a household where his or her parents or guardians were not college educated and held jobs that did not require a college degree (Lee, 2005; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Yeh, 2010).

Critical theory perspectives are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by certain marginalized statuses (Fay, 1987). Proponents of critical theory seek to “reflexively step outside of the dominant ideology in order to create space for resistive, counterhegemonic, knowledge production that destabilizes the oppressive material and symbolic relations of dominance” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 31). Critical theorists seek to comprehend and transform the underlying orders of social life, access subjugated knowledges, and examine the micro-politics of power (Creswell, 2007; Foucault, 1976; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Morrow & Brown, 1994). Ultimately, critical theory aims to create transformative tension within
Social systems rather than simply producing knowledge that feeds the system (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Social constructivism is a worldview through which individuals seek understanding of their world through the development of subjective meanings of their experiences. “These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meaning into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). The researcher’s goal is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the experience. Typically, these subjective meanings are formed through social interactions and are influenced by cultural norms that impact the lives of the individuals (Creswell, 2007). Because all individuals are shaped by historical, cultural, and societal factors, these in turn influence the knowledge created by each individual, shaping each individual’s reality. These processes of knowledge creation and validation are influenced by power and capital, which renders some knowledge as dominant and some as subjugated. Uncovering these subjugated knowledges and understanding the processes which develop them is critical constructivism (Kincheloe, 2005).

Metatheory is the study of theory. This includes the “development of overarching combinations of theory, as well as the development and application of theorems for analysis that reveal underlying assumptions about theory and theorizing” (Wallis, 2010, p. 78). In other words, a metatheory is a theory about theory. For example, a sociological metatheory (such as that developed by Bourdieu) is a sociological theory about other sociological theories.
Habitus (and the rest of the following terms) is a term coined by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and refers to the life history and predispositions of a person, which are continually being created and recreated throughout one’s life (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). Bourdieu (1994) describes it as a “structured and structuring structure” (p. 170). While this may at first appear to be the antithesis of a definition, when broken down, it is very helpful in understanding this complex concept. One’s habitus is structured by both past and present circumstances (i.e. education, upbringing, employment, etc.). It is structuring because one’s habitus impacts one’s practices in any given situation or field. Additionally, it is a structure because it is systematically ordered and not random, or lacking pattern. The structure of one’s habitus compromises “a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices” (Maton, 2008, p. 51).

Capital comes in four principal forms: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital refers to tangible assets, such as money or possessions (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital refers to assets which allow a social agent to mobilize cultural authority. In other words, cultural capital refers to the symbolic elements acquired through belonging to a specific group and which creates a sense of collective group identity and position. Bourdieu (1986) viewed cultural capital in opposition to economic capital. It is primarily a relational concept, existing in conjunction with the other forms of capital (Reay, 2004). Social capital cannot be understood when isolated from economic, social, and symbolic forms of capital (Reay, 2004). Social capital refers to a social agent’s connections, such as memberships within groups and specific networks,
and also to the strength of these connections and the resources that these connections have access to (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Sobel, 2002). Social capital can be acquired through purposeful actions in order to be used for personal gain, whether socially, academically, or economically. Symbolic capital is any form of capital which is not perceived as such, but which is rather perceived through socially or culturally accepted means (Wacquant, 2006). Symbolic capital can manifest via individual prestige and personal attributes, such as authority and charisma (Bourdieu, 1985; Reay, 2014). In addition to identifying forms of capital Bourdieu (1986) conceptualized a complex process through which one form of capital could be converted into another.

In Bourdieu’s theory of practice, a field is a specific context in which a person, or social agent, finds themselves (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). This could be large, such as a university, or relatively small, such as a classroom or service-learning site. It is the interactions between one’s habitus, capital, and field that help to establish practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Maton, 2008).

Hysteresis is the fish out of water feeling that a person feels when her or his habitus and field are out of synch (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). In other words, this occurs when a person does not possess the habitus or capital in order to feel comfortable navigating within a particular situation.

Doxa are unrecognized or subconscious rules or norms (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008) that aid a person in determining her or his actions within a specific field or context.
Doxa may be acquired, such as social capital, and can be used by a social agent to increase her or his standing.

Symbolic violence, also known as suffering, is the harm inflicted due to the domination of certain groups. The dominated group may or may not be aware of it (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). Bourdieu wrote extensively on the symbolic violence experienced in the classroom, which he said resulted from the arbitrariness of the qualities rewarded by success in school (Bourdieu, 1977; Brown & Morrow, 1994).

Organization of Dissertation

In chapter 2 of this document I explore how social class complicates the higher education journey for students of low social class or poverty class backgrounds. Additionally I summarize the history of the practice of service-learning and explore the outcomes of this pedagogical practice when utilized with traditional college students and those of various marginalized populations.

In chapter 3 I provide a description of the critical constructivist lens through which I conducted this study. I also explore Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice and describe its application to my research. The four research questions are identified and the research site chosen is described. The processes of participant selection, data collection, and data analysis are provided, followed by descriptions of the final participants. Within this chapter I also discuss the validity of the research and position myself as a qualitative researcher. Some limitations of this research are also made clear.
In chapter 4 of this dissertation I provide the main themes that emerged from data analysis and illustrate and support them with selected quotations from the participant interviews and written reflection documents.

In the final chapter I examine the main findings in context of the literature. Recommendations and implications for higher education practice are presented. Finally, areas for further study are identified.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with an overview of the work of Pierre Bourdieu, in particular his theories of practice and social reproduction and the role education plays in the latter. It then provides an overview of the experiences of low socioeconomic status students in higher education. Barriers to success in higher education are presented, as well as methods institutions can employ for supporting low SES students. Critical pedagogies, such as service-learning, may be one method of support institutions could employ. Therefore, the opportunities provided for traditionally marginalized student populations by service-learning are explored. The chapter concludes by examining the potential of employing Bourdieu’s metatheory in order to study service-learning.

Pierre Bourdieu

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a prominent French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher who published prolifically throughout his career on a wide expanse of topics. His work was influenced by the theories of scholars such as Heidegger, Husserl, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Levi-Strauss, Mauss, Merleau-Ponty, and others (Grenfell, 2008). By routinely linking theoretical ideas with empirical research, Bourdieu developed novel investigative frameworks, methodologies, and theories. Primarily, Bourdieu focused on the power dynamics found within societies, particularly how power is transferred across generations in order to maintain the hierarchical structure of society. To explain how this social reproduction occurred, Bourdieu developed a logic of
practice, or metatheory, which countered rational choice theory and Marxism (Bourdieu, 1990; Grenfell, 2008). Bourdieu believed that social agents did not act based on rational and economic data calculations and indicators, but rather based from an internal practical logic and individual dispositions. In other words, social agents act according to their “feel for the rules of the game,” developing strategies to successfully navigate the social realms or fields that they inhabit. The success of a social agent within any given field is based not only on this logic and dispositions, but also on the value of the capital he or she possesses (Bourdieu, 1990; Maton, 2008). Additionally, Bourdieu introduced or expanded upon several influential sociological concepts including habitus, field, doxa, reflexivity, symbolic violence, and social, cultural, and symbolic forms of capital (which will be expanded upon below) (Grenfell, 2008).

**Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice**

At the root of the metatheory is one’s habitus, the life history and predispositions of that person (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). Habitus is a system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations, and practices. It is structured by one’s past and present circumstances and helps to shape the practices of an individual (Bourdieu, 1990; Maton, 2008). For Bourdieu, habitus was how outer social structure and inner individual agency could be reconciled for a social agent (Maton, 2008). Field, capital, and habitus are interdependent and co-constructed; they cannot truly be examined alone within Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Thomson, 2008). Bourdieu did not suggest that social agents are simply “pre-programmed automatons acting out the implications” of their early familial socialization (Maton, 2008, p. 51). On the contrary, Bourdieu wrote
that practices were the result of the relationship or interaction between habitus, capital (position within the field), and field (Bourdieu, 1993b; Maton, 2008). In other words, habitus, field, and capital are in constant interaction and are continuously influencing one another.

To Bourdieu, capital could be one of four different forms - economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. Economic capital is directly convertible to money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights. Cultural capital can be convertible into money under certain conditions and may be institutionalized as educational qualifications. Social capital is made up of societal connections, which may be convertible to money under certain circumstances and may be institutionalized as title or status (Bourdieu, 1986). Symbolic capital is any form of capital which is not perceived as such, but which is rather perceived through socially or culturally accepted means (Wacquant, 2006). Symbolic capital may be institutionalized as prestige or charisma (Bourdieu, 1985). Capital may advantage or disadvantage an individual within a given situation or field because the value capital holds is relative or context specific (Carter, 2003). One form of capital can be converted into another form, but this process is complex and not achieved straightforwardly (Bourdieu, 1986; Reay 2004).

Bourdieu believed that to truly understand human interactions or social phenomena, sociologists need not examine what happened so much as the context in which it happened; the social space in which interactions, transactions, and events occurred (Bourdieu, 2005; Thomson, 2008). This social space is what Bourdieu termed field, and he defined it as:
[A] structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power [capital] at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies. (1998, p. 40-41)

Bourdieu often used the analogy of a football (soccer) field and the game of football to illustrate the concept of field. The field consists of positions occupied by social agents. What happens within the field has boundaries; therefore, there are limits to what can occur within any given field, and what can occur within any given field is also shaped in part by field conditions (Thomson, 2008). A social space operates semi-autonomously; each social field has a distinct logic of practice with its own corresponding truth and doxa. Social fields can be interdependent; they can have two opposing poles, and they can contain subfields. The capital (power) possessed by a social agent impacts her or his position in any field, and that position can also impact her or his position within another field or subfield. Fields are hierarchical, and Bourdieu believed that all subfields in the cultural field were dominated by the economic field (Thomson, 2008). However, it is still important to note that Bourdieu did not believe social agents were automatons, nor were their practices always prescribed even within the boundaried, hierarchical social fields described above. Individuals are in fact “active and knowing agents endowed with a practical sense that is an acquired system of preferences, of principles, of vision
and…of schemes of action” (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 25), in other words, habitus. Additionally, Bourdieu believed that while habitus was durable and transposable, it was also transmutable over time. In other words, the structures of the habitus are not set, but evolve. Additionally, the contextual fields or social landscapes which social agents occupy also evolve according to their own logics and histories, which are influenced by the practices of the social agents within them. The result is that habitus and field are interrelated; changes in one can impact the other (Bourdieu, 1993a; Maton, 2008). This is an important relationship within the metatheory, and one which can be utilized to counter the critiques of Bourdieu’s work as to static and deterministic (will be explored further below). Another component within Bourdieu’s metatheory that is important to understand is doxa. Bourdieu believed that there are many things people unconsciously accept; rules or norms that are unrecognized or subconscious. These are doxa, unquestioned shared natural beliefs or opinions. Doxa are assumptions that are taken for granted and lie behind ideologies, but they can cause conscious struggles for individuals (Deer, 2008).

Social agents may experience hysteresis, or the “fish out of water” feeling, that occurs when habitus and field are out of synch (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). Hysteresis has been described by many working class and poor students in educational settings, and the anxiety produced can cause isolation, stress, the imposter syndrome, or dropping out altogether (Zandy, 1995). Habitus is endlessly transformed throughout life and is, therefore, in a constant state of flux. When an individual is in a state of personal and social stability, change occurs slowly and somewhat predictably, and habitus and
field are well-aligned. However, at times of abrupt, even catastrophic field shifts, habitus and field are disrupted, and change is unpredictable. At this time, an individual may experience hysteresis until habitus and field align once more (Hardy, 2008); although, this realignment may not always take place. When habitus encounters a new field, the confrontation can cause a cleft habitus, which is “a habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and its ambivalences, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perceptions of the self, to successive allegiance and multiple identities” (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 511). Bourdieu thought of possessing a cleft habitus as a negative condition, one which could produce suffering, another key component to the metatheory.

Bourdieu believed that social hierarchies created inequalities between social classes which led to suffering. The inequalities and resulting suffering experienced by oppressed social agents are maintained mainly through symbolic domination (e. g. language, etiquette) which Bourdieu termed symbolic violence (Schubert, 2008). Humans make up and order the world based on categorizations, and these categorizations both constitute and order people within society. Efforts to legitimate these systems of categorization lead to political struggle, and violence can result if those systems are misrecognized as natural rather than as culturally arbitrary and historical (which is what they truly are). Symbolic violence is typically unperceived, and it is a much more effective and efficient form of domination than actual physical violence because the dominating class need exert little to no energy to maintain its continued dominance (Schubert, 2008). Bourdieu elaborated, stating that when:
discipline is enforced by military strength; you must obey. In a sense it is easy to revolt against discipline because you are conscious of it. With the mechanism of symbolic violence, domination tends to take the form of a more effective, and in this sense, more brutal, means of oppression….the violence has become soft, invisible. (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, para. 3)

So while the dominated classes may experience suffering due to symbolic violence, this state of suffering is considered normal, just part of everyday life. This misrecognition and internalization of domination and oppression simply leads to exacerbating and perpetuating the suffering and the established systems of domination (Schubert, 2008). It was through such a lens, which Bourdieu viewed educational systems.

**Social Reproduction through Education**

Bourdieu believed that within the contextual, social field of education, “cultural capital includes a wide array of linguistic competencies, general cultural awareness, preferences, and information about the schooling system” (Mullen, 2010, p.35). In fact, it was the concept of cultural and social capital that Bourdieu (1986) claimed allowed him to hypothesize an explanation for “the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes” (p. 47). For Bourdieu (1986), these differences could be explained by the distribution of and differences in cultural capital between social classes. Bourdieu postulated that schooling was one of the mechanisms that replicated social classes by validating certain forms of capital and devaluing others.
Instructors, consciously or not, tend to favor students who follow the dominant cultural norms of a school setting and perceive these students as more capable and intelligent (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The cultural standards of dominant groups (e.g. upper to middle classes) typically establish the arbitrary cultural standards followed in academic settings; this is one way that dominant cultural groups maintain their powerful, privileged status (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Mullen, 2010). This power structure can be harmful to individuals in dominated groups if they cannot learn to adapt to the arbitrarily dominant cultural system; Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) refer to this as the symbolic violence of schools (Mullen, 2010). De Certeau (1984) writes that for Bourdieu, “practices give an adequate response to contingent situations” (p. 55) and that individual strategies for actions within a field are typically based on “an assumed world as the repetition of the past” (p. 56). Meaning, the actions, and I would say expectations, of individual agents (here students within an academic system) are governed by implicit and explicit rules of what is right and wrong, and these rules are based on the historical, social, and cultural constraints within the system. This is what de Certeau refers to as “the economy of the proper place” (p.55); the fact that social systems, such as schooling, tend to restrain individual actors through implicit and explicit rules imposed upon these actors to remain within their prescribed place in society. In essence, this symbolic violence of schools is one of the ways through which Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) felt that schooling aids in the reproduction of social class stratification.

Bourdieu’s work focused on the French educational system; however, U. S. researchers, such as Coleman (1990) and Putnam (2000), came to similar conclusions in
reference to U. S. educational fields. Because of this, the concept and role of cultural and
social capital and their influence on student academic achievement have a history of over
half a century in U. S. educational research and policy making. In particular, social
capital was a central finding of the Coleman Report of 1966, which has had a major
impact on U. S. educational policy (Howard, 2001).

Schools bring little influence to bear on a child’s achievement that is independent
of his background and general social context; and that this very lack of an
independent effect means that the inequalities imposed on children by their home,
neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities
with which they confront adult life at the end of school. (Coleman, Campbell,
Hobson, MacPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966, p. 325)

Robert Putnam (2000) revived research interest into cultural and social capital
through his influential book, *Bowling Alone*, in which he argues that the decline in capital
which Coleman et al. (1966) observed in the 1960s has continued into the 21st century.
The result of this for individuals living in communities that do not regularly interact is
decaying social networks, health, and academic achievements, among other concerns.
While Coleman et al. (1966) and Coleman (1990) focus mainly on family dynamics for
the decline in capital, Putnam (2000) broadens this focus to the community level.

Bourdieu provided an example of doxa related to the symbolic violence within
schooling. In a 1992 interview, Bourdieu stated:

I will give you an example taken from our society [France]. When you ask a
sample of individuals what are the main factors of achievement at school, the
further you go down the social scale…. the more they believe that those who are successful are naturally endowed with intellectual capacities. And the more they accept their own exclusion, the more they believe they are stupid…. It doesn’t mean that the dominated individuals tolerate everything, but they assent to much more than we believe and much more than they know. (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, para. 2)

Bourdieu believed that children of the upper classes entered the social fields of schooling not only with the dominant cultural capital necessary for success, but also with the highly valued rules and norms (doxa) required for success within schools (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). In other words, the children of the upper classes entered the field knowing the rules of the game, allowing them to play the game and understand the game better than their peers from lower social classes. However, not knowing the rules of the game is not the only stressor a social agent may encounter. Bourdieu applied these theories to education, writing extensively on the symbolic violence of schools and how this contributed to social class reproduction in France (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Schubert, 2008).

Many scholars in the U. S. and Europe within the last few decades agree with Bourdieu in that educational systems can serve to maintain rather than reduce social inequality (Archer & Leathwood, 2003; Beattie, 2002; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Croizet & Claire, 1998; DeMott, 1990; Hatcher, 1998; Horvath & Davis, 2011; McLaren, 2007; Mills, 2008; Morley & Lugg, 2009; Mullen, 2010; Ostrove & Cole, 2003; Reay, 1998; Swartz, 1977; Therbon, 2006). Social institutions such as schools, churches, and
the media are controlled by the dominant social group. Therefore, “these institutions expose individuals to the specialized thought representing the dominant group’s standpoint and interests” (Hill Collins, 2009, p. 6). This is the heart of Bourdieu’s metatheory concerning social class reproduction through education. Three reoccurring themes in Bourdieu’s (1977; Swartz, 1977) work are: 1) academic performance is linked to cultural background; 2) schooling does make a difference in life outcomes; and 3) the selective process of education is linked to social class structure without reducing the relationship to one of simple class determinism. While Bourdieu focused heavily on social class differences, he was aware that social class is only one of numerous social identities an individual possesses as evidenced by his work on ethnicity, immigration, and colonized societies (Grenfell, 2008). Certain social identities award individual privileges within societies, but privilege is complex in the multiple ways that it operates within lives and social systems.

These complexities can be explained by the matrix of domination, a construct first introduced by sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1998, 1990, 2009). Hill Collins wrote that various forms of privilege (e. g. those based upon gender, ability, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, religion, citizenship status, social class, and age) do not exist independently within the context of society or within individual experience. Rather, the privileges are intertwined with each other in complicated ways that make it difficult to comprehend one without taking into account the others. For Hill Collins, there is no social situation in which people perceive and treat others only in terms of one, isolated characteristic such as being black or male or gay (Hill Collins 2002; Johnson, 2004). However, in following
Bourdieu, this research attends primarily to issues of social class, while not ignoring other salient social identities participants chose to espouse and relate to.

**Critics of Bourdieu**

There are some critics of Bourdieu’s work. One such critic is his last graduate student, Michelle Lamont (1992). While she does not disagree with the metatheory entirely, she revised it due to the following considerations: 1) Rather than differences directly translating into hierarchalization, Lamont finds that these relationships are more complicated because of variations in the strength of symbolic boundaries; 2) Lamont believes Bourdieu vastly underestimates the importance of moral signals and makes them the privileged concern of a small group of people, concentrating almost exclusively on signals of SES and cultural status; 3) Bourdieu agrees with rational choice theory in that SES is more important than other identities, but Lamont found that the relationship between social identities change across time and space; 4) Bourdieu relies too heavily on French, in particular Parisian, attitudes, which exaggerate the importance of cultural boundaries; 5) Bourdieu argues that worldviews are primarily defined by habitus (via proximate environmental factors), but Lamont found the importance of considering the roles of macrostructural determinants and cultural repertoires in shaping tastes and preferences (Lamont, 1992).

Many researchers have proposed additional forms of capital in order to fill in gaps within Bourdieu’s theoretical framework and his forms of capital (1986). Ortner (2002a) proposes psychological capital which describes the “complexity of desires, intentions, and personalities in acting subjects” (p. 9). Nowotny (1981) developed the concept of
emotional capital (a variant of social capital) which constitutes the “knowledge, contacts, and relations as well as access to emotionally valued skills and assets which hold within any social network characterized at least by partly affective ties” (p. 148). Emotional capital is theorized in gendered (feminist) ways, as it is typically held more by women and transmitted through mothers (Reay 2000, 2004). Allat (1993) (drawing on Nowotny, 1981) defined emotional capital as “emotionally valued assets and skills, love and affection, expenditure of time, attention, care and concern.” In other words, emotional capital can be viewed as the “stock of emotional resources built up over time within families and which children can draw upon” (Reay, 2004, p. 61). In this manner it can be related to Ortner’s (2002a) concept of psychological capital which refers to “the production of the kind of social self a person emerges with from childhood” (p. 13). Additionally, Bourdieus forms of capital have been diversified into religious capital (Iannaccone, 1990), spiritual capital (Verter, 2003), physical capital (Shilling, 1991), and likely several others. All of these forms of capital assist in understanding the complex array of resources and attributes which social agents are privileged or unprivileged with (depending on their current field); however many (if not all) are truly extensions of Bourdieus original four forms of capital. Each can be related back to cultural, social, economic, or symbolic capital. This is not to say they are not valuable concepts which assist in complicating our understanding of the complexity of practice theory and social hierarchalization. However, I see each as extensions of, rather than counters to Bourdieus larger metatheory.
There are other criticisms as well. The main one being that the metatheory is too static, prescribed, and deterministic. For example, Ortner (2002a) writes that “Bourdieu lacks a complex theory of subjects as persons with certain forms of consciousness, certain structures of feeling, and certain types of what Americans colloquially call personality” (p. 12-13). Bourdieu never intended for his practice theory to be as simple as a static input/output mechanism for determining social agent practice. In fact, he argued against these criticisms (Bourdieu, 1977; Hatcher, 1998; Swartz, 1977). Ortner (2006) does point out discussions of concepts one might consider agency by social actors in some of Bourdieu’s work. However, Bourdieu never explicitly discusses free agency; it is simply implied. Yet, Ortner (2006) goes on to speculate that while this omission of agency may be deliberate, it may also be due to the lack of a French term for what Americans and British social theorists mean by agency. Thus, while Bourdieu does not address agency by social actors, he also doesn’t preclude it. Although Bourdieu’s metatheory is not without its problems, it is still an accepted, widely used methodology for understanding social reproduction through the U. S. public and higher education systems (Grenfell, 2008; Lamont, 1992; Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002).

Ortner’s (2006) variations on practice theory are influenced by Bourdieu, however she also challenges his metatheory in several ways. For Ortner (2006), Bourdieu ‘s “strong emphasis on structural power tends to ironically move away from the question of real practices” (p. 5). Social relations of power and inequality are central within Bourdieu’s practice theory, but to Ortner (2006) Bourdieu never explores these as
“specific formations of power, involving specific ideologies and practices” (p. 5). Ortner explains that:

Rather, Bourdieu devotes most of his intellectual efforts to the elaboration of the notion of *habitus*, a deeply buried structure that shapes people’s dispositions to act in such ways that they wind up accepting the dominance of others, or of “the system” without being made to do so. (2006, p. 5)

For example, Bourdieu (2001) discusses the “paradox of doxa” (p. 1) in his work *Masculine Domination*. This work is not primarily concerned with “social organization of patriarchy as a system of power” (Ortner, 2013, para. 5) as the title implies. Instead Bourdieu focuses on the ways in which patriarchy is perpetuated through symbolic violence in the form of the deep, unconscious internalization by women of their own inferiority. In other words, men remain socially dominant in many societies because deep down women accept and believe that this is *the way life should be*. For Bourdieu (see also Foucault, 1976 and de Certeau, 1984) habitus is deeply internalized structure which is powerfully controlling and largely inaccessible to consciousness (Ortner, 2006). Therefore, to Ortner (1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2006, 2013) Bourdieu’s practice theory does not adequately explore the processes which denaturalize class-defined social locations, “the little cracks and openings that constantly appear [in the habitus] as a result of the complex and constantly changing dynamics of practice” (Ortner, 1998, p. 14).

Although the theory of practice developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) is criticized for the reasons disclosed above, it appears to me that his practice theory provides a structure with defined components which are useful as tools for framing, discussing, and
understanding the interactions, beliefs, understandings, and actions of social agents. I propose this with the added caution of that the metatheory is useful if seen as a starting point, a framework, and not taken as doctrine or truth. Bourdieu provided us with a framework and theoretical tools to assist to our studies and understandings of the very “messy” societies that we live in, but it is vital to remember that this framework and these tools are themselves “made up”; they are concepts crafted and birthed from an individual social agent. His framework leaves room for social agency and it does not have to be (and should not be) viewed as deterministic and static. All of the components within the framework are relational and transmutable, which is what allows the metatheory to be more fluid than it is critiqued for. Additionally, there is evidence to defend the position that habitus and power structures do not necessarily remain buried in the internalized unconscious (see Abrams & Ingram, 2013, chameleon habitus). It is in this spirit with which I apply Bourdiesian theory.

The Promise of Critical Pedagogy

A working class ethos leading to self-elimination of certain future educational and occupational options derives from an assessment that schools offer little chance of success for those without much dominant cultural capital. Traditional pedagogy demands that style rather than content be the mechanism whereby cultural privilege is reinforced and cultural disadvantage is left unattended. In other words, traditional teaching styles and school rules are more aligned with middle class norms; therefore, middle class students are more likely to be perceived by teachers, school officials, and other students as better behaved and more intelligent. However, this has more to do with the habitus of
middle class students being more congruent with the field of the school than actual innate intelligence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Mullen, 2010). Macro-level patterns of social class inequality and unequal distribution of dominant, traditional cultural capital are linked to micro-level processes of pedagogy, evaluation, and curriculum. In essence, school is not the same for everyone (Bourdieu, 1977; Swartz, 1977). Critical, non-traditional pedagogy, such as service-learning or justice-learning, may be one method of counteracting the middle class privilege of the classroom (Mitchell, 2008).

However, as research leads to more awareness and understanding about the far-reaching influences educational systems can have on the ultimate life paths of individuals and the make-up of societies, effective changes can begin to be enacted in pedagogy and policy. “Schools are complex systems. They can be sites where existing hierarchies are reproduced, and they can be places where these very same hierarchies are disrupted and possibilities for class mobility are created” (Horvath & Davis, 2011, p. 143). Horvath and Davis (2011) continue by saying that it is unclear how schools accomplish both of these roles and which role predominates, but they feel that the latter can become predominant when schools have the right resources and approaches. The right resources and approaches will likely differ between institutions due to the populations served and the needs they have, but it is possible that engaged pedagogies such as service-learning may be part of the solutions found by some institutions (Scales et al., 2006).

Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy and social movement which combines education with critical theory (Freire, 1970). Kincheloe (2005) writes that “critical pedagogy is grounded on a social and educational vision of justice and equality
Critical pedagogy is influenced by postmodern, postcolonial, anti-racist, feminist, and queer theories and has focused on examining and dismantling societal inequalities based upon social class, religion, race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and another diverse identity dimensions. Friere (1970) emphasized the goals of critical pedagogy in critiquing and disrupting traditional, oppressive educational regimes of power and knowledge to the end of bringing about societal change. These goals are furthered in the modern critical work of educators such as bell hooks, Peter McLaren, Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg, Ira Shor, Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Parker Palmer and others. In particular, McLaren (2015) describes, revolutionary critical pedagogy, a social movement for the creation of a democratic, socialist alternative to capitalism.

Through critical pedagogy students are challenged to think critically about their education, encouraging them to recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts which structure them. Building upon Freire’s work, more contemporary scholars have developed critical pedagogy into a praxis oriented “educational movement, guided by passion and principle to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action (Giroux, 2010, para. 1). Practicing critical pedagogy involves re-examining and reconstructing the curriculum, roles, and power structure within a classroom. Rather than the traditional banking system of education which emphasizes the consuming of knowledge by passive students, critical pedagogy emphasizes that education could become the practice of freedom if students
were taught to become active, critical subjects (Freire, 1970, hooks, 1994). Education becomes “liberatory when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labor” (hooks, 1994, p. 14).

Such transformations of classrooms and how learning is achieved can be difficult and students may be resistant to critical pedagogy because it is not the type of education they are comfortable with and acculturated to. The role of the critical instructor then becomes crucial because students need to be assisted in separating themselves from the unconscious, unconditional acceptance of the way life is. Once students become conscious of the power structures which impact their lives, they must become equipped to critically examine and question such hierarchies. Such a restructuring of education can be liberating, but can also (and should) result in a redistribution of power and authority within the classroom. As students become active, critical agents participating in and owning their own education, power is redistributed amongst the group and the instructor becomes a co-learner or fluid facilitator (hooks, 1994, Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 2000; Shor, 1980). Shor (1980) describes this classroom structure to be supportive of the development of each student’s intellectual character, rather than one in which students simply learn to mimic the style of the professor. When instructors become aware of themselves both as practitioners and as individuals, they can begin to teach students in non-threatening and anti-discriminatory manners. To this end, self-actualization should become the goal of both instructor and students (hooks, 1994). Critical pedagogy achieved in this environment becomes engaged pedagogy, with all classroom stakeholders actively participating in and constructing learning (hooks, 1994). In theory
such pedagogical practice would not privilege one student over another as all classroom participants are active agents in critiquing and constructing knowledge.

**Higher Education and SES**

Beyond the work of Bourdieu, social class continues to be a heavily researched and emphasized theme within the fields of education and sociology. Education, in particular, has long been “centrally positioned within sociological theories of class re/production, playing an important role in ensuring either the reproduction of (middle class) privileges or (working-class) disadvantages” (Archer, 2003, p. 5). Yet, within U. S. society there is a strong cultural belief in the principle of meritocracy, which underlies the prevalent belief that success in school and work is and ought to be determined by the talents and efforts of an individual (McCall, 2013). While the principle of meritocracy appears logical, in practice it does not always pan out. There are more influences on an individual’s success than talent and effort and there are obstacles encountered in life that effort and ability cannot overcome (Mijs, 2015). These findings align with Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and the theory of social reproduction discussed above. Mijs (2015, p. 15) found that “societal institutions seriously distort the meritocratic process in increasing inequalities rather than providing the level playing field” desired by policy makers. Individuals have unequal starting positions, often undeserved, which strongly influence the trajectory of their lives. Social class constitutes one such starting position because classes “are positions in social space defined by economic and cultural capital. People are born into those spaces and being born there has consequences” (Ortner, 1998, p. 13). However, because the principle of meritocracy is so widely believed in and promoted in
U. S. society, it legitimatizes societal inequities as justly deserved, resulting in belief in individual fault rather than social injustice (i. e. symbolic violence and suffering) (Mijs, 2015). So, while many students of low SES have turned to higher education for upward social mobility, their efforts and talents may be thwarted by the barriers within a U. S. educational system which privileges the middle to upper classes.

**Barriers to Higher Education for Low SES Students**

Historically in the U. S., it is widely believed that if a person is intelligent, capable, and determined, it is in society’s best interest to educate her and that she will attend college (Adam, 2006). In fact, two of the terms used most frequently to describe American higher education are “equitable” and “accessible” (Astin & Osequera, 2004). However, as the emphasis in financial aid has turned from grants to loans, education has increasingly become a commodity, something to be purchased (Adam, 2006), and low income students are definitely disadvantaged (Nelson, 2011). This changing viewpoint on education has had many consequences, including the watering down of content, grade inflation, increase in part-time teachers, higher emphasis on activities outside of the classroom (including athletics), heightened student debt load, and an increasing number of students attending community colleges and low-tier institutions. This last category is particularly true of low income students and students of color, many of whom never apply to selective institutions and frequently undermatch or attend an institution below their academic ability (Adam, 2006; Hoxby & Avery, 2012; Jaschik 2012). Because of these many negative consequences, which particularly impact low income students, federal legislators have renewed focus on the cost of higher education and what
institutions are doing to assist students in affording college (Kahlenburg, 2014; McGuire, 2014).

While it is true that members of many underrepresented groups have more access to higher education than they did 40-50 years ago (Astin & Osequera, 2004), we continue to see social, racial, and ethnic stratification in higher education increasing in recent years (Adam, 2006; Hart & Hubbard, 2010; Lederman, 2010). In particular, the gap in college attendance between high and low income students is growing and has surpassed the racial gap (Adam, 2006; Carnevale & Strohl, 2010; Selingo & Brainard, 2006). This remains true even though college participation rates for low income students have tripled over the last half of the 20th century (Timpane & Hauptman, 2004). Lederman (2010) writes that this stratification is heavily influenced by the heightened selectivity of many colleges, which is strongly influenced by middle and upper class parents chasing selective colleges for their kids. “Selectivity in this case is defined heavily by the traditional measure of standardized test scores, on which underrepresented minority students and those from low income backgrounds historically score much lower” (Lederman, 2010, para. 5). Additionally, the traditional recruiting strategies and territories many selective institutions employ never reach many low income areas or are ineffective with those student populations (Hoxby & Avery, 2012).

Whether a student earns a bachelor’s degree is largely determined by that student’s social class (Selingo & Brainard, 2006). The most consistent factor in academic achievement is a student’s socioeconomic status, and it is still true that fewer poor students attend college. Of those that do, fewer complete degrees, and fewer finish
in four years or less (Howard, 2001; Selingo & Brainard, 2006). While we do see higher
diversity in those students who attend college, the majority of these students, particularly
low income students, attend nonselective, lower tier, 4- and 2- year institutions where
they are disproportionally represented (Adam, 2006; Astin & Osequera, 2004; Carnevale
The latter statistic is important because at schools with larger institutional endowments
more money is typically spent on instruction and financial aid, and low income students
who benefit from that financial support often thrive academically at such institutions
(Hoxby & Avery, 2012; McLoughlin 2011, 2012). Financial aid has tripled over the past
decade for wealthier families and only raised 55% for low income families (Selingo &
Brainard, 2006). In a recent analysis done by the Education Trust of more than 1,000
higher education institutions, it was determined that only five served low income students
successfully based on enrollment, net price, and graduation rates (Nelson, 2011). The
same study particularly criticized many public flagship institutions for directing their
grant aid toward programs that help high-achieving students who do not necessarily need
the assistance. These public, flagship institutions typically give out financial aid in a
manner that disadvantages low income students; in fact, they spend about the same
amount on aid for low income students as they do on aid for students from much
wealthier families who don’t really need the financial assistance (Nelson, 2011).

Disadvantages extend past enrollment and financial aid packages for low income
students. By age 24, only 10% of low SES students have earned a bachelor’s degree,
compared to 71% of students from the wealthiest quartile. This is important because
earning a degree is key in determining future social class status, with a person possessing a bachelor’s degree earning significantly more money than those with only a 2-year degree or a high school diploma (Adair, 2001; Selingo & Brainard, 2006). Adair (2001) goes on to write that a college education can alter the lives of poor students beyond their financial and social class status, transforming the ways that they “think, write, speak, act, work, parent, befriend, and love” (p. 219); in essence, their habitus. Even though college accessibility and affordability have been emphasized by politicians and the populace alike for some time, this situation has not been improving as is evidenced by the fact that “a generation after the US government made a massive commitment to making college education available to all, minority and low income access is declining, financial aid is going to students who could manage without it, and the middle class is finding more friends in Congress than are the poor” (Orfield, 1992, p. 337). This impresses upon us that college accessibility for lower income students is not a new concern. In fact, Astin and Osequera (2004) conclude that higher education in the U. S. is “more socioeconomically stratified today than at any time during the past three decades” (p. 338). Thus, even after decades of study and policy-making, “the college experience has become more disparate” (Mullen, 2010, p. 2). This increased socioeconomic stratification is of concern because while education is important for all citizens:

it is absolutely essential to those who must go on to face continued obstacles of racism, classism, and sexism, to those who have been distanced and disenfranchised from the U. S. mainstream culture, and to those who have suffered lifetimes of oppression and marginalization. (Adair, 2001, p. 219)
The renewed focus on higher education and low income students by the Obama administration is yet another reminder that after decades of awareness, the problem still has not been adequately addressed (Kahlenberg, 2014).

Available financial aid is not the only determining factor in where a student decides to attend college. O’Connor-Duffy (2008) found that at Radcliffe College between the years 1940-1970, relatively few working class students attended and that this percentage remained relatively stable over time, even as financial aid increased for these students. The process through which a student chooses a college is complex and may be understood within the context of that student’s individual habitus, that person’s “set of dispositions which incline agents to act and react in certain ways” (Thompson, 1991, p. 12). McDonough (1997) found that students make college choices within the context of implicit and explicit messages from their social and organizational backgrounds. Students with a similar socioeconomic status (SES) and academic ability tend to choose similar schools, and these choices are qualitatively different from those made by students with similar academic ability but different SES. This is likely related to shared characteristics between the habitus of students within the same SES group. Students feel entitled to a particular kind of education based on class socialization, and this entitlement is a joint product of family and school influences. In essence, a student’s cultural capital affects the level and quality of the college education that student intends to acquire and will actually limit the number of alternatives that student considers (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; McDonough, 1997). Therefore, individual habitus heavily contributes to the undermatching of many low SES students with higher education institutions.
There are other difficulties facing low SES students aspiring to college careers. Low SES students may receive little to no encouragement from parents or guardians in areas of education or careers. In fact, they may even encounter resistance to their efforts to further their education or training. Nicol and Yee (2012) refer to this phenomenon as “crabs in a barrel, that is the idea that when one is perceived to be better, getting ahead, or getting out of the barrel, the others grab them and pull them back in” (p. 179). This perceived lack of support or active resistance could be due to lack of knowledge, as well as a lack of financial support (Miller & Kastberg, 1995). Even if support and encouragement is received from family and friends, difficulties can still arise.

Oftentimes, low SES students face difficulties transitioning between home and college, feeling out of place in both fields. This can leave low SES students with a feeling of cultural disconnect and isolation (i.e. hysteresis) as well as an estrangement from family and friends if they pursue a college career (Rendon, 1996). In addition to the academic challenges faced, low SES students also often have to face “considerable identity work, and the discomforts generated when habitus confronts a starkly unfamiliar field” (Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010, p. 120). When students are confronted with two conflicting social fields, such as home and university, they can experience what Bourdieu (2000) identified as a cleft habitus, a destabilized or divided habitus. Ingram (2011) describes this phenomenon as a habitus tug in which the differing tastes, practices, and dispositions dominant in different fields are in competition for supremacy. Reay, Crozier & Clayton (2009) have found that some students can succeed in this process through creative and multi-faceted adaptations of identity development. The authors describe this
as “dispositions of self-scrutiny and self-improvement – almost a constant fashioning and re-fashioning of the self but one that still retains key valued aspects of a working-class self” (Reay et al., 2009, p. 1103). While experiencing a cleft habitus, or habitus tug, does create stress and the necessity for often extensive identity work, some researchers have found that individuals who successfully negotiate conflicting fields often are able to do so through developing the ability to become adaptable and reflexive (Abrams & Ingram, 2013; Ingram, 2011; Reay et al. 2009; Rutherford, 1990). These individuals benefit from the unique positioning within “third space,” a privileged and reflexive position for a social agent to occupy. Bhabha (1990) described this third space in terms of cultural hybridity which “displaces the histories that constitute it and . . . gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation or meaning and representation” (p. 211). Abrams and Ingram (2013) found that the displacement of histories that occurs within third space “creates a cleavage in the habitus that can generate dynamic processes of habitus revision” (p. 3). Through this identity work some social agents achieve the development of a chameleon habitus which allows them to maintain multiple identities and successfully negotiate diverse fields (Abrams & Ingram, 2013). While this is possible, not all low income students are ultimately successful in achieving a chameleon habitus.

It is not only lack of support from family and friends that can negatively impact a student’s institutional choice or decision to attend college. Public schools and public policies can also have an impact. A major focus, both past and present, of public policy has been increasing enrollment of low income students in colleges, but not on the
importance of proper preparation and their resulting performance once they enroll (McGuire, 2014; Timpane & Hauptman, 2004). In addition, there is not a corresponding focus on where low income students choose to enroll or on the “hierarchical arrangement of American higher education institutions and the distribution of students within that system” (Astin & Osequera, 2004, p. 322). Timpane and Hauptman (2004) also point out that there is a lack of targeting in public policy. Most public policies benefit the middle class and do not have an effective focus on low income students. Low tuition at state schools takes away subsidies that low income students need. Additionally, K-12 teacher training rarely includes preparation on working with the special needs of low income students, which directly contributes to their level of preparedness for college (Howard, 2001; Timpane & Hauptman, 2004). In other words, these students are neither developing the habitus nor obtaining the cultural capital needed in order to effectively succeed once enrolled in college. Schooling aids middle class students in developing habitus and capital that fit within a college context, enabling them to then generate further habitus and capital through educational and social interactions in that setting. Working class students may also be able to do this, but fewer have such opportunities, and it is more difficult for them. In other words, the structures of primary and secondary schools, and later colleges, “interweave with the middle class students’ capitals to perpetuate privilege and advantage them further” (Crozier, Reay, Clayton, Colliander, & Grinstead, 2008, p. 175). Additionally, working class students are often required to take remedial courses, paying full tuition, in order to obtain skills they should have received in K-12. This results in the acquisition of more debt for a population already at greater risk
to drop out prior to graduation and to default on college loans (Timpane & Hauptman, 2004). Enrollment in remedial coursework can also lead to the further social and educational stigmatization of these students in the eyes of faculty, staff, and peers. “Institutions need to avoid the tendency to place developmental-education programs and the academically underprepared students they serve at the margins of institutional life” (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008, p. 50). Instead Engstrom and Tinto (2008) recommend avoiding add-on approaches such as remedial courses and consider innovative supportive learning environments and strategies such as learning communities. Remedial coursework lengthens an already long road to graduation that many low SES students never successfully traverse.

Even if a low income student manages to vault all the hurdles put before her prior to enrolling in college, it is unlikely that the higher educational institution itself will provide her with the resources she needs to succeed. Academic, financial, and social support programs at colleges rarely provide targeted programs for low SES students (Barratt, 2012; Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Howard, 2001). Additionally, faculty and administrators are not provided with the training and resources to best support these students, unlike that provided for students in different marginalized groups (Barratt, 2012; Howard, 2001). There are many women’s and ethnic studies programs across the country, but only two working class studies programs (CSWCL, 2015; CWCS, 2015). In fact, Vander Putten (2001) argues, “White students from working-class backgrounds are largely invisible on college campuses” (p. 16). Walpole (2008) found that Black American, low SES students had less contact with faculty, studied less, were less
involved with student organizations, worked more, and had lower grades than their higher SES peers. Vander Putten (2001) found that at a historically black college or university (HBCU), race was never mentioned as an obstacle, only social class. He found this particularly enlightening because as the study was completed at an HBCU, he felt that this meant race was controlled for. Apparently, this situation has not changed much over the last several decades and also impacts other races because Spangler (1979) found that White, low SES college men also had to work more and were less likely to participate in campus social life and peer integration. Ganaposki (2001) wrote on her experiences as a poor, White college student. She states that impoverished students often felt the need to hide their status in college in order to avoid prejudice from college staff, faculty, and students. She describes feeling too embarrassed to participate in a class discussion of welfare. She felt that poverty was associated with low intelligence and at times race, citing her experience of applying for a need based scholarship that was only advertised in the African Heritage House and being told it was only for people who really needed it (i.e. Black students). What these different sources show is that even among different racial groups and genders, low SES students share many characteristics in common. This is one reason why socioeconomic status needs further examination within the context of higher education; it spans across many different marginalized populations (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender).

Arzy, Davies, and Harbour (2008) found that low income students felt more connected to friends from high school than to college peers; did not feel connected to college faculty; were reluctant to speak in class or bring attention to themselves; and
suffered from feelings of financial inferiority and fears of failing. All of these are related to challenges with communication and can contribute to a profound sense of being an outsider; having difficulty forging new connections with peers, faculty, and staff; feeling the need to hide one’s true identity; and to changing language and dialect, known as code-switching (Delpit, 1988; Priest, 2009). Higher education requires a high level of proficiency with academic discourse, a skill that students from marginalized populations rarely enter university fields already possessing (Priest, 2009). Code-switching is an idea developed by Delpit (1988), who argued that marginalized students should not be taught to simply submit passively to the alternate code of academic discourse valued within schools. Rather, they should be encouraged to value the code [language] they are already in possession of, as well as to understand the power inherent in mastering the code of academic discourse. In this way, students “learn the new code associated with academic writing [or discussion], but do not abandon the code associated with their social background” (Priest, 2009, p. A-76).

Developing the ability to successfully code-switch is one of many ways in which low SES students have to work harder than their middle to upper class peers within the social fields of higher education. Needing to develop the abilities to successfully navigate and communicate within higher education can be daunting and stressful to low SES students who may also wrestle with feelings of needing to work harder to prove themselves. This may develop into a belief that they have succeeded due to chance, which could manifest as a fear of being found out (Ganaposki, 2001; Miller & Kastberg, 1995). These feelings can lead to the development of the imposter phenomenon
(syndrome), which involves the development of intense feelings of having attained success because they were at the right place at the right time and not because of their hard work, intellect, or abilities (Clance, 1985; Clance & Imes, 1978); in other words, they struggle with a sense of not belonging, namely, hysteresis (Bourdieu, 1977; Vander Putten, 2001). All of these negative feelings and difficulties add unneeded stress to an already struggling and at risk population of college students.

**Supporting Low SES Students**

There are recommendations for how colleges can reach out to low SES students. On campuses, classism may contribute divisively by fostering negative interactions among students (Gilmore & Harris, 2008). Because of this, campuses need to include class and income status within their definitions and discussions of diversity in order to fight classism and remove classist behaviors from campus life, much as women’s and multicultural programs and centers have done for race and gender (Vander Putten, 2001). Faculty and staff should be educated on how to effectively support low SES students, and they should also be made aware of their own possible stereotypic responding, the natural affinity to favor one’s own in-group, and how this impacts their services to students (Delpit, 1988; Gilmore & Harris, 2008; Priest, 2009). Barratt (2012) recommends raising the awareness of student, staff, and faculty social class identity and origins and initiating conversations on social class across campus in order to “lead to awareness and knowledge of how social class affects student and staff perception and participation on campus” (p. 6). Issues surrounding social class should also be worked into the extracurriculum (Barratt, 2012).
Rendon (1996) recommends helping low SES students adjust to college life without encouraging breaks in their existing relationships or from their culture. This can be done through fostering an environment that encourages convergence between what these students bring and what higher education has to offer. Efforts such as these may help students as they begin to negotiate feelings of habitus tug (Ingram, 2011). Somech and Bogler (1999) advise colleges to establish orientation programs for new low SES students to ease acculturation to higher education and provide them with access to the hidden curriculum. Programs such as these may help students to develop cultural capital needed for success on campus. Such programs should involve mentors and role models who actively reach out to low income students in order to get them involved in academic and campus life and offer support and guidance throughout their academic careers (Rendon, 1996; Timpane & Hauptman, 2004). The most influential factor in low SES students attending and succeeding in college is positive mentor support (Howard, 2001). Engstrom and Tinto (2008) recommend going a step further by utilizing learning communities, which they found both academically and socially beneficial for low income students. Priest (2009) recommends transparent teaching strategies that accept, value, and validate the “knowledge students of low SES backgrounds bring. Effective strategies are based on drawing students into the debates, teaching them the questions, and encouraging them to find their own solutions” (p. A-80). Additionally, opportunities to interact with faculty outside of the classroom may assist low SES students in gaining the social and cultural capital necessary for success in higher education (Walpole, 2003). Some institutions recognize this capital deficit and have instituted efforts to assist low
SES students in gaining cultural capital, such as tuition credits for participating in campus life, common reading initiatives, and cultural activity graduation requirements (Lederman, 2013). While low SES students may be lacking in dominant capital within a university setting, it is important to realize that low SES students may not lack aspiration (as they are so often accused of), but rather they may only have access to “scripts” – comprising economic, social, and cultural resources – that may provide less direction for academic performance, thereby rendering it harder to achieve their desired outcomes (Bok, 2010). What Bok (2010) refers to as scripts, Bourdieu (1977) referred to as habitus. Increased interaction with knowledgeable and caring faculty and staff mentors can help low SES students develop the skills they need to navigate and succeed in higher education.

Rendon (1996) recommends also employing connected teaching, where the faculty is both a teacher and a mentor, making the curriculum more relevant and meaningful to these students in order to meet them where they are, but also still challenging and empowering them. The unique differences in students’ lives and experiences should be accounted for when designing academic programs in order to provide learning environments that allow for all students to learn more deeply and intimately (Howard, 2001). These pedagogical recommendations are not likely to be met through traditional “sage on the stage” practices, but rather through more impactful, counternormative, critical teaching strategies such as service-learning, which will be explored below.
While all of the above recommendations are worthwhile for colleges to take into consideration, Ganaposki (2001) reminds us that institutions should recognize and reach out to low income students, but not in predetermined ways. She calls on institutions to ask low income students what they need, and to help them in those ways, not to only offer what it is assumed low income students need. While there are many strategies colleges can employ to aid low SES students in the further development of their habitus and cultural capital in order to better navigate the middle to upper class world of academia, it is vitally important that these students still be allowed to retain their own background, relationships, and culture. It should not be a goal of colleges to encourage students to erase their past and who they are, but rather help them to find ways to grow, develop, and succeed in higher education through learning new skills and capitalizing on those skills they already possess (Delpit, 1988; Priest, 2009). This is the development of the adaptability and reflexivity that Rutherford (1990) and Reay, Crozier, and Clayton (2009) wrote of. These are students whose voices are not commonly heard throughout the academy, but it is important that colleges begin turning up the volume.

**Service-learning**

Service-learning is an experiential teaching and learning strategy that engages students in activities that address identified community needs. Ideally, service-learning is reciprocal, enriching both the learning and the service (NSLC, 2005). This pedagogical strategy provides students with opportunities that are intentionally designed to promote student learning and development, partly through structured and assessed academic reflection that is incorporated throughout the experience (Jacoby, 1996).
History of Service-learning

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, U. S. campuses and communities alike were experiencing much upheaval and change. The Vietnam War, War on Poverty, and Civil Rights movements are some examples of issues with which the nation was struggling during that time. Student activists and concerned educators began “chipping away at what they perceived as a monolithic, teacher-centered, alienating, and irrelevant education system that failed to involve and serve an increasingly diverse population of learners” (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p. 1). Some may argue that not much has changed. A small number of individuals were concerned with connecting elements in the social movements of these times. They believed that “action in communities and structured learning could be combined to provide stronger service and leadership in communities and deeper, more relevant education for students” (Stanton et al., 1999, p. 1). These original goals of service-learning aligned strongly with ideals and goals of Freirian critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970). Many worked independently and in ignorance of similar work being done by other individuals elsewhere. Eventually, however, they would find each other and create the foundations of the service-learning field and pedagogy that is known today.

The conceptual antecedents of this pedagogy can be traced to the philosophy and practice of the extension education programs that were a product of the land grant acts of the 1860s, in progressive education and settlement house activities in the early 1900s, in New Deal work programs, and in immigrant education and civil rights organizing movements (Pollack, 1996). Service-learning pedagogy is a type of experiential learning,
a teaching/learning method first described by David A. Kolb (1984). Many authors attribute scholars such as Kolb, Jack Mezirow, John Dewey, Paolo Freire, and Maxine Greene as having impacts on the early practice and theory. In particular, Mezirow, Freire, and Kolb stressed that at the heart of all learning lies the way that students process experience. To these scholars, learning is cyclical, beginning with experience, followed by critical reflection, and translating into action. The latter then also becomes a concrete experience upon which to reflect (Rogers, 1996). Service-learning is based upon this experiential learning cycle, and the learning and developmental outcomes claimed are numerous and varied.

**Service-learning Outcomes**

Possibly one of the most referenced studies on the learning outcomes of service-learning is Eyler and Giles’s 1999 book, *Where’s the Learning in Service-Learning?* This book discusses the findings of research conducted at 20 participating institutions with 1500 students, 2/3 of which had participated in service-learning experiences, and 1/3 of which had not. Data were collected via pre/post surveys and interviews. Eyler and Giles (1999) found that service-learning allows students to serve with diverse populations. When this service is well integrated into the course and is accompanied with best practice reflection, it helps to break down stereotypes, increase tolerance, encourage personal and interpersonal development, and increase connection to the institution and surrounding community. Students report that they learn more and are more able to apply their knowledge outside of class because they are more engaged and curious about the issues they experience in the community. Since the learning experience
becomes personal, students report wanting to work harder in service-learning classes because the outcomes truly matter. Furthermore, through well integrated service-learning, students increase their ability to use critical thinking skills, and they become more open to new ideas. Service-learning impacts perspective transformation in students. Students become more aware of social problems and their causes and more interested in civic engagement for affecting change to increase social justice. Active and effective citizenship requires the personal qualities, interpersonal skills, understanding, and cognitive development that are strengthened through service-learning. All of the learning outcomes identified for service-learning lead to committed community participation, one of the historic goals of higher education (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Other studies have found evidence that agrees with Eyler and Giles (1999). Students in service-learning sections of a course on contemporary political issues were significantly more likely than those in traditional sections to self-report that they had performed up to potential, had learned to apply principles from the course to new situations, and had increased their awareness of societal problems. Classroom learning and overall course grades were significantly higher for students in the service-learning sections. In addition, pre and post test data showed significant effects from participation in community service on the personal values and orientations of students (Markus, Howard, & King, 1993). Astin and Sax (1998) found that undergraduates participating in service enhanced their academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility. Swick and Rowls (2000) found that service-learning positively influenced the personal, professional, academic, and career functioning of pre-service teachers.
Beling (2003) compared physical therapy graduate students in a service-learning section and a traditional section of a third year course. Service-learning enhanced the knowledge and attitudes of physical therapy students toward older adults, a main objective of the course, and imparted better learning (Beling, 2003). In 2004, Kearney found that service-learning in a first year pharmaceutical course was an effective pedagogy for achieving positive educational outcomes such as critical thinking, communication and social interaction, decision-making, and social awareness and responsibility. It also contributed to the achievement of professional practice-based outcomes in pharmacy education.

Wang and Rodgers (2006) found that service-learning courses had a positive effect on students’ cognitive development, and that this effect increased when a social justice emphasis was employed. Leung, Liu, Wang, and Chen (2007) found that most medical students enrolled in a program with a service-learning curriculum had achieved what they were required to learn, especially the training in communication skills and ability to identify social issues. Many of the above studies were based on students’ self-reports, but some also include examining students’ reflections and interviewing students.

The former studies all dealt with undergraduate or graduate college and university students. However, there is evidence that service-learning positively affects primary and secondary school students as well. Strait (2008) found, using pre and post-tests, that 3rd-5th graders involved in a service-learning project directed at working with the homeless showed an increase in understanding and empathy towards this community as they progressed through grade levels. They also began to change their behavior accordingly, such as not tolerating negative comments or teasing about the homeless. Scales et al.
(2006) examined three large data sets in order to study the relations among 6th-12th grade students’ community service and service-learning experiences, academic success, and socioeconomic status (SES). Principals in high poverty, urban, and majority non-White schools were more likely to judge the impact of service-learning on student attendance, engagement, and academic achievement as very positive. Students that participated in more service and service-learning had higher grades, attendance, and other academic success outcomes (Scales et al., 2006).

The above research all points to many positive learning and developmental outcomes for service-learning impacting a wide range of areas such as academics, career skills, interpersonal skills, civic engagement skills, and personal development. However, the majority of service-learning studies have examined the “ideal type” of service-learning student: full-time, White, traditionally aged, single, childless, and economically privileged (Butin, 2010). Research and service-learning programs which focus on the “ideal type” of service-learner assume that this pedagogy forces students to confront differences while interacting with populations unlike their own. However, for students not matching the description of the “ideal type” student, service-learning often puts them into the position of serving populations that mirror their own racial, ethnic, class, and/or cultural identities (Wylie, 2014). For this reason, it is imperative that the impacts of this pedagogy on students who do not fall into the “ideal type” category also be examined before it can be universally claimed as beneficial to student learning and development. Green (2003) calls for similar work, writing that “we must begin theorizing how service-learning is experienced differently by those from different groups and look closely at the
gaps between our theories of service-learning and our theories of subject position(s) of race, class, gender, and sexuality” (p. 276).

**Service-learning and Students Outside of the “Ideal”**

There are not many studies specifically examining service-learning and diverse students; although, the number is growing as researchers continue to delve into all aspects of this pedagogy in order to better understand and strengthen it. In relation to race, Coles (1999) found that students of color didn’t feel as if they needed a service-learning experience because they felt that they had plenty of experience with diverse communities and poverty. Students of color also felt uncomfortable discussing issues of poverty and race in classrooms where their numbers were typically lower than those of their White peers. The term “service” can be problematic for some students as it can have negative connotations when contextualized within certain cultures (Espenschied-Reilly & Iverson, 2014; Iverson & Espenschied-Reilly, 2010). For example, some marginalized students may have troublesome histories with the term and concept of service-learning, and some may even question the value of service-learning, as their families may be in service positions (Warren, 1998). However, some studies have found that service-learning courses are more attractive to students of color, as well as women (Cohen, 1995). Cohen (1995) found that all students expressed shock and surprise at the evidence of poverty and racial oppression at their service site, a low income school, but that students of color came to class with a critical perspective on race and class relationships in the U. S. and a sense of ways in which education reproduced these relationships. These students differed from their White peers in that they gained a strengthened sense of their identity with
communities of color, and they also discovered language which helped them to articulate their critique of U. S. education and society (achieving a goal of critical pedagogy).

In her qualitative case study of three Black American male high school students required to complete 100 service-learning hours as a graduation requirement, Winans-Solis (2014) found that service-learning legitimized lived experiences and enabled the re-writing of self through the construction of new social and intellectual spaces. By utilizing service-learning, the charter school these three students attended was able to engage marginalized students as knowledgeable, capable change agents. This communicated the message that students mattered within the school and the community, which ultimately empowered and legitimized these students. “Service-learning was a way of exercising power that became empowering when it permitted the marginalized student a means of critiquing and transforming oppressive structures while recognizing the ways their own narratives maintained harmful arrangements of power” (Winans-Solis, 2014, p. 619).

Low SES students may also experience opportunities for identity development through participating in service-learning. Henry (2005) completed multiple interviews with three, female, low SES students at Bucknell who had participated in service-learning. Henry (2005) concluded that working in their service-learning capacity allowed her subjects the experience of being able to construct their identities, while also coming to understand that these constructions are socially based. These three women began to understand the privileged and the underprivileged aspects of their lives and how these
two components meshed to make up who they currently were and who they were becoming (Henry, 2005).

Lee (2005) found that low SES students described a desire to “give back to my community” as a strong motivation to enroll in a service-learning course. When asked the same question, middle to upper class students referred to the larger social good without making connections between themselves and the community served. Lee (2005) found that low SES students were more comfortable at the service site, a low income school, than other students, and that this was more a class factor than a race factor. After the experience, all students felt their sense of civic responsibility was increased, and all perceived the class diversity as good for learning. There were no differences in these results between socioeconomic groups.

In addition, Shadduck-Hernandez (2006) used critical ethnography to examine how immigrant and refugee undergraduates understood their participation in a service-learning course during which they mentored children from similar ethno-cultural backgrounds. She found that students came to understand that resisting and challenging the status quo can have an impact on their lives. They both confirmed and affirmed their own identities. They empowered their communities and themselves through the use of critical thought and activism, and through their artistic potential, they were able to impact social change. Shadduck-Hernandez (2006) found that while marginalized students benefit from diverse interactions, they also benefit from interacting among themselves. This allows the development of close peer relationships, political identities, and creative outlets that help them to better persist in their academics. Thus, while much literature has
claimed that service-learning benefits White students by increasing their interactions with diverse populations, the same service-learning experiences may benefit marginalized students by increasing their interactions with their own in-group.

Reed and Butler (2015) found similar results when they worked along with urban middle school students to create two service-learning initiatives; one aimed at improving literacy and one aimed at breaking the Cradle to Prison Pipeline (CPP). In Reed and Butler’s (2015) study, struggling eighth grade readers helped to develop a reading program for kindergartners. Additionally, sixth graders who had incarcerated parents helped to develop a thriving tutoring and mentoring program for all sixth graders at their school. This program was aimed at helping to prevent students’ own incarcerations in the future. Students in the reading program espoused a desire to help others, became more engaged in academic classes, began reading on their own and to siblings, received fewer suspensions, and demonstrated increased self-efficacy, self-confidence, and collaboration with others. Students in the program aimed at breaking the CPP felt more empathy, efficacy, and excitement about their lives and education. Additionally, students were able to begin reframing individual characteristics that were considered student deficits into assets. Empowering students frequently targeted as the recipients of service to become the designers and givers of service within their own in-groups allowed them to view themselves as powerful leaders and citizens. This allowed their teachers to work with students academically and in ways that promoted socio-emotional growth (Reed & Butler, 2015).
To further confirm that marginalized students often benefit from service-learning, Conley and Hamlin (2009) found that three women students of color who identified as first generation, low income each developed a greater sense of agency and efficacy within academic and civic settings and a newfound concern for social issues and systemic change after participating in a justice-learning, first year seminar course. Justice-learning “lies at the intersection of service-learning and social justice education” (Butin, 2007, p. 177). This distinctive critical form of service-learning fosters a justice-oriented framework that makes the questioning and disruption of unexamined and oppressive dichotomies of how we view the struggle toward equity in education possible. Conley and Hamlin (2009) felt that their findings may indicate that this pedagogical model may be useful for the retention and success of first generation, low income students by making the educational experience more relevant to them.

Yeh (2010) also examined first generation, low income students in a service-learning course and found many promising outcomes. Service-learning promoted students’ academic integration through the acquisition of relevant cultural and social capital, which enabled them to be more successful in college. It was also liberatory and empowering. Service-learning empowered students to develop self-efficacy and autonomy by providing opportunities to engage in self-defined and self-directed projects, serve as a resource to others, and see that they can make a difference. Students developed coping behaviors and problem-solving skills. They used service-learning as a buffer for other stressors. They developed support networks with other students, faculty/staff, and community members that bolstered social competence and social and
academic integration into the university. Service-learning served as a potent mechanism for promoting personal and spiritual exploration and growth. Students were empowered through service-learning, making connections between sociocultural/sociopolitical awareness and educational empowerment. All of these factors contributed to retention and persistence in these students.

Williams and Perrine (2008) found supporting information in their study of low SES students in service-learning courses. They believe there may be a potential link between service-learning and first year retention for low income students, perhaps because students were engaged in structured classroom activities that actively involved them with peers and faculty and helped them make connections to their college environment, all key to college retention. Seeing themselves as potential leaders in the community may have empowered students to take a leadership role and get more involved on campus, potentially promoting retention. Williams and Perrine (2008) concluded that service-learning can be an effective strategy for promoting connections to campus and campus personnel, academic competence, and a sense of social awareness and security for low income students. It is of note that the majority of the above research showing positive outcomes for traditionally marginalized students participating in service-learning involves critical service-learning or justice-learning approaches as opposed to more traditional service-learning approaches. For a full comparison of critical and traditional service-learning approaches see Mitchell (2008).
**Service-learning and Bourdieu**

The practice of service-learning provides an interesting and unique opportunity to apply Bourdieu’s theory. Traditionally, there are two logistical components to a service-learning course, the classroom and the service site. Each of these locations is a separate field (to use Bourdieu’s terminology) with its own social and academic doxa which may be explicit or implied (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2008). Students create knowledge through interactions within each field, but the power structures and social relationships, the “micropolitics” (Foucault, 1976), of each field are significantly different. The classroom is typically a more structured and traditional academic environment, one which low SES students may find challenging to adapt to (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). The service sites in the case of this study are ones involving low SES populations (elementary school in a low income neighborhood, free meal site, and a charitable nursing facility) and may be more familiar to low SES students because they have likely been to similar sites and may be familiar and comfortable in these settings (Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006). Each student enrolled in the course has a unique habitus and possesses different forms and levels of capital, which according to Bourdieu, should influence her or his practice within each separate field. This should lead to different social and academic experiences for each student, and potentially different opportunities for capital development and success in gaining and processing knowledge within the confines of the service-learning course. Additionally, in service-learning, students are asked to translate their experiences at their service sites through the process of structured, academic reflection, which is then assessed for learning and graded. Reflection often takes the form of journaling, papers,
presentations, class discussions, etc., all fairly traditional forms of academic discourse having more in common with the doxa of the classroom than that of the service site.

Bourdieu’s theory of practice may aid in understanding the experiences of low SES students as they navigate the fields of classroom and service site and try to use reflection to translate that experience into learning. More specifically, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus may help to understand any differences student participants describe in their experiences between the two fields. No one characteristic or experience determines a person’s habitus; although, people sharing certain characteristics, such as the same SES, may show some related similarities in habitus. Hence, terminology such as “working class habitus” is employed extensively by researchers such as Reay (1998; 2004) in her work on studying class and gender.

Another compelling reason for utilizing Bourdieu’s theory of practice for examining service-learning is that several research studies have indicated that service-learning has the potential to increase students’ development of social capital, a key indicator of student academic success (Campbell, 2000; D’Agostino, 2010; Hennes, Ball, & Moncheski, 2013; Howard, 2006; Kahne, Chi, & Middaugh, 2006; Puccino & Penniston, 2014). Howard (2006) found that the number of direct service-learning experiences in which a student participated in was significantly correlated with a decline in the number of hours of TV watched; the latter being cited as a contributor to a decline in social capital. Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh (2006) found that utilizing experiential practices like service-learning in high school civics courses have the “potential to meaningfully support the development of key elements of social capital” (p. 405).
D’Agostino (2010) concluded that service-learning involvement can predict social capital post college graduation. Hennes et al. (2013) found that service-learning can lead to the building of social capital, which can lead to the development of further social capital throughout life. Puccino and Penniston (2014) also found that service-learning aided social capital development in community college students; however, they cautioned that “factors beyond the service-learning itself may also contribute to whether and how social capital develops” (p. 204). Because social capital is key to student academic success in Bourdieu’s theory of social class replication through education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), these studies indicate that service-learning could be one method of promoting social capital development in students. This may be one way to begin to chisel away at the socioeconomic success gap within U. S. educational fields.

The above incomplete, yet compelling, information set the stage for this study. It is evident that service-learning may be an effective pedagogical strategy for aiding in the academic success of low SES students for a variety of reasons. It is, therefore, imperative that this be further studied in order to better understand how low SES students understand and experience service-learning courses.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter begins with an overview of the qualitative framework utilized for this research project, which is tied to Bourdieu’s metatheory (reviewed in detail in Ch. 2). The study design is outlined and the research questions, study site, sample, and methodology for data collection and analysis are presented. Potential researcher bias is explored and efforts aimed at reflexive bracketing are described. Afterward, study validity is defended and study limitations are made transparent. This chapter is finalized with detailed descriptions of the seven study participants.

Qualitative Framework

This research utilized a critical constructivist epistemological lens. I utilized responsive interviewing techniques and written artifacts (student reflections) for data analysis. Bourdieu’s practice theory provided a framework for understanding the themes which emerged from data analysis.

Critical Constructivism

Max Horkheimer defined critical theory as an interdisciplinary social theory directed at critiquing and ultimately changing society (Tarr, 2011). Horkheimer furthered this description by declaring critical theory to be a radical, emancipatory version of Marxist theory, which countered positivism (Honneth, 1987; Tarr, 2011). Critical theory perspectives are concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by certain marginalized statuses (Fay, 1987). Proponents of critical theory seek to “reflexively step outside of the dominant ideology in order to create space
for resistive, counter-hegemonic, knowledge production that destabilizes the oppressive material and symbolic relations of dominance” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 31).

Critical theorists seek to comprehend and transform the underlying orders of social life, access subjugated knowledges, and examine the micro-politics of power (Foucault, 1976; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Morrow & Brown, 1994). Ultimately, critical theory aims to create transformative tension within social systems rather than simply producing knowledge that feeds the system (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In other words, critical researchers are attempting to bring to light subjugated or marginalized knowledges and ways of understanding in order to try and alter the existing cultural, political, economic, or social norms that currently exist in an institution or society.

Constructivism is an epistemology through which researchers seek to understand the worlds of others through the development of subjective meanings of their participants’ experiences. “These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meaning into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). The researcher’s goal is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ perceptions of the experience(s) in order to craft a better understanding of how the participants view and understand their world. “The world is socially constructed and what we know about the world always involves a knower and what is to be known. How the knower constructs the known constitutes what we think of as reality” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 2). This indicates that any individual’s reality is relative, or subjective. Typically, these subjective meanings, or realities, are formed through the participants’ social interactions and are influenced by cultural norms that impact the lives
of the individuals (Creswell, 2007). Every knower is both a historical and a social subject, and these spatial and temporal settings impact and shape the subjective constructions of the world. Additionally, individuals and the knowledge they possess are impacted and shaped by history and culture (Kincheloe, 2005). “We create ourselves with the cultural tools at hand. We operate and construct the world and our lives on a particular social, cultural, and historical playing field” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 2). What Kincheloe (2005) is describing in these passages aligns well with how Bourdieu (1977) described the interactions of habitus, capital, and field (see Ch. 2).

Constructivist researchers generate theories or patterns of meaning throughout their work rather than starting with one already in mind (Creswell, 2007). Questions are typically general and broad, leaving meaning construction up to the participants. Critical constructivists are looking to maximize variables in order to craft a more complexly detailed understanding of the social, political, economic, cultural, psychological, and pedagogical world (Kincheloe, 2005; Knoble, 1999). Critical constructivists are particularly concerned with the exaggerated role that power plays in an individual’s construction of reality, as well as in the ways that these processes privilege certain people, while marginalizing others (Kincheloe, 2005). Constructivist researchers often address these processes of interactions among individuals. They focus on the specific contexts in which people exist in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. In constructivism, as in many other qualitative frameworks, the researcher must recognize that her own life experiences impact her interpretations and that she must, therefore, position herself in the research in order to acknowledge that fact.
The end intent of constructivist research is for the researcher to be able to uncover and understand the meanings others have about the world (Creswell, 2007). In other words, “Critical constructivists become detectives of new ways of seeing and constructing the world” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 4).

**Standpoint Theory**

Critical researchers “argue that research should redress past oppression, bring problems to light, and help minorities, the poor, the sidelined and the silenced” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 25). Critical theory, and critical constructivism in particular, holds that knowledge does not exist outside of the perceiver but is instead subjective and depends on the perspective through which it is viewed (Kincheloe, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This heavy emphasis on subjectivity is referred to as standpoint theory because the eyes through which the data are viewed determine the point of view or interpretation ultimately taken (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). A standpoint is an acquired position or view shaped by life experiences that may be shared by members of a social group, who, because of their social status (such as shared social class), experience similar struggles and oppression (Hirschman, 1997). It is important to note, however, that one’s standpoint is partial and can be impacted by multiple identities; all social agents have multiple social identities. The beginnings of standpoint theory reach back to Hegel’s studies of the knowledge and power transfer and creation in the slave-master relationship and Marx’s discussions of how delegation of work in society shapes an individual’s knowledge. More recently, it has been used extensively in critical feminist studies to examine gender relations (Griffin, 2009; Harstock, 2004; Wood, 2008; Wylie, 2003).
Standpoint theory supports strong objectivity, which is a concept described by Harding (1995), who states that the perspectives or viewpoints of individuals from marginalized and oppressed social groups should be taken into account in order to develop more objective constructs and understandings about society and culture. This does not lead to relativism in research. Rather, Harding (1995) writes that strong objectivity unlinks:

- the neutrality ideal from standards for maximizing objectivity, since neutrality is now widely recognized as not only not necessary, not only not helpful, but, worst of all, an obstacle to maximizing objectivity when knowledge-distorting interests and values have constituted a research project. (p. 331)

Strong objectivity allows researchers to update the notion of objectivity, making it more relevant and useful for qualitative research (Harding, 1995). Strong objectivity is a concept valuable in research such as this which aims to uncover knowledge from those who are often found in marginalized positions. People who are subject to oppression and marginalization (such as the working class) may be “epistemically privileged” (Wylie, 2003, p.26) within certain social fields or contexts, such as the service sites utilized in some service-learning classes. Service-learning often attempts to have students confront their own privilege by exposing them to social settings and problems believed new to them – low income schools, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters. However, these settings may not be new or novel to all students, particularly those from marginalized populations, those who may in fact possess first-hand, lived experiences within these settings, which equips them with epistemic privilege (Reed & Butler, 2015;
Winans-Solis, 2014; Wylie, 2003). In other words, marginalized people may possess different or “better” knowledge than people who are relatively privileged (within specific fields or contexts) because of what each typically experiences and how each understands these experiences; however, this privilege should not be automatically assigned (Wylie, 2003). Knowledge uncovered from individuals with epistemic or epistemological privilege forces researchers to question certain societal constructs and beliefs assumed to be factual realities. Research such as this attempts to uncover this knowledge and demonstrate that the existing structures are maintaining social inequalities. Through this study, I inquired into this different or better knowledge Wylie (2003) refers to by speaking with students of working-class backgrounds in order to discover if these claims held true. This was an attempt to discern if 1) their knowledge was in fact privileged in the service-learning environment; 2) what the participants’ views and understandings of service-learning were: 3) and to see if it could be discerned if these views and understandings were in part shaped by their identities as working class students. By employing responsive interviewing with a critical constructivist framework, I attempted to come to understand the experiences of the student participants as they themselves understood them and to use their views and words to inform current academic service-learning practice with the end goal of bettering this practice for the needs of this silenced student population.

**Bourdieu’s Metatheory**

Utilizing a critical constructivist epistemology, I applied Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice (habitus, capital, and field) to frame my understanding of my findings. The
The metatheory of Pierre Bourdieu (reviewed in Ch. 2) is a critical constructivist practice theory of sociology which can be applied to educational settings. The critical stance is embodied within the questioning and exposure of the established societal constructions and cultural norms that allow arbitrarily privileged groups to dominate arbitrarily unprivileged groups (Benatouil, 1999). Bourdieu explained that through his application of this metatheory in his research his end goal was always to aid the oppressed. “I try to help the person who is suffering, to make their situation explicit in a sort of socioanalysis conducted in a friendly and supportive way” (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992, para. 4). Benatouil (1999) elaborates, “[the metatheory] compromises at the same time a theory of the obstacles which it encounters – of their social necessity and sociological meaning- and a theory of their overcoming” (p. 380). Utilizing this metatheory for this study aligned well because Bourdieu’s academic work (and social activism) focused not only on shedding light on societal injustice, but also on exposing it in order to empower the oppressed to overcome it.

Additionally, Bourdieu’s metatheory aligns well with constructivism and standpoint theory because it relies heavily on the perceptions of a particular social agent within the boundaries of a specific social field. How a social agent perceives a social field will be heavily influenced by individual habitus and the capital the agent is in possession of. Therefore, any given social field is perceived differently from the individual standpoint of any given social agent and that perception constitutes the reality of the field for the individual. This is the subjective experience of a social agent as influenced by the objective structures existing within an environment (Benatouil, 1999).
This double truth, objective and subjective, is what constitutes the whole truth of the social world (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Utilizing the critical constructivist metatheory of Bourdieu framed how study participants understood their academic and social experiences within the social field of a private institution and within the context of service-learning classrooms.

**Responsive Interviewing**

I utilized a critical constructivist lens for this work because it aims to divulge how participants understand their experiences. I wanted to come to understand the academic and social experiences as perceived by low SES students within the context of service-learning when the population being served was of similar SES (social class ingroup). This main focus on the participants’ understandings and experiences is what led me to choose to design a study based on self-reported data, specifically, in-depth interviews and written academic reflection assignments. “In-depth interviewing uses individuals as the point of departure for the research process and assumes that individuals have unique and important knowledge about the social world that is ascertainable through verbal communication” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.119). Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe a model of in-depth interviewing that they term responsive interviewing. This model “relies heavily on interpretive constructionist philosophy, mixed with critical theory, and is shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.30). In this model, the interviewer and the interviewee form a relationship of trust, in order to create a safe space for sharing honest information and creating knowledge. I have addressed this in prior interviewing, including pilots for this study, by beginning a
session with getting to know the individual and allowing him or her to get to know me
before we enter into the set interview protocol. I try to find an interest or life event that
we have in common upon which to build rapport. For example, during a conversation
leading up to a pilot interview, a student shared that her mother had recently beat breast
cancer, and I shared that mine had as well. We then swapped stories about our
experiences with our mothers and how we had felt during them, and she even got out
family photos to share with me. This shared experience set a tone of openness and
sharing, which I felt continued throughout the interview. To me, this conversation and
sharing prior to beginning to interview is invaluable to finding common ground and
helping the interviewee feel comfortable enough to share openly. It is a give and take
relationship in which I must also be willing to share when given the opportunity.
However, knowing these initial interactions might also color the responses received
during the more formal interview session, I attempted to guard against leading the
participants or expressing opinions on topics relevant to the actual interview protocols.

The ultimate goal of this interviewing technique focuses on collecting information
of great depth, not merely breadth, and it is also one of mutual respect and sharing. At
times, this may involve spending time talking about topics seemingly unrelated to the
research goals (like in my above example), and at times it meant not conducting the
interview as planned on that particular day and time. There were some instances when
participants needed to discuss issues or simply just be heard by someone outside of their
class and institution. On those occasions, I left the recorder off and tried to be an
impartial ear for the participants who needed it. There were also times when participants
initiated exchanges with me via phone or email both related and unrelated to the study, which I attended to. Through these actions I remained flexible in my interviewing methodology in order to accommodate participants. This is the model of interviewing that I followed for this research. Other research methodologies, such as case study, were considered. However, because I wanted to give voice to low SES students and how they interpreted their academic and social experiences in service-learning courses, I purposefully chose to focus on in-depth interviewing. I felt that this methodology was the one that would allow me to best develop rapport and relationships with my participants, as well as be the one that would truly allow me to focus on their words, feelings, and thoughts.

Because the process of structured reflection is so central to the pedagogy of service-learning, I also examined how the participants translated their experiences from actions at the service site into assessed academic knowledge through the process of reflection and how successful the participants felt at that process. I was interested in how low SES students perceived their academic and social experiences within each separate field of classroom and service site and how they felt this perception impacted their learning, as well as how it impacted their social acclimation to the university setting. Again, Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) responsive interviewing model fit well within this research framework. By focusing on the voices of the participants, I gained access to their perceptions and constructed realities that may or may not have been disclosed in class or in reflections. I then utilized these to suggest elements of current or student perceived service-learning practice which might be critiqued and further explored.
Study Design

Research design was guided by four research questions:

What are the academic and social experiences of low SES students at their service site for a service-learning course?

What are the academic and social experiences of low SES students in the classroom for a service-learning course?

How successful do low SES students feel they are at translating their academic and social experiences into graded work through the process of reflection?

What does the term “social class” mean to low SES students and how do they feel that their social class status impacts their academic and social experiences in college?

Research Site

Both the student participants and the research site utilized for this study were assured the protection of anonymity. Because of this, pseudonyms were created and are utilized throughout this manuscript for all individuals and locations. The following description of the research site includes information sourced from documents and websites provided to me by the institution. To directly and fully cite these sources would break our agreement for anonymity; therefore, they have not been cited.

The research site, Harkness University, is a private Catholic university of approximately 3000 students located in a small, Midwestern suburban environment. It has both undergraduate and graduate programs. Harkness was founded by the Brothers of Christian Instruction in order to “make Jesus better known,” and it is dedicated to educating its students to become servant leaders “through a value based education.”
Harkness “encourages an international perspective in the Judeo-Christian tradition.” In order to “imbue proper moral values” all undergraduate students must complete theology coursework. A decade ago, Harkness began a service-learning program so students could “undertake works of mercy” and “exercise preferential treatment of the poor.” These espoused goals align with a charitable, rather than a social justice model of service-learning (Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Mitchell, 2008). These descriptions of Harkness University and its mission came from historical documents authored by one of the Catholic Brothers once affiliated with the institution. When I spoke with Harkness’s service-learning director and examined the documents and website associated with the office of service-learning, they were in stark contrast to the strong religious and charity-based statements from the Brother’s writings. It was the opinion of the service-learning director, River, that the majority of the academic service-learning offered by Harkness was not faith-based, with the exception of service-learning completed as part of theology or religion courses. In an initial consultation prior to choosing Harkness as a research site, River informed me that “faculty do not proselytize to students or to the people at the service sites through service-learning” (River, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2011). Examination of the service-learning website and documents provided to students, community partners, and other stakeholders did not show evidence of Catholic teachings or proselytizing other than to reiterate the institution’s mission of preparing students to become servant leaders through a “values-based education.” The “values” were never defined on the documents examined.
As part of students’ general education requirements, Harkness requires the completion of two service-learning courses prior to graduation. These courses are officially recognized by the university and are required to meet specific criteria in order to be designated as service-learning. Because all students must take at least two university designated service-learning courses, I felt this would give me potential access to a representative population of the university. Whereas, if I had selected an institution where service-learning courses were only options in a wider course catalog and may not be open to all students, the sample would not have been as illustrative of the phenomenon that I was attempting to research. In my experience as a service-learning director and from interactions with others holding similar positions, I have found that the latter situation often leads to “clustering” of service-learning courses in disciplines such as sociology, education, psychology, and other social and behavioral sciences or humanities offerings. Within these majors, service-learning often is built into smaller, upper-level courses typically taken only by students seeking that specific degree, causing many students on other degree tracks to never enroll in such courses. By choosing an institution where service-learning is a requirement and where courses are required to meet certain criteria in order to be designated as service-learning, I felt that not only would I have better potential access to a wider student population, but that I would be drawing from service-learning courses in which the course design was adhering to the university’s accepted standards for service-learning. The latter is a concern because in institutions where there is no accepted definition and/or standards for service-learning, an instructor may believe that she is practicing service-learning pedagogy, when, in fact, it is
simply community service hours being assigned to course requirements for a grade or for credit.

The university graduation service-learning requirement and university established standards for service-learning course designation made for ease and convenient sampling (as described above). However, it is of note that the institutionalization of service-learning at Harkness University had been accomplished by (or had led to) the establishment of a centralized model of service-learning. Institutionalization is a synonym for legitimacy within the academy, but Butin (2003, 2005, 2015) warns that while this legitimizing process has succeeded in driving research and increasing the use of the practice, it has resulted in very little of the dynamic social, political, and community change that is espoused by practitioners and proponents as the ultimate endgame of service-learning. In essence, institutionalization of service-learning may impede or water down the critical components of the pedagogy.

Harkness University is practicing a centralized model of traditional service-learning, in which its service-learning director is the only individual interacting with all of the stakeholders impacted by the utilization of service-learning pedagogy – the students, faculty members, community agency workers, and service recipients. The emphasis in models such as this is on the students – their learning and personal and social development (Mitchell, 2008). An additional emphasis is on relieving the faculty from spending time on the work inherent in establishing the necessary community relationships and facilitating the community service itself. This latter emphasis may be one of necessity stemming from the make-up of the institutional faculty (full time vs. part
time vs. adjunct), multi-dimensions of faculty workload, institutional faculty reward structure, and institutional resources. There are several practical deterrents for faculty in regards to incorporating service-learning into their curricula. Common deterrents include the lack of institutional recognition for service-learning as a scholarly practice, lack of recognition of service-learning in faculty reward structure, budgetary constraints on developing new curricula or implementing the community service aspect of the curriculum, or the logistical difficulties and liability involved in implementing service-learning courses (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002), many of which are reflected at Harkness University. Additionally, faculty may be reluctant to try service-learning because of a practical lack of knowledge of how to implement the pedagogy soundly. In the case of adjunct or non-tenure track faculty, they may not have the required academic freedom over their courses in order to implement new pedagogical methods, such as service-learning. One of the recommendations Abes et al. (2002) suggested in order to alleviate several of the above deterrents is to:

- develop an infrastructure within the institution to support a centralized service-learning office to connect potential community partners with the university,
- provide funding, create incentives to try new approaches, assist faculty with logistical support, and provide developmental instruction to new or potential service-learning faculty. (p. 16)

Harkness University has taken Abes et al.’s (2002) advice and established such a centralized service-learning office as a faculty resource. However, this resource may have turned into an additional deterrent or significant barrier (albeit unintentionally) to
implementing service-learning pedagogy effectively (particularly critical service-learning) and to the mutual benefit of the students and community. Additionally, such a centralized model can actually act against faculty success with service-learning in regards to establishing and maintaining professional authority (see Ch. 4 for further elaboration).

I received approval to conduct research at Harkness based upon the successful acceptance of my IRB proposal by Kent State University (the institution through which I was enrolled as a doctoral candidate). I also had the support of the service-learning director and the faculty members teaching the courses from which I recruited students. I had worked with the Harkness service-learning director on several projects and knew her well as a professional colleague. She and Harkness were both supportive of and interested in my findings because of their dedication to bettering their service-learning practice and also because they were aware of their growing number of low SES students and the need to better assist them toward the goal of successful matriculation. This interest and support helped me with logistical issues related to campus access; however, at no time did the service-learning director or course faculty members attempt to interfere with the research.

The courses I recruited from were a 100 level English course entitled Service-Learning: Reading/Writing Connections and a 300 level sociology course entitled Victimology. The English course was taught on a semester basis and drew students from various majors and programs. The course required a minimum of 12 hours of service in an afterschool tutoring program at a nearby elementary school (Bad Wolf Elementary School), which had a high population of children from low income households. In
addition, service-learning students also had to complete a journal of five total entries following the DEAL model for critical reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2004, 2009). This model of reflection includes three sequential steps: describe, examine, and articulate learning. First, students describe their experiences in an objective and detailed manner. Second, students examine those experiences in relationship to specific learning goals or objectives. Finally, students articulate their learning, including goals for future action that can be carried with them into their next learning experience (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Each step of this model requires the use of specific guiding prompts, which allows students to engage in the development of their own learning rather than reproducing what their instructors teach them (Clayton & Ash, 2004; Howard, 1998).

The second course was an upper-level sociology course taught every third semester that mainly pulled students of junior and senior standing; even so, these students represented a variety of majors because of the course’s designation as service-learning. It required a minimum of 10 hours of service at one of three different service sites: the same elementary school afterschool program as in the English course, a temporary/emergency shelter and food site for men (Torchwood Haven), or a non-profit nursing home catering to lower income elderly (Lumic House). This course did not incorporate the DEAL model for student reflection, but it did require that more informal journals and notes be kept and ultimately combined with scholarly research into a final 12-15 page reflection paper. Additionally, students were placed into small (3-4 students) reading groups. Regular oral reflections based on service experiences and assigned class readings
occurred within these groups and were led, designed, and assessed by the student members.

Ultimately, these two courses were selected from the larger service-learning offerings because the required service work involved aiding those from low SES backgrounds. I eliminated another course offered to me as an option because it was an upper level theology course in which the service-learning was strongly aligned with Catholic teachings. The influence of religion and/or spirituality on college students and service-learning is beyond the scope of this study. Other service-learning courses were eliminated from potential recruitment because the required service work involved animals or populations that were likely mixed in SES background (i.e., people with differing mental and physical handicaps) or because the required service would be considered indirect, such as translation or the creation of a health fair.

**Sample**

Students selected to participate in this research were recruited from the English and sociology courses described above. Interested students were asked to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to aid in determining each student’s socioeconomic status, both currently and historically (i.e., the socioeconomic status they experienced as they were growing up). Students who were determined (by the researcher) to be working class or low SES were considered for eventual participation in the study. A combination of current and historical characteristics such as the: 1) education level and employment held by students’ primary caretakers while he or she was growing up; 2) use of social service programs; 3) and eligibility for certain financial aid
programs were used to determine SES. Other studies similar to this have used parents’
education level and employment level to determine student SES (Lee, 2005; Yeh, 2010).
Originally, I hesitated at following this strategy because of my personal life history.
Neither of my parents attended college. My father is a salesman, and my mother was a
secretary/bookkeeper. However, because of their success in owning their own business
they had moved (economically) from working class to upper middle class status by the
time of my birth. However, without knowledge of this socioeconomic status climb, I
would have been classified as working class simply based on my parents’ education and
employment levels. Therefore, I included a question about owning a business on my
questionnaire in order to try to eliminate this classification error. Other demographic
factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, etc. were collected in order to gain more
information about participants, but these factors were not considered when determining
inclusion or exclusion in the study.

The final participants are described in detail, partly in their own words, in the
final section of this chapter. I feel these descriptions are necessary for the reader to
become familiar with each participant’s individuality and to honor their stories.

**Data Collection**

I attended a class meeting within the first month of both courses and invited
enrolled students to participate in a research study focusing on undergraduates’
experiences in service-learning courses. All students were assured that their participation
or lack thereof would not impact their grade in the course. I informed them that no one,
including their instructor, would know who ultimately participated in the study, as I
would obtain all data directly from them. I did not mention any specifics about income status for two reasons. First, I did not wish to make it known to the entire class which student population I focused on because it may have been embarrassing for those who wished to participate, and it could have violated their privacy. Additionally, I offered a modest “stipend” in return for participation, and I did not want students falsifying information in order to be considered. While some discourage using payment for research participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006), I felt that this was warranted and appropriate in the case of this study because of the target population. Low SES students are often required to work in order to remain in school. Additionally, these students may have young children and families that also required their time. Taking time away from their many responsibilities was a hardship. I strongly felt that offering them a research stipend in exchange for their participation was important and possibly even necessary in order for them to be able to take part in this project.

After informing students of the opportunity to participate in the research study and what participation would entail, I asked them to complete a short demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B) that aided me in identifying possible participants. The questionnaire included items aimed at identifying the socioeconomic status of students in such a way as to not make it obvious that this was the prevailing qualification for inclusion in the study (i.e. included distracters). I piloted this questionnaire, as well as the interview protocols, with two former students of mine, two students from a different service-learning class that was eliminated from inclusion in the study, and a colleague who worked with low income individuals as a director of a social service agency. Their
comments and responses were utilized in the creation of the final appended versions of the questionnaire and interview protocols.

I selected potential participants based on the answers to the class questionnaire, and I recruited seven participants in this manner. I chose seven as a minimum number based on the methodology used by researchers in studies that were somewhat similar to this (Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Yeh, 2010). Additionally, seven is equal to 35% of the top enrollment of each of the above mentioned service-learning courses, and that is equal to the reported low income, first generation college student enrollment reported by the research site.

I used a mixture of in-depth semi-structured responsive interviews and journal analysis for this study. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured series of prompts at two points during the semester (see Appendices C and D), early and late in the semester. These interviews were scheduled individually and occurred at a quiet, private location that was convenient and comfortable for each individual participant. The participants selected where the interviews would be conducted; some preferred their dorm rooms, some preferred off campus, and some preferred an empty office provided for my use by Harkness. Interviews were recorded, and I took notes throughout. These interviews were later transcribed for analysis. In addition to the interviews, I used the written reflection assignments for analysis. Copies of the journals and final papers were obtained directly from the student participants and not from the instructors. By doing this, I protected the participants’ confidentiality, and I believe this also helped them feel reassured that their participation and my ultimate findings would have no impact on them
as students or on their grades in the course. Additionally, it eliminated potential biasing of the researcher. Copies of reflections received from instructors could have included instructor comments and/or grades; both of which could have influenced coding and analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The reflection assignments and the interview transcripts were analyzed using a variation on Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw’s (1995) process for analyzing ethnographic field notes. I have practiced this process in previous research projects and feel comfortable with its execution and its ability to aid me in my analysis. My coding process began with an initial read through of the transcripts and reflections. As I read, I jotted notes in a coding journal on reoccurring themes I began to form. I then used these themes as a starting point for line by line coding. I made 1-5 word descriptions about my interpretations of the data. I then read these descriptions and made notes of reoccurring phrases. I compared these phrases to the initial themes I had determined, and I eliminated, altered and/or combined these with the new themes as my analysis and understanding changed and progressed. This process follows the use of Emerson et al.’s (1995) description of open coding. Next, Emerson et al. (1995) recommend writing initial memos. This involves a process of forming and collecting more complete thoughts, episodes, and memos that fall within each established theme. I then completed a more focused coding, going through the reorganized data and identifying subthemes in each category. Following this step, Emerson et al. (1995) recommend writing integrative memos to aid in drawing final conclusions from the data and settling on final themes. I
examined the data through the lens of critical constructivism, using the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu, in order to draw conclusions based upon my four research questions.

**Positioning the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes part of the study and is the main instrument for data analysis (Creswell, 2007). It is, therefore, important for the researcher to bracket herself and her experiences, and to be reflexive in order to understand how her own life experiences and beliefs impact the research process and data analysis (Bourdieu, 1992; Creswell, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In order to uncover my personal biases and assumptions throughout this research, I recorded reflective journals directly after finishing all interviews. Additionally, at all of the different stages of data analysis, I used written reflective journaling, not only to unpack biases and assumptions, but also to record thoughts, feelings, and ideas. These oral and written journals were all reviewed numerous times throughout data analysis and dissertation writing. It was through these techniques that I attempted to bracket my biases and assumptions. Ultimately, the goal of these reflective exercises was not to eliminate the influences that my preconceptions had upon my analysis. Complete elimination of personal bias is impossible in qualitative research as the researcher is the instrument of data analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; McLoughlin, 2011, 2012). In fact, some qualitative researchers believe that reflexivity in qualitative research should be undertaken in order to “value the researcher’s own contribution to the understanding and to trace how the researcher’s original sense of the topic changes over the course of the research” (Angen, 2000, p. 383; Bergum, 1991). Therefore, the goal of this reflection
was to attempt to unravel and understand my preconceptions and to use this understanding in a productive manner.

Reflexivity is a key component in qualitative research, and it was emphasized by Bourdieu as imperative when utilizing his theory of practice. “Bourdieu’s understanding of reflexivity can be defined as a critical epistemological process that consists of objectifying the very conceptualization and process of scientific objectification” (Deer, 2008, p. 200). Utilizing this kind of reflexive approach:

would allow scientists to control and reduce the influence of an important source of discrepancy with regard to knowledge, namely the unconscious failure by most to recognize and control the effects and influence of their own relations to the object of their research. (Deer, 2008, p. 201)

Notice that, like Hammersely and Atkinson (1995), Deer (2008) discusses controlling and reducing the influence of one’s biases, assumptions, and preconceptions on the object of their research, not eliminating it. When a researcher fails to practice reflexivity in research, she risks unconsciously muddying her findings by attributing personal characteristics as well as her own perceptions and comprehension of the world unto the objects of her research (Bourdieu, 1990; Deer, 2008). It is for these reasons qualitative researchers should aim to isolate their personal objective position within the field(s) of their research. If successful in this reflexive practice, the researcher will succeed in contributing to the construction of academic and intellectual knowledge devoid of any unconscious projection of their own relation to it (Deer, 2008). It is with this aim that I explore below my potential biases which could color my analysis and findings.
I had five years of experience as a service-learning director at a small, private liberal arts institution, and I am also a published service-learning researcher (Becerra & Espenschied-Reilly, 2010; Espenschied-Reilly & Iverson, 2014; Iverson & Espenschied-Reilly, 2010). I was a professional colleague of the service-learning director at Harkness University (she has since left higher education), and I have participated in several collaborative service projects with her and Harkness. We also regularly interacted via a statewide Campus Compact organization. These experiences and interactions could be interpreted as positioning me as an inside researcher, someone who is conducting research within an organization they are part of (Adler & Adler, 1987; McLoughlin, 2011). Some scholars caution against insider research because they feel that the researcher may be too close to the data to remain effectively objective, to avoid making assumptions that contaminate the findings, or to successfully probe deep enough with participants (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; McLoughlin, 2011). However, Brannick and Coghlan (2007) counter these cautions. It is possible that inside researchers may “provide cultural context to the study by their ability to interpret meanings held by research participants” (McLoughlin, 2011, p. 79). I believe this insider status assisted me in my data collection and analysis, although I do not believe that it provided a bias in favor of service-learning or Harkness University. Even in my role as a campus facilitator and advocate of service-learning, I never believed in nor pushed for using the pedagogy for the sake of simply doing so. I worked carefully with faculty and community partners to craft mutually beneficial service-learning relationships that fit both the academic needs of the course in question and the civic needs of the community partner. This commitment
to conscious reciprocity is a key component to service-learning practice (Pusch & Merrill, 2008). I do not believe, nor did I advocate, that service-learning was appropriate for every course, instructor, or community need, and I did not shy away from criticizing its misuse or misapplication when I felt it was warranted.

My research interests to date have primarily been within the realm of cultural tensions and problematizing service-learning, and while I believe that service-learning can be an impactful pedagogy, I fall into a group of researchers and practitioners who believe that it is a pedagogy that must now be strengthened through research, scrutiny, and critique in order to remain counter-normative, rigorous, and impactful (Butin, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2015). This is important because the status of service-learning as a counter-normative pedagogy defines it as one that “qualitatively changes the norms and relationships of the teaching-learning process” (Howard, 1998, p. 22), which, according to Clayton and Ash (2004), “allows us to more fully tap the transformative power of the pedagogy” (p. 69). I have personally seen the transformative effects service-learning can have on students, both positive and negative, and therefore, I do hold it as an impactful pedagogy that reaches beyond the confines of the academic classroom. However, I also know that the impacts of service-learning can be varied, long-term, difficult to measure and predict, and just generally “messy,” which is why I feel that more critical research of this nature needs to be undertaken. Service-learning pedagogy is too complex a topic to not be viewed through the eyes of all the various stakeholders, and this includes diverse students, such as low SES students, who have not been the traditional focus of service-learning research in the past. Their voices and knowledge, both positive and negative,
must be incorporated into understandings of this pedagogy before we can truly come to understand its academic, developmental, personal, and social impacts on the diverse body of students participating in higher education today. In addition, attending to the input from students, such as those involved in my study, will aid practitioners as they strive to create high quality service-learning experiences for future students. High quality service-learning is that which is “well integrated academically, rigorously reflective, and procedurally democratic and communal” (Clayton & Ash, 2004, p. 59). It is with this aim that I approach this service-learning research, to potentially critique in order to inform improvement.

Another potential bias I had to address was the affinity I developed for my participants. Their stories were not new to me, as I have worked for over a decade with college students from low SES and low income situations. Many of their stories reminded me of students I had worked with in the past and students that I work with still today. While I did not share the financial struggles that my participants experienced, I did share many of their struggles with first generation college student issues and the struggles of possessing a habitus more aligned with a working class upbringing. Even though my parents had a successful business and would likely be classified as upper middle class based on annual income, they were both raised in struggling working class households. The cultural capital that was passed on to me from my upbringing has elements of both low and high SES households. Additionally, I am the first of my family to go to college, so like many first generation college students, I had to learn how to succeed in college on my own, and I frequently felt as if I were speaking in a foreign
language when I tried to discuss college with my family. That feeling remained while I pursued this terminal degree, as well as when I try to discuss my career in higher education. My family has no context in which to understand my studies, my research, nor my career. While they are generally supportive of my educational and career goals, not being able to truly discuss these fully with them can be isolating. I heard similar stories from several of my participants.

Lastly, I often found myself identifying with my participants when they expressed frustration with peer students, faculty, and the institution, and I explored this feeling of solidarity a great deal through reflective journaling. I believe the affinity I felt may be due to what I interpreted as sharing the experience of the symbolic violence of the academic process. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) wrote that all teaching is a form of symbolic violence because it is the imposition of the culturally arbitrary by an arbitrary power. “Schools teach students particular things and socializes them in particular ways” (Schubert, 2008, p. 188). This is the basis of Bourdieu’s standpoint that educational systems reproduce the class systems in human society. “The lack of fit between lower- and working-class habitus and educational field, and the blaming of the individuals involved for their poor performance, is a form of symbolic violence through which social class hierarchy is reproduced” (Schubert, 2008, p. 189). I often found myself sharing the anger and frustration expressed by participants, as it was akin to the anger and frustration I have experienced throughout my doctoral journey, particularly in regards to faculty expectations and institutional bureaucracy. Exploring these feelings through reflective
journaling allowed me to identify my own feelings and bracket those out from my interpretations of the data.

Exploring these feelings of suffering through reflective journaling additionally allowed me to frame them within Bourdieu’s theory of practice, making this journaling both an emotionally supportive and academically beneficial practice. Bourdieu wrote of the symbolic violence of education at all levels of schooling. In regards to higher education, Bourdieu also postulated that the process of symbolic violence continued on past graduation and into the rank, promotion, and tenure process for scholars who decided to become part of academe. Bourdieu wrote in *Homo Academicus* (1988) that "the university field is, like any other field, the locus of a struggle to determine the conditions and the criteria of legitimate membership and legitimate hierarchy" (p. 11). It is in that struggle that I found myself as a doctoral candidate, and while it is at a different level of education, it is a similar struggle to that which my participants have battled throughout their educational journeys.

These biases and feelings are part of me, but through the process of reflective journaling described above, I believe I have been able to bracket them in order to let my participants’ words and experiences come through data analysis uncolored. My goal was to hear what the participants said; it was not to champion or denigrate service-learning, nor was it to boil student identities down to being all about social class. I approached this research project with an open mind, which I partially attribute to my original training as a biologist. While I am aware that quantitative techniques and perspectives are not and should not be applicable and transferrable to qualitative research (Davies & Dodd, 2002),
I do think that this prior training and research experience has taught me to be aware and attentive to my biases and predispositions, and to keep them separate from the interpretations of data and the outcomes of research.

**Validity**

The question of validity and how it is judged is a somewhat contentious issue in qualitative research (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lather, 1986; Sparkes, 2001), but that does not mean that it is not important or that qualitative validity does not exist. Sparkes (2001) writes that criteria for judging both the methods and the results of qualitative research will continue to emerge and evolve, and it is vital that the debate surrounding them continue. Sparkes (2001) goes on to state that this continual flux will continue to be wrestled with by researchers because “there can be no canonical approach to qualitative inquiry, no recipes or rigid formulas, as different validation procedures or sets of criteria may be better suited to some situations, forms of representation, and desires for legitimization than others” (p. 550). Lather (1986) writes that for qualitative researchers, establishing validity occurs through “the confrontation of issues of empirical accountability in our methodological formations, the need to offer grounds for accepting a researcher’s description and analysis, and the search for novel, workable ways of gathering validity data” (p. 78). It is with these issues forefront that I have designed the methodology of this study.

The design of this research project was based on study designs of several published and peer-reviewed inquiries (Conley & Hamlin, 2009; Lee, 2005; Shadduck-Hernadez, 2006; Yeh, 2010). I was careful throughout my course-based preparation for
this terminal work to provide myself with opportunities to practice these chosen methodologies and data analysis techniques through the completion of several smaller research projects, some which have been published (Espenschied-Reilly & Iverson, 2014; Iverson & Espenschied-Reilly, 2010). I designed an interview protocol that contained direct questions about social class, but that also asked participants about other parts of their identities. I piloted this protocol on several students and adjusted questions so that the final, appended protocol addressed the complexities of students’ identities, while also asking directly about: 1) what they thought about social class; 2) what social class they were a part of; 3) and if and why they thought social class mattered in college, with their peers, and in their service-learning class. Based upon the sample data I collected, I feel that my interview protocol was valid and addressed my research questions, while leaving space for students to discuss their complex identities, not simply their social class status.

As outlined in my methodology, I interviewed participants at two points in the semester, using similar interview protocols on both occasions. Additionally, I collected all written reflection assignments participants turned in for academic credit. By utilizing interviews at different points in time and by utilizing oral and written data, I employed the process of triangulation. Triangulation is a process through which multiple sources of data are employed throughout a study in order to generate a robust, comprehensive data set that aids the researcher in producing a richer understanding of the lived experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1988). While triangulation alone does not increase validity, it does aid in uncovering threats to validity that could be introduced by similar methodology or biases (McLoughlin, 2011). In other words, triangulation
does not lead to a “univocal truth,” but it can elucidate varying or divergent accounts of a research focus (Angen, 2000, p. 384).

Angen (2000) writes that “validity does not need to be about attaining positivist objective truth, it lies more in a subjective, human estimation of what it means to have done something well, having made an effort that is worthy of trust and written up convincingly” (p. 392). It is in this spirit that I drafted this section addressing my study rigor and validity. I utilized methods that I believe contributed to processes of validation and were both ethical and substantive. I produced research that is meaningful and meant to further the understanding of the academic community, stimulate more thought and action, and address issues of inequity. I defend the validity of this study through the above provided evidence of my practice of the art of qualitative research, utilization of peer-reviewed models, and the integrity of myself as a researcher (Angen, 2000; Smith, 1990).

**Study Limitations**

The limitations of my study include examining only one institution, one institutional type, two courses during one semester, and only seven participants. These factors limit the generalizability of the results of my study. However, qualitative research is very different from quantitative research, and the generalizability of results is very rarely a concern or goal of the researcher (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In this situation, I was primarily concerned with understanding the research participants’ lived academic and social experiences within the boundaries of this one semester’s service-learning courses, with the application of Bourdieu’s theory of practice
in aiding the building of this understanding. Through the construction of this understanding and with the aim of drawing attention to their unique experiences within academia, particularly within service-learning courses, I hoped to give voice to these students. It was my hope that hearing their voices might inform practitioners and make them more aware of the differing needs, beliefs, experiences, etc. of this “invisible minority” that exists within the academy. Because of this heavy emphasis on accessing the voices and knowledge of my participants, I chose an in-depth interview and reflection analysis design. Therefore, my only source of data was the participants themselves – their experiences, feelings, beliefs, and opinions as they espoused them through interviews and written reflections. While this purposeful design decision allowed me to direct my focus on the knowledge created by the student participants, it also limited my knowledge as a researcher as to discussions and events that occur in the classroom and at the service site, as the participants may not have shared these occurrences with me. Additionally, I did not have access to the standpoints and knowledge of other stakeholders involved in the service-learning classes, such as the instructors, community partners, service recipients, and other students. My final conclusions are fully based on what my participants chose to disclose, and their understandings of those discussions and events. In essence, I did not have access to the “full story,” but that was not what the aim of this study was. Though it is important to acknowledge the limitations upfront, in this case, I feel my study design met the needs of my research goals.
The Final Participants

Initially, participant surveys were solicited from students in three service-learning courses. Ultimately, however, only students from the sociology and English classes were determined as eligible for inclusion in the study. Seven students participated in the study; all completed both interviews and submitted all of their written reflection assignments for their respective courses. Priscilla, Emma, and Cliff were students in English, and they all completed their service-learning at Bad Wolf Elementary. Hector, Lucy, Sydney and Arti were students in sociology. Hector and Arti completed their service-learning at Bad Wolf Elementary. Lucy completed her service-learning at a men’s shelter and community meal site, Torchwood Haven. Sydney completed her service-learning at a charitable nursing home, Lumic House. The seven participants are described below in detail.

1. Priscilla

Priscilla is a 20-year-old, White female. She is a sophomore majoring in early childhood education with a minor as an intervention specialist. Priscilla grew up the youngest of three children in a two parent household, and she still lives with her parents. She was heavily involved in sports in high school and described a very busy schedule of school, practice, games, work, and friends.

I would get up for school. I would go to school. I would go to practice until it was about five and then I’d go to work. I did that my entire high school career because my parents didn’t have the money to pay for everything….I would come home and do
homework, and some nights I wouldn’t even get home until about eleven or midnight.” (Priscilla).

Priscilla has two older brothers; one serving in the military stationed in Afghanistan, and the other is in college. The family’s financial difficulties started about 2-3 years ago when her father was laid off, so Priscilla has felt the most burden of the three kids. ‘Because my brothers don’t live at home, they don’t see the financial problem . . . my middle brother, he went to [a large, state university] and it was kind of a bummer to see him go through all four years, and then I had to take off last semester” (Priscilla).

Priscilla’s parents both graduated from high school. Her mother completed a nine month certification program for medical assistance but did not work in the field. Her father completed an associate’s degree, while working to support the family, so it took him over four years to complete it. Priscilla’s mother is currently a cook making less than $10 an hour, and her father is collecting unemployment after being laid off after working for the same company for 28 years. He did have some short lived jobs in the meantime, but the family had been mainly living off of her mother’s income and her father’s unemployment benefits. At the time of our interviews, his unemployment benefits were just about to run out, and Priscilla was unsure if they were going to be able to keep the family home.

Priscilla works 25-30 hours a week (40 or more hours when school is on break) while maintaining a full course load. She is used to balancing such a heavy work schedule with school because it is what she did in high school, working around 30 hours
a week in food service. Priscilla, both of her brothers, and her mother worked for the same local fast food restaurant to help make ends meet while Priscilla and her brothers were in high school. In fact, she feels it is a bit easier to balance work and school now because an injury has forced her to give up sports.

Priscilla began college right after graduating high school, living on campus, and attending classes full time while working only 12-15 hours per week as a waitress. Now, Priscilla is a semester behind in her program because when her father was laid off, she was unable to acquire the loans needed to pay for college; she had no other options for a co-signer. Because she was unaware of a financial appeal option available to struggling students, she had to withdraw after her freshman year to go work full-time as a waitress and save money in hopes of returning to college. Her college roommate informed Priscilla of the appeal process, and once she completed it, she was able to return to school on a need based scholarship. However, she had to move back home to save money on room and board. Priscilla misses living on campus, and while it does save her a substantial amount of money, she is concerned about the money needed for gas and the wear and tear on her truck, which needs replaced. Additionally, she has taken on some financial responsibility for the family household. She has deferred replacing her truck to help with her parents’ gas, groceries, and other household needs. Ultimately, this impacts the money she has available to pay for college. Priscilla explained, “I help my parents out when they need something . . . I’ll go fill their gas tanks for them . . . I have to work more shifts, save more money . . . it’s a lot harder.”
For now, Priscilla does not anticipate needing to take any more time off from school, and she should graduate in about three years. She pays for college with private loans, academic and need-based scholarships, and the money she earns through waitressing. She hopes to work in a nearby school district after graduation.

2. Emma

Emma is a 22-year-old, White female majoring in early childhood education. She has attended two different colleges since graduating high school and is ranked as a sophomore. She grew up in a nearby community and had a complicated childhood. Neither of her parents graduated high school. Her mother worked as a waitress, and her father worked for a trucking company as a dock worker. Her parents divorced when she was in fifth grade, which is when she remembers her home life dramatically changing.

“My life was great, and then my parents got divorced… my mom started doing drugs, and my sister raised me for a couple years. My dad really wasn’t around” (Emma).

Emma was very involved in high school and spent a lot of time at school events and with friends. She was involved in student council, Key Club, and National Honor Society, and she was a cheerleader. Emma feels that she was in denial about her difficult home life and was trying to hide it from her friends as well as herself by trying to create a different life through school and friends. Emma described:

None of my friends ever knew anything about my life. I never told them. I just always ended up hanging out at their house. No one ever knew that I didn’t really have anything. Actually, my best friend since I was in second grade never knew
any of this about me until last year. I told her because I just always had hid it. I never talked about it.

Emma decided during the latter part of her high school career that she wanted to attend college. “I did go to college because I wanted to better my life, and I hung out with people who were upper class, and I saw what they had, so that’s what I wanted” (Emma). Unfortunately, her GPA was not high enough to get into the college she wanted to attend or to obtain the amount of financial aid she required. She enrolled in a nearby community college, Isolus State College, in order to bring up her GPA and to help her decide what she wanted to major in. She completed two years at Isolus State as a nursing major. However, she realized that nursing was not her passion, and she decided to apply to Harkness University and change majors to early childhood education.

Emma has never lived on campus. She currently lives with her boyfriend in an apartment off campus. She works as a waitress 20-25 hours a week to help pay for school. Because she lives off campus and has to work, she has not been able to be as involved with friends and student groups as she was in high school. In addition to her earned income, she has support through several government grant programs, private loans, and an academic scholarship. Her grants are need based, such as Pell, and she also has the TEACH grant, which requires a commitment to serve in low income school districts after graduation (FSA, 2012). Emma predicted it would take her another two to three years to graduate. She attributes the delay in graduation partly to her transfer, change in major, and also her low GPA and academic unpreparedness for college. When
she graduates, she plans to teach in low income schools, not only to fulfill her TEACH Grant commitment, but also because she strongly feels that is her calling.

3. Cliff

Cliff is a White, 19-year-old, male accounting major. When we met, he was in the second semester of his freshman year. He worked in the cafeteria at Harkness University, but only for about five hours a week. Cliff grew up in a small (population 2,200) rural town about an hour away from Harkness. He grew up in a two parent household with one younger brother. Neither of his parents attended college, but they did both graduate from high school. His mother was a homemaker when he and his brother were younger, but now she makes around $11 an hour working as an aid at the high school he attended. His father is self employed as a carpenter and has had some trouble finding work lately, which was one of the reasons Cliff’s mom began working. The family supplements their income with some royalties from natural gas wells on their property. Cliff pays for college through a Pell Grant, several academic scholarships, support from his family, and his job.

Cliff says he enjoys college and has adjusted well to living away from home. His hometown and high school were racially homogenous, and he noted that as a difference between Harkness and his high school. “I went to a pretty much all White high school.” He did feel prepared for college and described performing well academically and settling in socially. Cliff described an active life at Harkness:
I like it. I think it’s better than high school. I get to live on campus and be with all of my friends here. . . I run cross country and track, like watching sports and basketball, baseball, enjoy going to sporting events.

Cliff ran cross country and track in high school as well. He chooses to participate in sports because he enjoys it, and he wants to continue to challenge himself to perform better.

Of all of the participants, Cliff has probably had the most traditional path to college so far. He is a first generation student, but he is traditionally aged, having matriculated to college directly from high school. He is the only participant to describe being as highly involved in campus activities as he was in high school. Cliff was also the only participant that appeared to spend more time with new on campus friends than with friends and family from home. This may be because of his lack of a car and ready transport home and away from campus. Cliff was the youngest participant and had had the shortest college career so far; he was only in his second semester. That could mean that he may not have yet had to deal with some of the challenges the other participants had experienced. All of these differences made him quite distinct in my sample group.

4. Hector

Hector is a 37-year-old, White male. Hector was raised in a two parent household in a small, rural community adjacent to a metropolitan area. Hector’s mother graduated from high school, but his father did not. Neither of his parents attended any post-secondary educational institutions. Hector’s mother maintained a heavy workload while keeping a household that included seven children. This included two step-children from
a previous marriage of Hector’s father, three children of her own with Hector’s father, and two nephews that she adopted.

Hector’s father was a full time truck driver with a local service, so he had a set 9 to 5 schedule. This bothered Hector because he saw his mom working as much as she could, and his father did not do the same, nor did he help out at home. Hector remembers his father as physically abusive and emotionally distant: “Most memories I have of my dad are either [him] kicking the snot out of me . . . or sleeping in his recliner. . . . He was there, but he was never there.”

Hector remembers being labeled as a “bad kid” in school because he and his friends often caused trouble. This changed for him in eighth grade when he was assigned to Mr. Terry Nation’s class. Mr. Nation had a profound effect on Hector that has continued to influence Hector throughout his life:

[Terry Nation] held me after class and told me that he sees possibilities in me . . . and he was gonna give me a fair shake . . . I started seeing him making efforts to show me that he meant it. So I started making efforts to make sure that he knew I appreciated it . . . I never wanted it to get back to him that he was wrong, so I did better in school, and I stayed out of trouble. . . . I have a feeling I’d be in prison . . . had it not been for [Mr. Nation].

After graduating high school, Hector joined the military and served for four years. He would have liked to remain in service, but he left the military and got a factory job so he could be home more with his wife and two children. Hector soon realized that he wanted something more, and to do that, he would have to go to college. Hector enrolled
at Harkness University as a middle childhood education major. However, after realizing he did not have the “right temperament for the classroom”, he left Harkness to complete police academy training. After graduating from the police academy, Hector enrolled at Davros State University, a large public university, to pursue a major which would allow him to become a juvenile probations officer. During this period in his life, Hector went through a divorce and became a single dad with two young girls to care for. He found balancing college and childcare very difficult, and ultimately, he was academically dismissed when health concerns prohibited him from attending classes, causing him to receive failing grades.

Because Hector was unaware of university policies and procedures, he was academically dismissed when he likely could have simply withdrawn or taken incompletes and finished the semester at a later time. Because of his dismissal, he turned to a for-profit institution, Tyler Technical College, in order to raise his GPA and be eligible to transfer back to Davros State. Hector completed an associate’s degree in criminal justice at Tyler Technical College; however the majority of his credits would not transfer to Davros State. Tyler Technical had an articulation agreement with Harkness University, which is how Hector came to be enrolled there again at the time of this study. Harkness University offered him two scholarships, one for returning students and one for non-traditional students, and Hector could also take advantage of a reduced core program because of his associate’s degree and military training. Hector still plans to get off academic suspension at Davros State and re-enroll now that he has raised his GPA. He
can complete a second associate’s degree from that institution with only two classes, while completing his bachelor’s at Harkness University.

Hector has remarried, and he and his current wife have three children together. In between attending Davros State and Tyler Technical, Hector worked in banking and insurance while his new wife finished her college degree. Hector returned to college after he was laid off from his second job. His wife was working as a teacher at that time, so they agreed that he could go back to college. At the time of our first interview, Hector’s wife had just been laid off due to the failure of a school levy, and the family was living off of her unemployment and various sources of government assistance such as Medicaid, WIC, SNAP, free school meal program, and rental assistance. Hector was paying for college with a Pell Grant and Stafford Loan, and the institution provided the scholarships previously mentioned. At the time of our interviews, he had roughly three semesters of courses left before graduation.

5. Lucy

Lucy is a 20-year-old, White female. She is in her third year of college and is ranked a junior. She is majoring in biology and is in the pre-dental track. She grew up about two hours away from her current institution in an urban area with a population of about 35,000. Her parents divorced when she was five, and she lived with her mother until her sophomore year of high school. During this time period, her mother could no longer afford to keep the family home. Rather than move her two daughters out of the home they were used to, Lucy’s mother moved out and the two girls remained in the
home, which had been purchased by a family friend. Lucy’s father was able to move in with the two girls and rent from this family friend.

Both of Lucy’s parents did graduate from high school, but neither attended college or further training. Both of Lucy’s parents are unemployed and receiving Social Security due to disabilities. Lucy’s father served in the military after high school. After his discharge, he received an injury while playing minor league baseball. After his initial recovery, he worked at a car lot until his injury (exacerbated by a bacterial infection) prevented full time employment. In addition to his disability payment, he earns some income “under the table” by buying and reselling cars. Lucy’s mother also receives disability support but has no other income. Lucy had difficulty recalling the last time her mother had been employed, but she felt it was around the time Lucy was seven. She had worked in catering and food service and sustained work related injuries that prevent her from working. Lucy’s mother had moved in with family to help care for her ailing mother, but Lucy was unsure where her mother was going to go now that Lucy’s grandma had passed away. From what Lucy described about her mother’s situation, her mother would technically be classified as homeless, since she has no permanent home or apartment of her own (NHCHC, 2015).

Lucy was highly involved in high school participating in Boosters Club, Key Club, and Spanish Club. She spent a lot of time with friends and still maintains contact with many of these same friends. This high level of student life involvement did not carry over to college. Lucy goes home almost every weekend and break to be with her high school friends and her family and has not joined any campus organizations. Lucy
has purposefully hidden her family’s financial difficulties from her friends, both at home and at college:

I don’t tell my friends. I know what my friend’s parents do and everything. They don’t ask me what my dad does or what my mom does, and I don’t tell them….if they would ask, I wouldn’t say because it is embarrassing. . .

Lucy’s family has support through government programs, such as Medicaid, SNAP, and free/reduced school meals. Lucy is paying for college through a combination of the Pell Grant program, the Stafford Loan program, private loans, a V. A. grant available to her because of her father’s military service, federal work study, and institutional need-based scholarships. By the end of our second interview, Lucy had initiated a transfer to Gallifrey State University, a large public institution near her hometown. She mainly attributed her transfer to financial reasons; this argument grew more compelling for her when she found out she would require an extra semester to graduate from her current institution. Not all of her credits were going to transfer, so she might be even further behind, but the cost savings and being closer to her friends and family was worth that risk to her. She had secured a regular babysitting job near Gallifrey State, was looking into campus employment, and was going to move back in with her father and sister, which would save her room and board costs. She said that with her sister beginning college in another year, this transfer would also allow her to contribute at home and support her sister. Lucy predicted it would take her another 4-5 semesters to graduate, and then she wanted to apply to dental school.
6. Sydney

Sydney is a 21-year-old, White, female, sociology major. She began college as a nursing major, but switched because she found nursing “too stressful” and found she was very interested in her sociology courses. She eventually wants to be a social worker and is excited about her summer internship as a victim’s advocate. Her change of major may also have been influenced by the numerous family crises she experienced during her first two years of school. Balancing the commitments of family and a challenging academic schedule were very difficult for Sydney. Sydney explained:

My first two years were really rough. My freshman year, my grandma had colon cancer and she ended up passing away second semester. And then sophomore year my dad got robbed at gunpoint. And we found out my mom had breast cancer. I would get sick just from the stress and running back and forth to go with my mom to chemo and radiation treatments. My first two years were just hell.

Sydney graduated in a high school class of only 44 students and describes her small town as a place where “everybody knows everyone.” She is very close with her family and friends from home. Regardless, her family has had challenges. Her parents divorced when she was young, and soon after, her mother’s boyfriend, Carpenter, moved in. Sydney did not talk about Carpenter much at all. If he came up, she quickly changed the subject.

Sydney has a heart-shaped collage of photos on her dorm room wall which she showed to me after our first interview, so I could “understand her better.” They included the family and friends she had talked much about. She also had photos of the patients at
the nursing home she and her mother work at. Her mother is a nurse’s aide, and she used to take Sydney to work with her when Sydney was young. She told me this was so Sydney would “know how to talk to people.” Now, Sydney works there as a housekeeper on breaks and over the summer to help pay for college. When she talked about the patients, she became animated and excited. They were important to her. “My mom works at the same nursing home I work at, and when I was little, she’d take me to the nursing home all the time and it seemed like I had four sets of grandparents at one time” Sydney described.

Sydney’s mom and dad both graduated high school, but neither went to college. Sydney’s dad has been unemployed for about a decade. He was a factory worker, but the company he worked for closed in 2002. Sydney said he’s had jobs on and off since then, but has mostly survived on unemployment support and “odd jobs” as a “handyman” for “under the table” income. Sydney implied that he had developed significant health issues, both mental and physical. Sydney’s mom has been a nurse’s aide at the same nursing home for more than twenty-five years. At the time of our interview, Sydney believed she made about $13 an hour. Sydney said that her mom and dad did help sometimes with the cost of college, but primarily, she paid for college through Pell Grant, Stafford Loan, academic and need-based scholarships, her own income working at the college library and at the nursing home, and she received a discount for having attended a Catholic high school. She was able to attend a private, Catholic high school by working grounds and housekeeping for the summers in exchange for a large tuition discount.
Sydney described her relationships with Harkness friends and back home friends very differently. At Harkness, she has very few close, trusted friends, does not drink or party, spends time on campus doing low key, often free activities, and is very motivated academically. At home, she is very dedicated to her family and her extended family at the nursing home. She has a large group of close, trusted friends that she also refers to as family and spends time drinking and partying with them. She described her friends at home as people she “trusted to take care of her.” These “two Sydneys” sometimes come in conflict with each other when priorities and responsibilities at home conflict with those at college. She discussed these conflicts at length, particularly during our second interview when some new stressors had arisen.

Sydney plans to go to graduate school and wants to study abroad through programs offered at her institution. She saved money and traveled to Washington D.C. with her institution this year. She stressed the importance of these opportunities for networking. However, Sydney’s parents are resistant to her going to graduate school and studying abroad. Sydney was very torn about family and friend obligations and making the choices she feels are right for her future. This strain was creating a great deal of stress for her, and she talked of planning on staying on campus more and not visiting home as much.

7. Arti

Arti is a 26-year-old, psychology and sociology double major, minoring in forensics. On her demographic questionnaire, she self-identified as White, but during her first interview, she discussed the importance of her Native American heritage. She is
one-quarter Native American on her father’s side. Arti grew up in a two parent household; both of her parents graduated high school. Her father is retired after more than thirty years working as an electrical lineman after first serving in the military. He completed two years of college at a large, state institution, planning on becoming a veterinarian before dropping out to enlist during Vietnam. After his military service, he had a young family, so rather than return to college, he went to work as a lineman. He also maintained a small family beef farm, which the family still operates. Arti’s mother never attended college and was a homemaker. The family still live in the rural community Arti grew up in, which she describes as “small and quaint . . . a great place to grow up and raise a family.”

Arti is a junior and anticipates graduating in another year and going on to graduate school. She began attending her current institution at 23, but it was not her first time enrolling in college. She enrolled at a large, out of state, public university, Judoon State University. Arti described, “I went to college right out of high school. I played volleyball [on scholarship] at [Judoon State University] and got hurt my first semester there. I had ACL surgery, so I came home.” The injury and resulting surgery made her unable to return to volleyball, which lost her the athletic scholarship that allowed her to attend Judoon State University. Ultimately, she did not look at her injury as a negative situation. Arti described “we practiced seven days a week, and we had games three or four times a week. I didn’t really want to be in the situation, so I was kind of glad I got hurt.” After returning home to recuperate, Arti decided to try attending a local branch of
Davros State University. That also did not work out for her, but for entirely different reasons. Arti described:

[Davros State University] was really hard because everybody that I graduated [high school] went there. Everybody constantly wanted to skip school. . . I remember going home one day and I looked at my mom and [said], ‘I’m not going to get anything out of this. . . I said I think I’m just going to go work.

Arti worked a variety of jobs before returning to college. She worked as a personal trainer, a bartender, and doing fuel tank replacement and repair. She values this time in the workforce and does not regret the delay in starting her education. Arti currently works a lot of hours to help support her education and living expenses. She works 20 hours per week during the school year in the Harkness IT Department, and that sometimes goes up to full time during term breaks. She also owns her own photography business and can work up to 30 hours a week for that, particularly during the summer “wedding season.” She also occasionally works as a fill-in bartender for several local bars. This income, in addition to a Pell Grant, Stafford loan, and other subsidized and unsubsidized federal loans is how Arti pays for college and her living expenses. The latter she splits with her fiancée, who she shares an off campus apartment with.

She attributes her decision to return to college at age 23 to a personal experience with her step nephew:

. . . .he was a wild child, and . . . rather than them taking him somewhere and putting him on [drugs], I just talked and talked and talked every time we had him. And he told me what was going on and eventually he just started going back to a
normal child. I said [to my mom], ‘I could do this. Sit and talk to kids all day.’

And she goes, ‘Yeah, you’re good with him.’

It was this experience that spurred Arti to research colleges until she found one that had a minor in forensics and a dual major in psychology and sociology tracked for counseling. She wanted all three programs at one institution, so she could complete them all in an undergraduate degree, prior to exploring opportunities for graduate school for child psychology. Her goal is to become a child counselor. At the time of our interviews, Arti had another three semesters to go in her program. It was clear that she was excited about going to graduate school, and she was already researching and making plans. She felt it likely that she would remain at Harkness University for her graduate degree because she was so happy with the quality of faculty in her major program and with the student support she felt the campus offered.

**The Final Seven – A Snapshot**

The final participants ranged in age from 19 to 37. There were two men and five women, all of whom self-identified as White. Four had only attended Harkness University; three had attended other institutions prior to Harkness. Two were education majors, one accounting major, one biology major, and three sociology majors. Three participants discussed postgraduate educational plans. All participants self-identified as Protestant Christian or Catholic, but none of the participants identified as practicing or devout. One participant was married with children, two were engaged, and four were single (or at least never mentioned a significant partner). Three participants lived on campus and four lived off campus; all had grown up no further than a two hour drive
from Harkness. The transcribed interviews and written reflection assignments collected from this group of seven participants comprised the total data set analyzed from which three major themes emerged. These will be described in detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents three major themes revealed through data analysis. Study participants 1) questioned instructor authority in regards to issues concerning social class and the realities experienced at service-learning sites. They believed themselves to be in possession of more authority over these topics because of personal experiences. All participants 2) practiced passing behaviors in order to appear to be middle class. Being perceived as middle class was considered imperative to achieving academic and social goals at Harkness. They believed if their true social class were known to peers and instructors it would draw pity and judgment upon them. Participants desired to avoid such stigmatization as it would interfere with their abilities to learn middle class doxa and gain middle class valued capital. Ironically, in many ways, passing as middle class limited the academic and social experiences of participants. Lastly, these students were actively constructing new social class identities by attempting to 3) develop chameleon habitus. Through attending a private institution, participants intended to learn doxa and acquire capital, which would allow them to achieve middle class security, while retaining the attributes of their working class identities that they valued. Ultimately, the students in my sample desired to move fluidly between working and middle class social fields and become successful at navigating within each.
Questioning Instructor Authority

The professional authority granted to a faculty member awards him or her power and respect due to possession of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills (Pace & Hemnings, 2007). During the semester all participants developed doubts regarding the professional authority of Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin in regards to multiple course topics and course design. In particular, participants believed that their personal lived experiences awarded them greater authority on topics regarding social class and on the realities experienced at the service sites. Doubts about instructor authority were kindled when participants: 1) saw disconnect between service-learning and course outcomes; 2) uncovered flaws in course and/or assignment design; or 3) viewed course information (readings, lectures, discussions) to be incongruent with existing knowledge from lived experiences or program specific (major) coursework. Questions regarding instructor authority caused participants to grow dissatisfied with course-related academic experiences and negatively influenced participants’ perceptions of and relationships with peers and course faculty. Ultimately, participants ended the semester questioning the academic relevancy of the course objectives and the outcomes associated with service-learning.

Course Design Impacted Instructor Authority

The overwhelming opinion of Hector, Arti, Sydney, and Emma, the students in Victimology, was that service-learning was academically beneficial for their learning, performance, and engagement in the course overall. Arti described that her participation
at the service site allowed her to apply academic knowledge and retain it better than if she had simply been participating in a traditional lecture course. She stated,

You can learn a lot of things, but until you really see it and grasp it, you have no idea what you’re really talking about. It’s easy to talk about poverty, and it’s easy to talk about homeless people, and it’s easy to talk about victims, but if you don’t see that person or see that look in their eyes. . . . everything, that you talk about in class comes to life. . . . and it makes it easier to hold that knowledge.

The specific learning outcomes of Victimology were clearly supported by the required service-learning activities and this was transparent and salient to the participants enrolled in that course. Because of the clear connection between service-learning and course outcomes, the students in Victimology did not question the utilization of service-learning as much as the specific design elements (e.g. site selection, reflection assignment design, time requirement, and student preparation) of the service-learning component of the course.

Participants in the composition course failed to draw direct connections between serving at Bad Wolf’s afterschool program and the course objectives. While service was viewed as positive in that it was “a way to give back to the community” (Cliff), English course participants did not view this course requirement as directly beneficial to improving their academic composition skills. For instance, Cliff asserted, “No, I don’t think its [service-learning] really helped me at all.” In his view, service-learning was perhaps discipline-specific: “this just seems like it’d be something for education majors, something that they would do [to] understand how to teach children . . . I’m not going
into that, so this information . . . I’m not going to really be using at all.” However, Emma, who was an education major, felt similarly, emphatically stating, “I didn’t learn anything about writing” and “I don’t feel like my writing got any better.” The academic connection between the service work and the course learning outcomes was not transparent or salient for the participants enrolled in this course. This lack of transparency left these three participants questioning the pedagogical appropriateness of utilizing service-learning for the course.

Service site selection impacted how successful participants were at drawing meaningful connections between course academic learning outcomes and service work. In Victimology, students were able to select from several service-learning sites, which were all directly related to course topics and learning outcomes. In the composition course all students had to complete service at Bad Wolf’s afterschool program, a service site that did not directly tie to the academic learning outcomes of the course. Neither Priscilla, Emma, nor Cliff understood how assisting in an afterschool program was meant to be directly beneficial to improving their academic writing skills.

When given a choice in site, participants chose locations which were personally relevant. Choosing personally meaningful service sites assisted participants to connect service to academic course content in ways which were relevant to them. Choice in sites also positively influenced overall satisfaction with the service-learning experience. For example, Sydney has spent a great deal of time in nursing homes throughout her life. Sydney and her mother currently work at the same nursing home in Sydney’s hometown. When Sydney was a child, her mother took her to the nursing home regularly so that
Sydney could interact with the elders. Sydney considers many of the elders at this nursing home to be members of her extended family. Sydney credited her familiarity and comfort with nursing home environments for her efficacy at Lumic House. She enjoyed her service at Lumic House, feeling as if she “had an impact” (Sydney) on the residents.

Lucy also chose her service site because of impactful experiences from her childhood. “I know what it’s like not to have a home because my mom lost ours when I was younger. That’s why I wanted to choose Torchwood Haven” (Lucy). Lucy’s parents divorced when she was very young. At first, Lucy and her sister lived in a house with their mother. When Lucy’s mother became unemployed she could no longer afford to keep their home. Lucy and her sister had to move in with their father to avoid becoming homeless. Lucy’s mother has been unemployed and episodically homeless ever since this childhood incident.

Hector and Arti felt strong connections to Bad Wolf Elementary because they identified with the students and the school environment, both having attended schools where a majority of the students were low income. Hector actually spent much of his childhood in the same neighborhood as Bad Wolf because he often stayed with relatives who lived in that area. Additionally, both Hector and Arti have career goals of working with at risk youth; Arti as a counselor and Hector as a juvenile probation officer. These career goals relate to deeply meaningful personal experiences for Arti and Hector. Arti credited her success in helping her fiancée’s nephew work through difficulties he was experiencing for prompting her to return to college. The success of this relationship helped Arti to solidify her professional goals, which led her to enter higher education
again. Hector was driven to assist troubled children because of the profound impact that his mentor, Terry Nation, had on him as a teenager. Hector shared,

I honestly believe if I can have that effect that [Terry Nation] had on me with just one to two kids, I’m good. I’d be very happy with my life. Because I passed it on, paid it forward… that’s why I’m here. That’s what I’m doing.

Having chosen personally meaningful service sites contributed to why students in Victimology felt that the service-learning was strongly tied to and benefitted their academic learning. The connections and familiarity Victimology participants felt at the service sites made the academic course content more tangible and relevant to their lives. Students in the English course had difficulty connecting the academic course content directly to their service at Bad Wolf. This result of this academic/service disconnect was that students in the composition course did not feel that their experiences at Bad Wolf made the academic course content more tangible and relevant to their lives, which negatively impacted their overall satisfaction with service-learning and the composition course.

Students in both courses ended the semester with questions regarding the use of service-learning or the specific design elements of service-learning. The emergence of these questions fueled doubts regarding instructor authority.

**Course Content Contradictory to Previous Experiences and Existing Knowledge**

Participants in both classes questioned some course content, specifically issues regarding social class and the realities experienced at the service sites. Hector, Arti, Emma, Priscilla, and Sydney expressed concerns with assigned course reading material
and in class discussions. These five participants felt that content presented in class or assigned for reading was often one-sided, biased, outdated, or false, leaving students unprepared for the complex realities experienced within service site fields. In particular, Emma and Priscilla cited several course readings assigned by Dr. Song which directly contradicted academic content both participants had been presented through their didactic and field education coursework. Emma criticized a decades old article assigned by Dr. Song as “outdated”; frustrated she claimed “[The education system] is tremendously different now . . . that’s irrelevant. . . stupid stuff that isn’t typical in schools today.”

Sydney expressed similar doubts about Victimology readings and lectures which she felt were often too “black and white”, glossing over the complexities of the many societal disparities confronted throughout the course.

Ultimately, participants believed they were in possession of privileged knowledge due to having lived experiences of many of the topics presented through the courses – e.g., low income schools, government assistance programs, food insecurity. Due to these lived experiences, participants felt that they had crafted broader, more nuanced worldviews than their Harkness peers, who were assumed to be middle to upper class and therefore socially and economically privileged. Arti dismissed some of the opinions her peers expressed in class as “stupid”, elaborating that only individuals who had hit “rock bottom” like she had could comprehend the complexities of societal inequalities. When peers shared what were perceived as naïve or biased opinions, participants often took offense or became dismissive of peers’ lived experiences as “sheltered” (Arti) or “narrow” (Hector). When course academic content contrasted with lived experiences or
existing knowledge, participants developed doubts about course academic integrity and instructor authority.

**Course Assignments Impacted Instructor Authority**

Five participants believed written reflection assignments were poorly designed. English students all described written reflection assignments as repetitive and too informal (i.e. not requiring the use of academic writing). English students did not believe that the informal writing style of the DEAL (Ash & Clayton, 2004) journals was aiding them in improving their formal academic composition skills, the main goal of the course. Priscilla described these journal activities as “silly” and “pointless”, lamenting that “it gets harder each time to write something because it’s the same things….over and over again. It’s hard to write a thousand word descriptive paper when it’s the same [experience].” Cliff described the multiple reflection assignments in English as not aiding him in mastering composition skills. Cliff saw these assignments more as informal, personal journals than as formal academic papers.

Both courses required culminating research papers that incorporated students’ experiences at the service sites with academic literature reviews. Participants described many final paper topics, approved or assigned by instructors, as too complex to adequately address through completing the service-learning as assigned. This poor advising was attributed to instructors’ lack of familiarity with, and therefore authority on, the realities of the service sites. Participants described not being able to observe evidence to support final paper topics while at service-learning sites. In some cases gathering evidence to support paper topics would have required interviewing clients one-on-one
about sensitive subjects; a practice which participants described as unethical and not permitted at service sites. Priscilla’s topic was the academic success of students living in homes with two parents compared to that of students living in single parent homes. Dr. Song approved Priscilla’s topic early in the semester. However, Priscilla found she could not gather data on this topic through completing service at Bad Wolf because she could not logistically interview children individually or ethically ask potentially upsetting questions. “You can’t [ask kids], ‘are your parents divorced?’ . . . Kids are going to get upset. . . . How are we supposed to balance that out in our research paper when we can only tell what we observed?” (Priscilla). Priscilla blamed her difficulty in incorporating her observations from Bad Wolf into her final research paper on Dr. Song’s lack of authority on Bad Wolf and K-12 educational settings. Priscilla believed Dr. Song should have advised her against that specific topic.

Sydney voiced similar concerns about her topic. Sydney struggled to find a topic that related to victimhood and elders living in nursing homes, finally settling on the process behind crafting a living will when the family disagrees with the patient’s wishes. Sydney possessed insider knowledge of nursing home fields, which (in Sydney’s opinion) awarded her more authority on Lumic House than Dr. Dhavin held. In order to draw conclusions about abuse, Sydney believed she would need access to data including a resident’s health, preferences, family dynamics, and other aspects of that individual’s care and life. The service-learning component of Victimology as assigned did not provide opportunities to collect this information because of the vulnerability of the populations at the service sites. Sydney grew frustrated with the final paper assignment
because she could not fully and accurately complete it. “I can’t really ask patients about that” Sydney explained. Sydney did not feel that the assignment, the service time required, and that particular service site (Lumic House) were congruent. She attributed this incongruence to Dr. Dhavin’s lack of professional authority regarding nursing homes, the elderly, and the complexities of the issues concerned with both. Ultimately, Sydney decided to interview Novice Haines, the director of Lumic House, in order to gather the experiences and insight of an authority on the concepts Sydney needed to address in her final paper. However, Sydney remained critical of the assignment because the paper could not be a product of her direct observations as it was assigned. Being unable to gather supporting evidence at the service sites compromised participants’ abilities to complete reflections as assigned and contributed to their dissatisfaction with the experience. Participants felt as if they were only “guesstimating” (Priscilla) and not gathering factual supporting evidence in order to draw academically relevant conclusions.

Other participants discussed similar frustrations with the process of choosing a final paper topic and completing the necessary assignment. It is of note that none of the participants attributed any difficulties with these assignments to themselves or their individual choice of paper topic or service site (if they had a choice in site). Arguably, if participants were more knowledgeable than Dr. Song or Dr. Dhavin, they should have been aware that their topic choices were inappropriate given the time commitment and service required. In fact, three participants chose topics of less interest to them because of the constraints they were aware they would face in gathering observable data. However, these participants still discussed dissatisfaction with assignment design and
expressed concern that peers were struggling with the unrealistic topics they had chosen. The overall perception of participants was that course instructors were at fault for not guiding students away from such topics and for designing an assignment which was inappropriate or impossible to complete given the time commitment and service sites required for the courses. These perceptions further fed doubts participants were forming about instructor authority in reference to the service sites and academic topics concerning them.

**Classroom Management Impacted Instructor Authority**

Participants blamed instructors for not holding students accountable for attendance, participation, assignment due dates, and comments made in class. This blame further added to participants’ doubts regarding instructors’ professional authority. In addition to frustration with instructors, participants also expressed feelings of animosity toward peers when those students: 1) did not fully participate in class; 2) came to class unprepared; 3) skipped class altogether; 4) or made comments participants considered biased or inappropriate. When peers failed to participate or came to class unprepared, participants described feeling a heavier burden to participate. Priscilla and Emma described feelings of being expected to “carry the class”, which both women interpreted as Dr. Song holding each of them to a higher standard than any of their peers. When peers failed to show up for class, participants became annoyed, seeing these peer absences as detrimental to their own learning and a waste of participants’ tuition dollars and time. Absent students could not “pull their own weight” (Sydney) or make in class contributions that participants could benefit from. Priscilla related that Dr. Song
frequently ended class early due to student unpreparedness and/or absence. “A couple times, I got ready for an hour class just to come up here [Harkness campus], and we didn’t do anything,” Priscilla exclaimed throwing up her hands in frustration. Emma, Priscilla, and Sydney believed instructors were at fault for enabling or permitting these types of peer behaviors because Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin did not enforce tangible consequences on slacking students. This lack of accountability measures was interpreted as evidence of instructor disregard for student learning. When participants stopped believing instructors cared about student and class success they grew disengaged. Priscilla rationalized, “when you have a professor who doesn’t really show any enthusiasm or caring, then why should I?”

Overall, participants wanted to see peers invested in the academic environment of the classroom, not only as an issue of equity but because peer contributions were valued as key aspects of the learning process. Five participants believed that learning from peers was an important opportunity lost when peers were unprepared or failed to participate. Emma explained, “Part of the reason why I may not be learning as much is because of my classmates. They don’t want to learn.” Participants wanted peers to take part in class activities and discussions more and to complete assignments on time. Participants valued the input of peers even when peers made contributions which were considered biased, naïve, offensive, or uninformed. Hector believed listening to his peers allowed him to understand how others thought about and viewed the world. “I appreciate it because I can see where stereotypes and prejudice and racism still exist, based on their comments ... I think it’s a good thing because it helps me understand them [peers]...” (Hector).
The above findings were based on participants’ perceptions of their instructors, their peers, and the classroom and service experiences. Perceptions are influenced by individual habitus and what results can alter the reality of the social field being navigated by a social agent. In other words, an individual’s perceptions have very strong influences on that person’s experience of reality. It was the reality experienced (perceived) by the study participants that this research aimed to uncover and understand. Participants perceived lack of effort and investment toward learning on the part of their peers. Participants also perceived a lack of authority in regards to classroom management on the parts of Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin. These perceptions led to strained classroom relationships between participants and peers and participants and course faculty.

**Service-learning May Cause Harm**

Arti, Hector, Sydney, and Emma expressed grave concerns that some required readings, topics of class discussions, and available service-learning sites created or reinforced negative stereotypes peers held regarding people of color and individuals living in poverty. Of even more concern were participants’ beliefs that participating in these service-learning courses created prejudice and ignorance in their peers which may not have existed *prior* to these service-learning experiences. Sydney expressed this concern by criticizing the title of the sociology course. Sydney strongly felt that by titling the course Victimology, it was implied that all of the social groups discussed in class were societal victims; a deficit-based label Sydney rejected as subjugating and demeaning. Because the course examined only negative aspects of the marginalized populations discussed, Sydney felt this prompted students to view the fields of the service
sites and the people within them through a narrow, negative lens. In illustration, Sydney described how complex and nuanced definitively spotting elder abuse can be without a complete assessment of the facility and the patient, which was not possible to accomplish through minimal, passive observations such as students completed during ten hours of academic service-learning. Sydney explained,

I don’t know what happens day to day. I only go once a week. . . . So [a resident] might be in bed for the past three times I’ve been, but that doesn’t mean she’s not sick and can’t get up. That’s not necessarily neglect on the facility’s part. We got people back home [the nursing home she and her mom work at] that don’t want out of bed. That’s their right to stay in bed all day if that’s what they want. That’s not up to me to decide if that’s neglect or not.

Sydney believed information presented in class dealing with issues faced during aging was too limited and simplified, focusing only on the negatives. This deficit-based view of the elderly and long term care left students with only a negative construct of nursing facilities, as if simply living in one equaled elder abuse. This one-sided, negative lens was the only tool Sydney felt her peers were presented with in class and therefore was all they utilized when reflecting upon their service at Lumic House.

Arti expressed similar views about the deficit-based nature and design of Victimology. Arti believed Dr. Dhavin should have chosen a more racially diverse school than Bad Wolf. Bad Wolf’s student body was made up of primarily low income, Black students. Like all study participants, Arti believed her Harkness peers to be overwhelmingly middle to upper class and White. In Arti’s opinion, serving at Bad Wolf
put her peers into a racial and social class minority (likely for the first time) which they were unprepared for. Immersing unprepared students into this setting reinforced the stereotype of the ‘hood environment perpetuated by popular media (Galster & Santiago, 2006; Richardson, 2012). “That’s the norm. Poor schools mean African-American kids,” (Arti). Arti believed participating in Victimology and service-learning should have challenged the stereotypes popular media had created concerning poverty, Black-Americans, and urban schooling. Instead Arti felt that the minimal preparation for and minimal time spent serving at Bad Wolf only solidified those stereotypes for her peers.

Participants’ beliefs that stereotypes held by peers were strengthened through participating in service-learning were based on comments peers made during class discussions and peer behaviors observed at service sites. “In class they’re [peers] disappointing and they’re disappointing to me at the service site,” (Emma). It is of note that in drawing these conclusions participants were making assumptions about their peers. Namely, participants assumed peers not only held unjust prejudices, but that these prejudices were formulated because of peers’ presumed social class and White privileges. Therefore, participants formulated or reinforced their own stereotypes regarding Harkness peers based upon interactions with peers throughout these service-learning courses.

The propensity for reinforcing or creating stereotypes held by peers was only one rationale provided individually by Hector, Arti, Emma, and Sydney for believing that service-learning components of their courses were counterproductive, even harmful. Additionally, these four participants believed that peers often delivered poor service
within service site environments, which contributed harm to both service organizations and clients. Participants interpreted certain peer comments and behaviors as negative or disengaged. “They say they like it, but their comments about their experience indicate otherwise,” (Hector). Such comments and behaviors were taken as evidence that peers were not fully invested in the missions of the service sites and that peers did not truly care about the challenges facing the individuals served within the fields of the service sites. Participants believed peers’ lack of engagement and empathy exacerbated each other, leading to poor quality service delivered. Hector described the ultimate diminishment of the mutually beneficial possibilities of service-learning which resulted in simply trading volunteer time for a grade. “I didn’t see anybody else make an attempt to build a relationship with any of the children … It wasn’t about anything other than getting a grade in school,” (Hector). However, not only was the service provided by peers often considered ineffective or poor quality. At times this disengaged service was considered directly harmful to individuals at the service sites. Participants believed that because they were cognizant of their peers’ lack of investment and empathy so were the individuals at the service sites. Participants who identified this potential harm caused by service-learning related it to a question of dignity. Accepting charitable service, even when it is needed, can be damaging to the pride and self-worth of an individual. When individuals in need have to accept service from people who are being forced to provide it against their will, that damage can be exacerbated. Participants who identified this potential harm resulting from service-learning were all individuals who had been (or were
still) on the receiving end of charitable service and it was from these lived experiences from which they drew their conclusions.

Because of their concerns about peer acclimation and poor service, Arti and Sydney purposefully accompanied peers to service sites. Arti and Sydney believed that by assisting peers they were additionally assisting the service site because the better acclimated peers became the better service peers could provide. Arti described advising peers while driving them to Bad Wolf, “Make sure you’re very open. Don’t close anybody out,” I said, “because you are going to see a lot of things that you never thought that you’d see.” Arti believed her encouragement pushed peers to interact with the kids at Bad Wolf more. Arti felt she had made a positive impact when after delivering this advice her classmate, Sarah Jane, allowed Bad Wolf students to braid her hair. “Sarah Jane didn’t like it, but she was trying to get over it,” (Arti). Sydney shared that she would have preferred to challenge herself with a less familiar service site, but she opted to serve at Lumic House because her classmate, Mickey, wanted her to serve with him there. Had she served at Torchwood Haven, her first choice, Sydney believed she would’ve “gotten more out of” service-learning because it was an unfamiliar site. However, she felt compelled to assist Mickey (and later other classmates) in becoming comfortable at Lumic House, so that he could provide quality service.

Notably, all harm believed to be caused was not exclusively attributed to classmates. Arti, Emma, Hector, Sydney, and Lucy all described the time commitment required for service-learning by their courses as insufficient. The time requirement (twelve or ten hours) was considered too minimal for becoming acclimated to the service
sites, exploring the complex realities of the service sites, and forming truly beneficial relationships with individuals at the service sites. These participants all contributed more hours to their service sites than was required and/or described desires to continue service after the semester’s end. Additionally, Sydney, Hector, Arti, and Emma each described feelings of guilt when they could no longer accommodate going back to their sites because of other demands on their time. Hector became deeply distressed by the end of the semester because he believed he had inadvertently caused harm to Donald, a boy Hector had been regularly working with at Bad Wolf. Donald was considered “difficult” by Bad Wolf staff and other volunteers, but Hector had been experiencing great success with him. Visibly distraught during our second interview, Hector confessed,

I was reading an article [“Mentoring at-risk youth in schools: Can small doses make a big change?” (Kolar & McBride, 2011)] and it said that if you have certain hours with a kid, it’s a good influence, but as soon as you leave, that could actually have a reverse effect because you’ve just added more disappointment and failure to a child. When I read that, it was like a mule kicked me. I see [Donald] going through so much already …. The idea of me adding to it makes me sad. . . . I did a good job at building that relationship, but I feel guilty because I did build that relationship and severed it.

Hector was deeply troubled when faced with the realization that he had potentially harmed Donald. One of Hector’s goals in pursuing a college degree was to ultimately help children like Donald, not add to their struggles. Arti, Sydney, Emma, and Lucy also made comments and displayed mannerisms and demeanors during second interviews
which indicated that each was struggling to process the possibilities that harm had been caused by the service work each had completed. Ultimately these participants did not believe that the mutually beneficial purpose of service-learning had been achieved. Each was highly doubtful that either their peers or the clients at the service sites had experienced positive change. This doubt contributed to the breakdown of instructor authority for participants.

**Loss of Professional Authority by Instructors**

The conflicts outlined above all contributed to the breakdown of professional authority attributed to Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin. Ultimately, participants believed having lived experiences of societal inequalities (particularly related to social class) awarded them greater authority regarding these topics. In other words, there was nothing Dr. Song or Dr. Dhavin could teach participants regarding living working class realities that participants did not already know; *these were participants’ realities*. Participants shared information presented by instructors and interactions with instructors all of which contributed to participants’ doubts regarding Dr. Song’s and Dr. Dhavin’s professional authority.

Sydney described an interaction with Dr. Dhavin which triggered Sydney’s doubts in her instructor’s professional authority early in the semester. Sydney and her mother had been violated by a physician. The physician was charged with multiple counts of voyeurism and the result was a long, complicated court proceeding involving multiple plaintiffs. Because Sydney was a “victim” involved in this court case she decided to approach her Victimology course instructor for advice on coping with the
legal and psychological issues she was facing as a result of this violation. Sydney described Dr. Dhavin as “shaken” by Sydney’s description of her abuse and its effects and “in a hurry to end the conversation.” Dr. Dhavin promised to bring Sydney some brochures from agencies that could provide assistance. However Dr. Dhavin never followed through with providing the promised information, nor did she direct Sydney to someone who could provide that assistance. Sydney believed this was due to lack of knowledge on Dr. Dhavin’s part and was one reason why Sydney did not view Dr. Dhavin as an authority or expert throughout the course.

Incorrect advice about proper attire led six participants to doubt instructor authority regarding the doxa of the service sites. Dr. Song, Dr. Dhavin, and River, the service-learning director, instructed all students to dress in business casual attire when at any service-learning site. However, dressier attire marked individuals as outsiders within the social fields of the service sites and in some cases caused distraction or conflict. Priscilla, Emma, and Lucy each described incidents in which service site clients asked to be given clothing items or accessories the women wore. “You stand out if you are dressier … the kids said, ‘Oh my gosh, that’s so cute. Can I have that?’ What do you say to that?” (Priscilla). Some individuals at the service sites displayed embarrassment or sadness in reaction to college students’ possessions or appearance. Lucy’s freshly painted nails sparked an uncomfortable exchange between a young girl and her father in line for food at Torchwood Haven. The young girl asked her father for nail polish like Lucy’s, to which the man snapped “well, we don’t have money to waste on that.” Lucy felt so embarrassed that she made sure to never wear nail polish to her service site again.
Arti and Hector knew that professional attire would be inappropriate and always dressed casually for the service sites. Advice regarding proper attire may appear trivial, however participants interpreted it as evidence that Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin had likely never been to the service sites. Not understanding the basic doxa of appearance practiced at the service sites indicated that instructors did not understand the social fields of the service sites and were therefore not authorities.

The centralized model of service-learning (see Ch. 3) that Harkness has established also directly contributed to the loss of professional authority by Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin. In order for courses to be eligible for fulfilling the service-learning university graduation requirement, course faculty had to utilize the services of the service-learning director and adhere to established criteria which defined service-learning at Harkness. Only through this mechanism could a course achieve the university designation of a “service-learning” course. However, utilizing a centralized model of service-learning may actually inhibit (or even prohibit) course faculty from forming direct, meaningful relationships with community partners and from becoming knowledgeable and familiar with service sites. Rather than individual faculty forming relationships with community partners, River, the service-learning director, was doing so. Institutionalization of service-learning through a centralized model/office can weaken the pedagogy, restrict impactful practice, and prohibit direct faculty and community relationships (Butin, 2015; Mitchell, 2008). These outcomes contributed to the loss of professional authority by Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin and, because of Harkness’ practices
regarding the administration of service-learning, may have been outside of their individual control.

Once participants no longer viewed course faculty as in possession of professional authority the academic content of the courses became less impactful and trusted. Participants grew dissatisfied with their academic experiences and this dissatisfaction negatively impacted their views of and relationships with peers and faculty. Ultimately, participants viewed themselves as authorities in regards to issues of social class disparities and the realities of the service site fields. This belief in their own authority provided participants with the confidence to engage in behaviors which they believed allowed them to pass as middle class, specifically because participants believed they had a stronger understanding of social class differences than Harkness peers and faculty. Doubts in instructors’ authority and beliefs in their own authority resulted in diminished academic and social experiences for study participants.

**Passing as Middle Class**

All participants exhibited behaviors inside and outside of the classroom which were intended to cover their social class. Participants were acutely aware of social class and social class differences. However, no participant believed that his or her social class impacted academic or social experiences at Harkness because no participant believed anyone on campus knew that he or she was a working class student. The qualification of “it doesn’t matter, because no one knows” (Lucy) was consistent among all participants. Participants all espoused a low salience for personal social class, however social class
had significant influences on how participants behaved, viewed their social fields, made judgments of others, and interacted within the university field.

**Everyone Here is Middle Class**

Participants all described peers at Harkness as being middle to upper class and this conclusion was based on observations of peer appearance, possessions, behaviors, and lifestyles. Because participants believed the majority of Harkness students were middle to upper class, participants all believed in the need to pass as middle class in order to be accepted and therefore successful at Harkness. These beliefs and perceptions caused issues of social class to permeate almost every aspect of participants’ experiences at Harkness. Social class was the analytical lens most participants utilized in drawing conclusions about peers and the social field of Harkness.

All participants believed that the majority of Harkness students were not responsible for their own tuition and expenses. Participants largely based this assumption on the fact that they knew very few Harkness students who worked. “They have parents that give them allowance ….I had to take off last semester. I had to work” (Priscilla). Additionally, study participants were acutely aware of possessions, spending habits, and behaviors of peers. These habits and behaviors were also noted as evidence which indicated that peers were largely not paying their own way. Sydney interpreted lack of care and respect for possessions as evidence that peers didn’t have to work for what they owned. Sydney described, “I had to work to pay for my car, so it makes me appreciate taking care of my car. I got friends where their parents just hand them everything, and they treat it like crap.”
Financial support and the ability to remain unemployed were not the only reasons participants believed peers were largely middle class. Participants indicated that peers clearly benefitted from the cultural and social capital of family members because this capital was valuable within the university field. This valuable middle class capital consisted of familial knowledge, abilities, and connections which were beneficial to peers in navigating higher education successfully. Sydney discussed the disconnect between her family and her college experience, attributing it to inexperience and lack of knowledge. “My parents didn’t go to college. If I have questions about how to go about doing stuff, my parents don’t know. . . they don’t get it” (Sydney). Emma also shared frustration because her parents could not advise her regarding higher education. While attending a local community college, Emma dropped a class not realizing that this negatively impacted her financial aid. That same semester, Emma was placed on academic probation, which jeopardized her progression and financial aid for the following semester. Other students advised Emma to have “her parents take care of it.” Emma exclaimed, “I don’t have parents! I can’t talk to her [mom] about [college related] things… she doesn’t know. I try not to hold it against her, but it’s hard.” Because Emma’s mother possessed no relevant knowledge about college that could assist her daughter, Emma had to navigate the crisis on her own. Cultural and social capital are transferred down generational lines ensuring that those in places of power in a society retain that power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Participants did not enter the field of Harkness in possession of power granting (exchangeable) capital transferred to them from their families because participants were largely first generation college students.
Hector, Sydney, Emma, Cliff, and Lucy believed their peers were more academically prepared for the rigors of college, a benefit also related to social class. Participants opined that middle to upper class students typically attended K-12 school systems with more rigorous college-preparatory academic programs. Additionally, these participants believed peers likely had college educated parents who were able to assist their children with scholastic achievements. Emma and Sydney expressed views that peers likely had parents who valued education and who passed these values on to their children. Emma’s parents did not graduate from high school. Because her parents held no value for education, they did not encourage Emma to attend school regularly. Emma blamed her parents for not ensuring she obtained a good K-12 education because Emma now struggled academically in college. Angrily Emma shared,

My mom never made me [go to] school. I never had any repercussions for getting a bad grade. If I didn’t want to go to school, no one said anything. But I chose to because I didn’t want to end up living like that [her drug-addicted mother]. I took my ACT and signed up for college on my own. I filled out my own FAFSA….I missed so many days while my parents got divorced….I feel like I missed out on learning all the basic things.

The above examples are just a few provided that outlined evidence which participants utilized to conclude that the majority of students at Harkness were middle to upper class. Seeing themselves in the social class minority caused participants to remain highly cognizant of social class differences. In order to avoid possible identification as
working class students (which would risk possible stigmatization) participants practiced numerous behaviors aimed at covering their working class identities.

**Passing within the Classroom**

Oral reflection was frequently practiced in the form of full class discussions moderated by course faculty, as small group discussions moderated by students, and informally between students outside of the classroom. Participants highly valued oral reflection, preferring it over written reflection; however participants admittedly often withheld their opinions and were often disturbed by peer comments. Even when participants disagreed with what was being said, they typically kept their opinions to themselves. Arti and Hector spoke of feeling like parents that needed to educate or correct younger children. Listening to peers’ opinions that the Bad Wolf kids were “dirty” was difficult for Hector because the kids at Bad Wolf reminded him of his own children. “They’re [peers] placing judgment because they’re [Bad Wolf students] lower income …that they’re not as clean, and that bothered me. I didn’t say anything, but that bothered me,” (Hector). Hector admitted to rarely disagreeing verbally with peers because he felt they were entitled to their own opinions. Sydney admitted to frequently “biting her tongue” because she didn’t want to start arguments in class.

Not only did participants admit to frequently withholding comments and opinions in class, they also withheld relevant personal experiences that could have added value and depth to class discussions. Only Hector and Arti admitted to sharing any personal information; although they clarified that it was minimal or implied. Hector believed only another low SES student would have picked up on his inferences to his social class
because he kept them so vague. On one occasion, Arti became so angry and frustrated with her reading group members that she openly declared her income level. This was the only instance about which I was told where a participant truly admitted her income level and class to her peers. Arti described her reading group partners, Sarah Jane and Amelia, discussing feeling “dirty” after serving at Bad Wolf Elementary. This exchange caused Arti to lose her temper and challenge her peers,

It was the social class difference because when you associate people with poverty, you associate them with being dirty. … [Amelia] said she felt like she had to go home and get a shower… [Sarah Jane] said, “You know, I just feel like there’s so many germs or like I have to go home and get showered.” [Arti begins to become more agitated as she tells this story.]…That’s when I said, “Well, I didn’t even make $7,000 last year. That puts me way below poverty level…So do you find me dirty?

Arti said Amelia and Sarah Jane were both shocked to discover Arti lived below the poverty line. Arti challenged her peers to explore why they considered the Bad Wolf kids to be dirty when neither Amelia nor Sarah Jane admitted to finding Arti to be dirty. In this manner Arti was able to deescalate the conflict into what she felt was a productive reflection upon social class differences and prejudice. Arti and Hector were unique among participants though in that both were obviously older than the majority of Harkness students. Their status as non-traditionally aged students gave Hector and Arti a type of privilege that the other participants did not enjoy. Hector and Arti believed that due to their ages, peers expected that they had different life experiences from those of
their peers. It was this reason that allowed Arti and Hector to feel more comfortable, safer, disclosing some personal information that related to their SES. The other participants kept such information to themselves. These omissions of relevant information and personal opinions allowed participants to pass as middle class within the classroom. Their silences implied agreement with the experiences and opinions of peers.

**Writing (or Omitting) to Pass as Middle Class**

The lesser value placed on written reflection was partially related to participants’ relative discomfort with or lack of confidence in their academic writing abilities. Additionally there was more specific and rigorous assessment tied to the written reflections than to the oral reflections. Written assignments were graded on content and student ability or skill, while oral reflections were largely assessed on participation. Emma, Hector, Arti, and Sydney felt they lacked the ability or skill needed in order to properly express their feelings and opinions on their service via written reflections. Some directly blamed poor academic preparation due to their low SES and the poor K-12 schools they attended. Emma admitted that enrolling in a composition course was “a big step” which she was “very intimidated by” because she felt her high school had not prepared her for the rigors of higher education. Others did not believe they possessed the adequate academic vocabulary needed in order to put their feelings, opinions, and experiences into written words. Arti became very emotional when attempting to describe how powerful she felt about her experiences at Bad Wolf. She did “not have the words” to convey such powerful emotions adequately in writing.
Participants had doubts in their abilities to successfully translate the academic learning they gained from the service sites into what they believed was the expected level of academic discourse required for quality written reflections. Some of participants’ lack of confidence in writing skills was based in reality (many written reflections collected were of relatively poor quality). However, this lack of confidence in writing skills coupled with the intimidation of participating in academic writing influenced why most participants placed a higher value on oral reflection.

Written reflections were read and coded after completing interviews. Written reflections differed greatly from the conversations held during interviews. During interviews, participants often shared strong opinions, deep feelings, and personal experiences. Participants’ informal reflections during interviews often displayed evidence of critical thinking. However, in contrast, written reflections were bland, full of facts, citations, and quotes. There was little of the passion, opinion, or personality that came across through interviewing. There was also a great deal of conflicting information presented between interviews and written reflections. Such conflicts were some of the passing behaviors discovered in participants’ written reflections, which were similar to the passing behaviors practiced during oral reflections.

Written reflections were crafted to relay what students thought professors wanted to read based on information presented in class or assigned as readings. Emma’s reflection papers contained opinions and information that she vehemently disagreed with in interviews. In a reflection focused on relating class readings to her experiences at Bad Wolf, Emma wrote “articles we summarized in class are closely relatable to our
experience at [Bad Wolf].” This is in stark contrast to several of her statements during interviews where she referred to the same article as “outdated” and “ridiculous.” Arti’s final paper also contradicted statements she made in interviews. In her paper, Arti wrote about poverty and neglect in a matter of fact, straightforward manner. Arti wrote, “due to neglect being a problem among children in low socioeconomic status homes, the children at [Bad Wolf] Elementary could be a prime sample of how neglect can cause learning difficulties and disabilities.” However, in interviews Arti discussed how complicated the issues behind neglect could be. Additionally, Arti discussed that what constitutes neglect is relative; individuals judge what constitutes child neglect based on their own experiences and values. However, Arti’s final paper reflected none of these complexities. Rather than write her own analysis, Arti cited Dr. Dhavin’s lectures and publications frequently. No participant wrote in conflict with course information, even though during interviews all participants expressed doubts about the accuracy or perspective of this same information. In essence, even though participants doubted instructor authority, none chose to challenge it openly.

Additionally, participants often wrote from a decidedly middle class perspective, implying that they were, in fact, middle class. Emma strongly implied she was middle class in her written reflections. She wrote of assumptions she brought into Bad Wolf as believing the students would be unfriendly and unintelligent “because they are children living in poverty.” She continued by writing that she learned through serving at Bad Wolf that “even though they are of a different race, they were intelligent and did not display poverty characteristics.” In interviews Emma described the children of Bad Wolf
as so much like her that she felt they “shared an unspoken bond.” However, in her written reflections Emma describes Bad Wolf as unlike anything she had previously experienced. Arti described students at Bad Wolf as “clingy” in her final reflection. Arti wrote that this clinginess was clearly evidence of parental neglect which was common in families living in poverty. “I found this to be sad, because, to me, the only clear answer was lack of attention at home, which is clearly neglect” (Arti). However, in interviews Arti described this very viewpoint as narrow-minded, influenced by social class and cultural values. Both choosing not to challenge instructor authority directly and writing from a middle class viewpoint (or what was believed to be a middle class viewpoint) were both behaviors participants practiced in written reflections which were intended to cover their working class identities.

What stood out more than what was written in reflection papers was what was not written. All participants had lived experiences of the topics on which they chose to write. Yet, similar to oral reflections, these experiences and opinions were not disclosed. Lucy spoke at length in both interviews about the frightening experience of losing her family home during her parent’s divorce. Yet, in her final reflection paper, which focused on homelessness, she never wrote about these experiences. Emma chose the impacts of mentoring programs on children with incarcerated parents for her final reflective essay. In both interviews Emma spoke extensively about her neglect as a child and her mother’s drug habit. However, Emma never wrote about connections between her personal experiences and her service or literature review. Priscilla wrote her final paper on how poverty impacted children’s success in school. However, she omitted how her own
family’s poverty had created barriers for her schooling. Likely the most glaring omission concerned Sydney. During our first interview, Sydney showed me a large heart made up of photos of family and friends which she had created on her wall. Included in this collage were several pictures of residents from the nursing home she works at. She considers these elders to be “family.” However, Sydney did not include any personal insights or experiences about nursing homes in her written reflections; not even simply a mention of working in such a facility. Hector was unique in sharing personal information in his final reflective paper. Hector’s final paper was on the effects of mentoring programs on at risk youth. In his paper, Hector describes himself as an “at risk youth” and briefly relates his mentoring experience with Terry Nation (see Ch. 3). This was the only instance in a written reflection where a participant drew a direct personal connection to the service work performed.

Being seen as middle class was considered essential to success at Harkness because participants believed the campus social class majority was middle class. Therefore, participants wrote reflections believed to be similar to ones their middle class peers wrote in order to continue to blend in with peers and appear middle class. Low SES students, particularly those in private university environments, become adept at passing as middle class through hiding information and clues to their actual social class (Steinmatz, 2008). Including relevant personal information in written reflections risked exposing participants’ hidden social class. Emma, Priscilla, Lucy, and Sydney were uncomfortable with sharing personal details and opinions with instructors. Emma believed if she described how her lived experiences were similar to those of the kids at
Bad Wolf she would be making herself vulnerable to Dr. Song, whom she did not trust. “I don’t feel like I’m comfortable enough to write that kind of stuff,” (Emma). All participants disclosed concerns that they would be judged or pitied if it became known on campus that they were working class. Participants believed that being singled out as working class would negatively impact the potential for them to learn middle class doxa and gain capital valued and exchangeable in middle class fields, which were ultimately the reasons for attending a private university. Unfortunately, passing as middle class inhibited participants’ full participation in academic reflection, which in turn limited the academic benefits gained through this key component of service-learning

The Importance of Appearances

Participants also engaged in passing behaviors outside of the classroom. In fact, institutional selection, in and of itself, was a passing behavior. All participants believed that enrolling at an expensive, private school allowed them to pass as a higher social class than they actually were. This can be illustrated by a conversation I had with Cliff. Cliff described believing the majority of Harkness students to be of a higher social class than he was. He based this assumption on observations made of peer possessions and behaviors, but also because they were attending a private school. After Cliff added that last detail, I responded with, “But you’re at a private school?” Cliff slowly grinned, cocked his head, raised his eyebrows and emphatically nodded, “Yeah. Right.” Like Cliff, all other participants believed that attending Harkness led others to assume (like participants did about peers) that they were middle to upper class students who could
afford such expensive tuition. “I live on campus; I have a car; I go to the same classes … We all go here, so we assume that people have money that go here,” (Lucy).

In addition to choosing a private institution, Hector described passing as middle class by practicing different speech patterns and behaviors than he normally employed. Hector referred to this as “acting up” to middle class. Hector described altering his speech patterns and behaviors, which is considered code switching. Hector learned these skills through serving in the military and working in the banking industry. Hector was aware he practiced code-switching behaviors and believed he was able to identify when other students practiced them as well. Hector was the only participant who described actively code-switching (and being aware of it). Sydney described learning the “right way to talk to people” by attending Harkness, which indicated she was beginning to learn similar speech patterns and behaviors which would allow her to code-switch. All participants were highly conscious of the dress, appearance, and possessions of Harkness peers; and all participants ensured their physical appearance matched that of other Harkness students. Participants’ abilities to maintain a similar dress and appearance were directly connected to why participants believed no one at Harkness knew they were low SES students. “We all wear sweatpants to class, so you can’t tell who has the money and who doesn’t,” (Sydney). However, Hector and Arti already stood out as different because they were older students. They both viewed their age as a privilege, which relieved them of the “burden” (Arti) of blending in. Hector and Arti believed peers thought they dressed differently because they were older, not because they couldn’t afford to dress like their peers. However, both Arti and Hector still made some
attempts to not dress out of the ordinary on campus. Hector initially wore business casual to campus, but quickly realized he was “really overdressed.” When he was mistaken for a visiting professor, he decided to change to more casual attire.

Five participants admitted taking on some financial hardships in order to maintain appearances. These hardships included purchasing the occasional designer or trendy item in order to blend in with peers. Lucy described cutting her food budget so that she could afford a Coach purse because “everyone was carrying one.” Arti admitted to purchasing Under Armour® because “everyone seemed to be wearing it on campus.” Emma transferred from a less expensive community college in order to access the prestige she believed a Harkness degree would award her. Arti retained a lower paying job in campus IT, rather than return to bartending full time because she believed the former position would help her to build a professional resume and obtain respected, influential references. Sydney believed becoming a Harkness alumna would grant her connections she would profit from; she believed she was learning to “network” at Harkness. In addition to a college degree, all participants were pursuing the obtainment of cultural and social capital, which they recognized as vital to future economic and professional achievement. In order to gain this capital, participants believed they needed to become educated, acculturated, and connected in a middle to upper class social field. By attending Harkness participants were attempting to learn the “rules of the game” that their middle to upper class peers already came to campus practicing. Blending in (passing) on campus was important twofold. Firstly, passing allowed participants to practice middle class doxa. Secondly, passing prevented participants from drawing attention to themselves as
working class students, which participants believed would put them at risk for stigmatization on campus.

**Fear of Being Outed**

Participants referred to covering their social class, not just to fit in, but also because they did not want to be judged or pitied. Emma spoke angrily about being treated poorly when she was working at her waitressing job. She believed customers looked down on her as a server, inferring she was of low SES. “I see the way people look down upon people that are of poverty or lower income. [Customers] treat me like crap all the time,” (Emma). Participants did not want their social class to become how they were defined on campus. Social class was an identity dimension participants believed put them at risk for marginalization on campus, therefore it made sense that participants wished to keep their social class identity on the periphery (Martin, 2015), hidden from others.

All participants believed peers were prejudiced against working class individuals. This is the main reason participants hid their low SES identities so carefully. Due to their fear of judgment, few participants admitted to sharing personal details about their lives or social class with Harkness peers, faculty, and staff. “I don’t talk about my personal life … I’ve worked hard to get to where I am, and I don’t feel like I should be judged because of where I came from,” (Emma). These omissions were also passing behaviors which inhibited the formation of strong, supportive relationships. Hiding an identity which could negatively impact participants socially, academically, and professionally added strain to the process of forming relationships on campus. When participants heard
classmates make negative, biased, or naïve comments in class about service-learning sites and clients; these fears about stigmatization and judgment were confirmed. Participants did not want the same judgment classmates were directing at service site clients directed at them. Therefore, these peer comments reinforced the practicing of passing behaviors. Sydney shared a story from high school that made this point very clearly. Sydney attended a private high school. She received a large tuition discount by working as cleaning staff during the summer. One year Sydney served as president of a program which selected local families to receive holiday food assistance. The high school students didn’t choose the families receiving the food; only focused on gathering the food donations and packaging them. Sydney was surprised when her mother showed her a postcard informing them that they would be receiving one of the food care packages from the school.

I never thought I was poor, but apparently somebody thought I was poor enough that I needed food from a school food bank… If some of the people in our school would have known who the food was going to; they would have looked differently on them. Like, “Oh, you’re that bad off? Oh, I’m sorry,” and that’s not exactly what everybody wants if you’re poor. (Sydney)

Sydney, Emma, Lucy, and Priscilla admitted lying, either directly or through omission, to friends about their families and backgrounds. Lucy said it was “embarrassing” that her parents did not have jobs, so she did not “ever talk about it.” Lucy’s friends have “never really asked, so I don’t bother to tell them.” Sydney, Emma, Lucy, and Priscilla have carefully crafted public personas which hide their home lives
Lucy and Emma have been practicing these active passing behaviors since grade school. Emma shared that she never allowed friends over to her house and made up what she received for Christmas every year. Emma now believes that she even lied to herself for most of her childhood about how bad her home life was. “I never knew how to handle it and now I realize, “Why did I act like that? Why was I so ashamed of where I came from?” (Emma).

It is noteworthy that participants admitted to lying to cover aspects of their social class identities. They may have also lied to me in order to cover aspects of their lives even more personal than those they did share. This may have been the case, however even with interviews lasting 1.5 to 3.5 hours with months in between, participants rarely contradicted themselves. Ultimately, participants practiced a variety of behaviors intended to cover their working class identities and allow them to pass as middle class. Participating in service-learning reinforced these passing behaviors.

**Passing Created Barriers to Forming Relationships**

All participants expressed the desire to form relationships, but barriers (discussed above), such as time and money, prevented them from doing so. Additionally, the efforts participants put into passing as middle class inhibited their abilities to form social and professional relationships on campus. Forming a relationship involves becoming closer to someone; getting to know that person better and allowing that person to know you. Covering a salient personal identity, such as social class, can require constant guarded vigilance. Forming new relationships may have put participants’ low SES at risk of discovery, which participants’ believed would result in marginalization on campus.
Participants desired to form peer and professional relationships that could be of benefit in the future. Relationships are important forms of social capital which can be converted into economic or social benefit (e.g. references for graduate school or jobs). Attending Harkness, a private institution, was a strategy meant to allow participants to develop beneficial peer and professional contacts. Ironically, very few participants could afford the time or money required to participate in the activities and experiences necessary for developing such social networks.

Sydney viewed acquiring networking skills as a top priority while at Harkness. She worked a great deal of overtime to afford to travel on a Harkness sponsored trip to Washington, D. C. to meet with Harkness alumni in public service. Sydney described the financial sacrifice as “well worth it” because the trip sparked her to broaden her aspirations. The trip “really made me think I could leave my hometown because I know all these people [Harkness alumni] and four of them are doing what I want to do,” Sydney shared. After this promising experience with networking, Sydney was considering studying abroad. She had begun accepting more overtime in order to attempt to save money to finance her travels.

Sydney made it a priority to form a professional network, but Lucy, Priscilla, and Hector found forming professional relationships hindered by lack of time, money, or existing connections. Priscilla had joined the education club during her first semester and had hoped to run for office. However, she had to withdraw from Harkness and the club when her father lost his job. Even though she had returned to Harkness, Priscilla had not returned to the education club. Priscilla’s work schedule conflicted with the club’s
meetings. Shrugging her shoulders, Priscilla explained, “What are you going to do? My dad lost both his jobs. I have to work.” Lucy had been highly involved in extracurricular activities in high school, but had not kept up that level of involvement at Harkness. Lucy enjoyed her involvement in high school clubs, but was hesitant to attend club meetings at Harkness because she “didn’t know anybody” and most clubs held weekend activities. Lucy described typically going “home on the weekends” to visit with friends and family. Lucy admitted that she joined clubs and activities in high school mainly in order to spend time with friends. Because she had no strong friendships on campus, Lucy had not continued her pattern of involvement.

Living on campus (or not) impacted participants’ relationships with Harkness peers. Cliff, Sydney, and Lucy lived on campus. Only Cliff and Sydney spoke of friends at Harkness whom they spent a significant amount of time with; Sydney even had a boyfriend. Hector, Emma, Arti, and Priscilla lived off campus with family or partners. Emma and Priscilla could not afford to live on campus and both said this was a large social barrier. Priscilla had lived on campus during her first semester, but due to financial constraints had moved in with her parents. She “wished” she still lived on campus and said she would move back if it was economically feasible. Priscilla believed living off campus was “difficult because you don’t get to see everyone much, but . . . I’m saving $3,000, and to me, that’s a lot of money.” Participants living off campus said that “being out of sight left you out of mind” (Emma) for peers. Off campus participants did not get invited to go out often. Other students “know I’m working a lot, so they don’t even bother asking,” Priscilla shared. “We used to go to lunch every day when I was a
freshman [when she lived on campus]; now it’s only every once in a while because we really have to find a schedule for it.”

Proximity to campus wasn’t the only factor influencing social invitations. Sydney, Emma, and Priscilla often had to turn down social invitations due to work, schoolwork, or lack of money. Because these women were forced to say no so often, other students simply stopped asking. Sydney didn’t make strong peer connections during her freshman year due to the heavy academic schedule of a pre-nursing major. Because she spent most of her time working and studying during that first year, Sydney “missed out” on becoming part of the Harkness social life. “If you didn’t [go out] when you were a freshman, why would you start now? I feel like that’s the way it works around here,” (Sydney). Emma, Priscilla, Sydney, and Lucy confessed to making up “lame excuses” (Priscilla) to avoid admitting to peers that they simply could not afford to go out. Priscilla was selective about which invitations she accepted in order to conserve money without being obvious that she was doing so. “I’ll say no because I can’t spend $200 on tickets for a concert … I don’t spend a lot [when I go out]; I know how to balance my money,” (Priscilla). Priscilla and Sydney tended to accept invitations that allowed for splitting costs with others, such as ordering pizza.

Hector and Arti lived off campus mainly because they were older students with family responsibilities. Hector described “having the priorities and responsibilities of an adult father.” The social isolation of living off campus was exacerbated by Hector and Arti’s non-traditional ages. Arti jokingly explained that no one wants “the old lady” going along with them to the bar. Hector could recall only one social interaction with
another Harkness student outside of class. Hector and a classmate once walked across the street to have lunch and study prior to a class they shared. Hector described himself as an extrovert with a large group of friends and connections off campus. However, Hector admitted,

There’s not a lot that I have in common with these kids because of the differences in priorities. I’m friendly with everybody, but to say I have a friend here, no… I would say I’ve made quite a few acquaintances … but when I leave school, I leave them here.

Hector and Arti both spoke of having more in common with their professors than their peers. However, professors are not an appropriate peer group for non-traditional students because of ethical considerations and power differentials. While Arti described talking “all the time” to Dr. Dhavin “about life in general,” Arti characterized these conversations as superficial. “I try not to share a lot of personal things because I don’t feel as though [long pause, considering] . . . I feel as though stuff like that’s on a need-to-know basis,” (Arti). While professors can be important professional contacts for students, they are not peers. Therefore, Hector and Arti’s ages truly left them with no real peer group at Harkness.

While time, money, lack of existing connections, and guarding their working class identities (passing) created barriers for participants in regards to forming new peer and professional relationships, the increased demand that academics placed on their time and attention strained existing relationships. All participants discussed difficulties in balancing academics, employment, and personal relationships. All participants spoke of
important relationships “back home.” Hector had a wife and dependent children. Arti and Emma had fiancées that each lived with. Sydney, Priscilla, and Lucy had parents they were helping to support. All participants, except Hector, were employed. Arti, Priscilla, Emma, and Sydney held the heaviest work schedules and none of these women believed she was allotting the time required to sufficiently nurture her personal relationships. Arti described this lack of time for her fiancée as “probably the roughest part” of attending college. “You don’t mean for it to, but naturally….your intimate relationships get put on hold,” (Arti). Sydney avoided going home to visit family and friends over breaks because, “it’s just a big old headache when I go home. I have so much [school work] to do, and if I go home, none of it is going to get done.” Remaining at Harkness over breaks made Sydney “feel terrible” because she wasn’t home helping her parents. Not having sufficient time for family and friends placed significant strain on participants’ personal relationships. Hector was emotionally torn over sacrificing time with his children for school work. Hector believed completing his degree would allow him to obtain financial security for his family, however he lamented missing irreplaceable time with his children in order to complete required school work, including service-learning. “By the time I’m getting home from [Bad Wolf], dinner’s already over, homework’s already done. That communication and connection time with my own children has been disrupted,” (Hector).

All participants, except Cliff, expressed guilt and regret about denying family and friends time and attention. Priscilla, Sydney, and Emma attributed some estranged or lost friendships to lack of time and availability. “My friend asked me to come out last night
and I told her I couldn’t because I had a paper to get done. She was mad,” (Priscilla).

Sydney and Arti had purposefully (although unwillingly) pulled away from family and friends because those relationships were negatively impacting their academic journeys. This was a burdensome choice to make, which added stress to participants’ academic experiences. Hector, Priscilla, Emma, and Lucy chose to focus whatever available time and attention they had to maintaining existing relationships. This choice ultimately left these participants no time left to successfully cultivate new relationships at Harkness.

**Service-learning May Encourage Forming Relationships**

All participants expressed difficulties in forming peer and professional relationships which could be capitalized upon for personal and professional success. This is of note because forming social relationships on campus is directly related to student success, but is often difficult for low SES students who may lack the social capital necessary to convert into beneficial relationships. Difficulties in forming relationships were all directly related to participants’ working class identities (as discussed above). However, service-learning did create opportunities for participants to form desired peer and professional relationships. Service-learning has been previously cited as one possible strategy for supporting the formation of new social relationships between students of diverse backgrounds (Pucino & Penniston, 2014). Additionally, students may also form connections with community partners through completing service-learning projects and these relationships may lead to acquisitions of support, knowledge, and resources students may otherwise not have had access to (Pucino & Penniston, 2014).
Five participants regularly went to service-learning sites with other Harkness students. The reasons behind participants’ decisions to serve with other students, or not, varied. Cliff had no transportation and therefore had no choice but to serve with peers. Relying on peer transportation was difficult to arrange and caused Cliff delays in completing his service hour requirement. Lack of control over his access to Bad Wolf frequently resulted in Cliff not being able to complete assignments on time. However, carpooling allowed him to get to know some of his classmates. Lucy and Priscilla felt more comfortable going with other students. Priscilla went to Bad Wolf regularly with classmates, Martha and Jack, whom she met in the composition course. Harkness offered monetary support for students who agreed to transport peers without vehicles. To earn this mileage reimbursement Priscilla offered to transport Martha and Jack. Priscilla believed she likely would not have attempted to form relationships with Martha and Jack outside of the classroom had it not been for the opportunity to earn back some of her travel expenses. Lucy didn’t know any of the other students in Victimology. Lucy shared that she was too shy to approach a complete stranger, so she recruited a student who had been in several of her biology (major program) courses. Because he enjoyed the experience, he offered to go with her again. Lucy’s self-described “extreme shyness” is why she wanted someone to go with her to Torchwood Haven. “I am more comfortable when I know people … I just needed somebody to go with me,” (Lucy).

In addition to opportunities to form peer relationships, service-learning provided some participants with opportunities to form professional relationships. Arti, Hector, Sydney, and Emma felt that they had formed professional relationships with individuals
at the service-learning sites which would be personally or professionally beneficial to them in the future as social capital. Participants felt that their working class skills and abilities (cultural capital) allowed them to excel at service sites, allowing them to receive more recognition and praise in the community environments than within the academic environment at Harkness. This praise and recognition made participants more confident in their abilities and promoted feelings of high self-efficacy. Emma and Hector both spoke proudly when Miss Cassandra, the director of the afterschool program at Bad Wolf, recognized them each for their abilities to work with children considered “difficult.” Emma, Priscilla, Hector, Arti, and Sydney all discussed eventually capitalizing on the professional relationships they developed through service-learning by seeking future professional references or internship opportunities from service site directors.

Clearly service-learning provided opportunities for the formation of social and professional relationships that may not have occurred otherwise. Completing required service outside of class time forced participants to spend time, which they likely would not have, interacting with peers and service site professionals and clients. However, it is unclear if participants were able to capitalize on these relationships outside of class or after the service-learning ended. Without the requirements of service-learning, participants may have returned to spending available time working, studying, or focusing on maintaining existing relationships.
Developing Chameleon Habitus

All participants were at different stages in the process of constructing new personal social class identities. They were all very aware of social class and the numerous ways it impacted their lives, even though they wished this was not true. Participants all practiced behaviors that covered their social class identities and allowed them to pass as middle class. This was part of each participant’s strategy for achieving success in higher education. Each participant had chosen a private university experience because of the social and cultural capital he or she believed such an institution could provide. This was a key component of participants’ strategies for bettering their positions within society. However, participants’ pursuits of higher education, middle class valued cultural capital, and financial stability were attempts to abandon their working class identities. Participants valued many aspects of their working class identities. These valued aspects of working class membership were incorporated into participants’ complicated conceptualizations of social class identity, which were evolving.

When habitus encounters a new social field, which is misaligned to the originary field of the social agent, there is a “dialectical confrontation” (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 31) from which a cleft habitus (Bourdieu, 1999, 2000) may emerge. This cleavage in habitus can produce multiple results: 1) Habitus may become destabilized causing an agent to suffer from internal division and contradiction (Bourdieu, 2000); 2) an agent may experience habitus tug, in which tastes, practices, and predispositions jostle for dominance, pulling the agent in multiple directions by different fields (Ingram, 2011; Reay, 2002); or 3) an agent may develop a chameleon habitus, which allows her to adapt
to and seamlessly code-switch between multiple fields (Abrams & Ingram, 2013).

Through development of a chameleon habitus a social agent can benefit from the creation of a unique, reflexive position between the two contrasting fields; a privileged location Bhabha (1990) refers to as third space. Shifting between misaligned fields (such as the service sites and Harkness) can allow students to create third space, a differently structured space from which to practice reflexivity and dynamic processes of habitus revision (Abrams & Ingram, 2013). Imagine third space as a bridge spanning a chasm which represents the cleavage in an individual’s habitus. By positioning themselves at either end of the bridge, an individual perceives an unbalanced view made up mostly of the side of the chasm they are closest to and only a distant vision of the other side. Moving to the other side of the bridge simply provides the individual with a view now biased the opposite way. An individual experiencing habitus tug could be imagined as one racing back and forth across the bridge over and over again. This behavior would not only cause stress, but would also never allow an individual to stop find a balanced view.

By positioning themselves in the middle of the bridge, an individual benefits from a unique, balanced perspective of the bridge, either side of the chasm, and the expanse of the chasm itself. The former scenario represents how Bourdieu (1999, 2000, 2002) viewed a cleft habitus, while the latter represents how Abrams and Ingram (2013) view a chameleon habitus and Third Space.

**Analyzing Peers at the Service Sites – Evidence of Third Space**

Participants had strong opinions about their peers’ behaviors at the service sites. This led participants to reflect upon and analyze some peer behaviors. This personal
reflection added a deeper layer of contemplation and critical analysis to participants’ service-learning experiences. Sydney, Emma, Hector, and Arti believed they knew what peers did wrong and why peers often felt uncomfortable at the service sites. Participants were familiar with the doxa and social fields experienced at the service sites. Participants were comfortable with the realities experienced at service sites; these were their everyday realities. Ironically, while this ease of acclimation made service-learning comfortable for participants, it also made service-learning less impactful for them as students because they were not experiencing anything outside of their norm. While peers were confronting new experiences at the service-learning sites, Emma questioned the value of the experience. Emma dismissed, “Those are things I already knew.”

Participants were familiar with the realities of low SES social fields (like the service sites), therefore were not processing feelings of shock or pity. Neither were participants confronting their own privilege for the first time like they believed their Harkness peers were. Therefore, participants opted to look beyond their personal experiences in order to benefit from observing peers’ reactions within service site fields. From positions of ingroup power and privilege, some participants were able to analyze peer behaviors and reactions which contributed to participants’ learning. Because some participants could view service-learning from various perspectives, this analytical experience was enriched. Analyzing service-learning from various perspectives is evidence participants were practicing the reflexivity of third space, albeit with varying levels of mastery.
In illustration, Hector displayed this reflexive ability to analyze peer behavior within the context of doxa and the social field of Bad Wolf. He explained how he was successful in getting a Bad Wolf student to willingly complete homework when another Harkness student had failed. Hector succeeded in this situation because he knew the “rules of the game.”

I was straight forward with him, which they respect that. That’s the neighborhood; that’s the lifestyle they’re living … I heard [Harkness student] say, “If you get done with this page, we’ll go outside,” and then she told him, “Well, let’s do one more.” You can’t do that. You just made yourself a liar to this kid. That’s the Charlie Brown and Lucy football trick. (Hector)

Sydney was embarrassed during a visit to Lumic House when none of her peers immediately volunteered to assist in Novice Haines’ request to assist with feeding residents. Sydney offered to help and then other students agreed as well. Reflecting afterwards, Sydney understood her peers’ hesitations. “There’s a difference between helping feed people and playing cards with them. You can’t really screw up playing cards . . . I don’t think people have problems feeding a little kid, but it’s weird to feed your grandma,” Sydney reflected. While Sydney did not share these hesitations, she later reflected that this was because she was familiar with the situation while her peers were not.

This type of analysis was common among study participants and was not always judgmental in nature. Sydney, Hector, and Arti felt that this ability to reflect on peers’ difficulties benefited their academic learning and their efforts to successfully acclimate to
the social field of Harkness because it facilitated understanding peers. These participants eventually gleaned a more complicated, reflective perception of peers. Arti and Hector began to believe that peers were more naïve than outright bigoted. This led each to conclude that peers needed more diverse life experiences in order develop a more complicated picture of the world. In contrast, while Emma analyzed peer behaviors, this analysis seemed to simply heighten her disdain for her Harkness peers. Emma was not able to capitalize on her personal reflections for academic or social benefits, like Sydney, Hector, and Arti did; evidence Emma was not yet adapting to habitus cleavage nor fully utilizing the reflective power of third space. She was only able to view her peers through a one-sided, therefore biased, analytical lens.

Retaining Valued Aspects of Low SES Identities

While all participants described how social class had created barriers to higher education, six also spoke of how being working class had contributed beneficially to their pursuit of higher education. For instance, five participants described possessing a strong work ethic which each attributed to having to work and be independent (some from a very young age). Hector desired to pass this work ethic onto his children. While Hector wanted his children to have more financial security than he had growing up, he encouraged them to work hard. “I tell my daughters, “You got to set your goals high, and if you fall short, I guarantee if you’re striving for that really high goal, you’re going to be a lot further than if you didn’t.” Whatever is in between, hopefully, is better,” (Hector). Participants described themselves as “more mature” than Harkness peers. This maturity was attributed to working and being independent beginning at a young age. Participants
valued this strong work ethic and maturity, viewing both as strengths they possessed when compared to their peers. Emma described herself as living her “life like an adult” unlike her peers “who live life like children.” Priscilla shared this view of her Harkness peers as children, but was also envious of them. She described wishing that she was able to enjoy “life as a college kid” like her peers were able to do. However, Priscilla quickly qualified lacking this freedom as “better” for her personal and professional development.

This “working class pride” is characteristic of low SES college students (Martin, 2015; McLoughlin, 2011, 2012). Maturity, independence, and a strong work ethic were characteristics participants directly related to their working class upbringings. These characteristics were strengths participants wished to retain, not shed. Participants viewed these characteristics as capital beneficial to their higher education journeys. Participants were seeking to acquire additional capital, but not at the expense of losing the capital they already possessed and valued.

**Obtaining Valued Aspects of Higher SES Identities**

When asked directly, all participants answered that they did not feel that their social class mattered in regards to their academic or social lives. However, this was clearly not the case. “I wish [long sigh and pause], to me social class means nothing. . . . But the reality of it is, it means almost everything,” (Emma). As Emma described, participants didn’t want social class to matter, but they knew that it did. Hector utilized the common analogy of a ladder to describe his reasons for pursuing his degree. “I’m climbing. Some of these kids have already been up on top of the ladder and standing there since they started, so they’re starting off here [holds hand up high] in their life. I
never had that.” Hector was attempting to obtain the capital he lacked in order to secure the social position which he desired.

When asked what social class meant to them, all participants directly and immediately connected social class to the amount of wealth and possessions an individual had acquired. However, none of the participants felt that defining social class was truly that simple. For study participants, social class was a complicated amalgam involving: upbringing and background; connections and relationships; education and credentials; knowledge and skills; behaviors and mannerisms; values; environment; safety, security, and vulnerability; and choices, options, and freedoms accessible (see Figure 1). Participants believed that some of these attributes of social class could be gained or lost, while some were static; once a person secured them, they could not be stripped (e.g. a college degree, a learned skill).

Participants believed that individuals could overcome or even leverage background and upbringing. Money and resources; connections and relationships; a good environment; safety, security and vulnerability; and choices, options, and freedom can be gained and lost throughout life. These were forms of capital participants lacked due to their low SES and were striving to gain through the pursuit of a private university education. By enrolling in a private university, participants had immersed themselves in a middle to upper class dominated social field strategically in order to assist participants in learning the doxa and acquiring the capital required for successful entrée into the middle class. These are capital acquisitions participants hoped to convert into economic and social stability within the distinctly classist society that exists in the U. S. (hooks,
Participants consciously crafted this strategy and appeared to be experiencing some (varying) success in implementing it, which provides evidence that participants were experiencing habitus change. All participants displayed evidence of struggling with a divided or cleft habitus. Should participants be successful in the identity work necessary in moving through habitus division, they may achieve a stable, beneficial chameleon habitus. Development of a chameleon habitus would allow participants to successfully navigate within multiple social fields (either low SES or middle SES dominated) (Abrams & Ingram, 2013). Rather than enter the middle class and leave the working class behind, participants were striving for the financial, professional, and social security each believed the middle class enjoyed. Participants were not class jumping, which implies shedding their working class identities. Participants viewed elements of social class as fluid; different skins to be worn in different environments. The ultimate goal was to be able to successfully move within and between working and middle class social fields seamlessly; a life strategy which embraced and valued aspects from both social classes. Achieving this ability would be akin to becoming a social class chameleon. Just as a chameleon can alter its appearance in order to blend in with its surroundings, so did participants desire to alter their social class “skins” in order to blend in with whatever social class dominated field they found themselves navigating within.
<table>
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Participants were utilizing the strategy of gaining a degree from an expensive, private college in order to learn the doxa and obtain the capital necessary to be economically and professionally successful within middle class career environments. However they wished to retain the working class capital and doxa that they valued; to this end participants were attempting to develop a cleft or chameleon habitus.

**Figure 1:**
This figure visually depicts how study participants defined social class and the multiple dimensions that compose it.

**Figure 1.** Participants’ conceptualizations of the elements comprising social class
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the U. S., education is widely believed to be the great equalizer, the key to upward social mobility (Carnevale & Rose, 2004). However, schooling is not experienced the same by everyone and may be partially responsible for maintaining social and economic inequality (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Hart & Hubbard, 2010; Spangler, 1979). An individual’s social class (among other identity dimensions) can lead to profoundly disparate educational experiences, opportunities, and outcomes. The Coleman Report of 1966 found that the most salient and consistent predictors of scholastic achievement were the social and economic circumstances of students (Coleman et al., 1966). That educational achievement gap is still in existence some fifty years later and is “mainly the result of an unequal opportunity structure that shapes the life chances – real and perceived – of youths from different social and economic circumstances” (Ready, 2015, para. 1). While access to higher education has greatly improved for many traditionally underrepresented groups in the U. S. over the last half century, social class, racial, and ethnic stratification persist (Adam, 2006; Astin & Osequera, 2004; Hart & Hubbard, 2010; Lederman, 2010), with the social class participation gap recently surpassing even the racial gap at many institutions (Adam, 2006; Carnevale & Strohl, 2010; Selingo & Brainard, 2006).
Students’ social class backgrounds shape their college experiences and can present significant academic and social challenges. Educational environments typically privilege students who enter in possession of social and cultural capital valued by the middle to upper classes and who are aware of the doxa dominant within middle to upper class social fields (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Working class students are more sensitive to such contextual differences, which can elicit behaviors aimed at covering their social class status (Grossman & Varnum, 2011). Several studies have proposed that service-learning, particularly with social class in-group members, can present both academic and social benefits for low SES college students (Henry, 2005; Lee, 2005; Reed & Butler, 2015; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Winans-Solis, 2014; Yeh, 2010). The purpose of this critical constructivist study was to determine how low SES undergraduates at a private, selective institution interpreted their service-learning experiences when the target population for the service was low SES individuals. My study focused on low SES students within a private, selective institution because of the relatively small number of low SES students at many such institutions. Because working class students typically make up a small subset of the student body at selective, private institutions there tend to be a lack of targeted services provided to support and aid these students in becoming socially and academically engaged on campus (Howard, 2001). More research focusing on low SES private university students is called for in order to understand their experiences within the selective, private university field and to determine best practices for assisting such students achieve success. This study aimed to
determine if service-learning courses were beneficial to the academic and social success of low SES students in a selective, private university setting.

Chapter 4 presented study findings and described major themes elicited through data analysis. Utilizing the lens of critical constructivism I applied the metatheory developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) in order to frame and understand these themes. The purpose of chapter 5 is to integrate findings with previous research and theory, present and explore implications of findings for higher education practice, and propose further directions for higher education research.

Discussion

Institutions of higher education are recruiting and admitting increasing numbers of working class students (Housel & Harvey, 2009); however, this increased matriculation into higher education is not translating into increased success for these students (Adam, 2006; Carnevale & Strohl, 2010; Selingo & Brainard, 2006). Low SES students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities face day-to-day obstacles that include feelings of social isolation (Ostrove & Long, 2007; Rubin, 2012), encountering unfamiliar doxa (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012), lacking valued cultural capital (Carter, 2003), and worrying about confirming negative class-based stereotypes (Croziet & Claire, 1998; Croziet & Millet, 2012), all of which can significantly impact academic and social experiences. To truly understand the social and academic experiences of working class students, and to understand their perceptions of these experiences, it is critical to explore the diversity of social fields that they encounter within higher education. In this way, higher education professionals can begin to develop
both academic and campus-life initiatives to better support socioeconomically diverse students. The following section will discuss study findings in relation to existing scholarship.

In Search of Middle Class Security

All study participants desired to achieve the financial professional, and social security they believed middle class individuals enjoyed. In order to accomplish this goal, participants chose to pursue a selective, private university degree. In this manner, participants had all subscribed to the widespread U. S. cultural belief (doxa) of meritocracy, that success in life is, and ought to be, based on an individual’s talents and efforts (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006; McCall, 2013).

Seeking capital at a private institution. Participants’ choice of a selective, private institution was a deliberate component of their strategy for achieving middle class security. All participants believed that attending Harkness University would allow them to gain social and cultural capital valued within middle class social fields, such as graduate school and professional employment. Emma left a more affordable and socially comfortable community college because she felt a Harkness education would “mean more” to potential employers. Sydney believed she was learning the “right way” to interact with other individuals through experiences at Harkness and insisted she was gaining valuable connections with alumni. Arti opted for lower paying on-campus employment because it was a “better resume builder.” These examples indicate that participants recognized the need to build social and cultural capital during their time at
Harkness because such capital would be valuable in their future academic and career pursuits.

**Passing by attending a selective, private institution.** All participants believed that the majority of Harkness students were middle to upper class and that by being enrolled in Harkness others would assume participants were of a similar social class. Therefore, institutional selection was a deliberate passing behavior aimed at covering participants’ low SES. Goffman (1963) described passing as “the management of undisclosed discrediting information” (p. 42). Passing occurs when members of marginalized social groups attempt to be identified as members of a dominant social group (Ginsberg, 1996); although Goffman (1963) wrote that passing could be either passive or active. Traditionally, research and literature on passing has focused on race (Ginsberg, 1996; Khanna, 2010; Petchauer, 2015); however recent studies have demonstrated that passing can apply to social class (Beagan, 2007; Jones, 2009; Linkon, 1999; McLoughlin 2011; 2012; Steinmetz, 2008), sexual identity (DeJordy, 2008; Han, Proctor, & Choi, 2014; Leary, 1999), nationality (Almeida, 2013; Sohn, 2013, 2014), gender (Diamond & Butterworth, 2008; Jones, del Pozo de Bolger, Dune, Lykins, & Hawkes, 2015), native speaker (Gnevsheva, 2015; Piller, 2002), and other identity dimensions. Goffman (1963) argues that an individual may choose to hide any invisible identity depending on the specific social context. Participants believed being of low SES put them at risk for stereotype or stigmatization both academically and socially within the field of Harkness. They brought this belief into Harkness when they matriculated, meaning that it was a structuring belief incorporated into each participant’s habitus. This
finding aligns with research conducted by Rheinschmidt and Mendoza-Denton (2014) which found that low SES college students were more likely than middle to upper class college students to contemplate how their social class would influence their social relationships and academic performance in higher education. Students who believe their social class puts them at risk for stereotype or stigmatization may engage in behaviors which allow them to pass as middle class (Beagan, 2007; Jones, 2009; Linkon, 1999). Participants in this study displayed similar concerns, therefore practiced behaviors aimed at passing as middle class.

Low SES students are highly aware of behaviors, mannerisms, and possessions of peers – all forms of capital- from which they make assumptions about peers’ social class (McLoughlin, 2011; 2012). Participants in my study displayed this same awareness. Study participants all described having less money and fewer possessions than peers. Participants believed they knew less about college and were less academically prepared than peers. These assumptions indicated that participants believed themselves deficient in the social and cultural capital valued at Harkness. Capital is context specific, making its value relative within the current social field an individual occupies (Bullen & Kenway, 2005; Carter, 2003). The same cultural capital that is dominant, providing the social agent power within one field, may become non-dominant and less powerful within a different social field. The status and power capital accrues is hierarchically determined; therefore, the capital possessed by marginalized individuals often has little exchange value and is viewed as deficient within social fields dominated by the privileged majority, such as educational institutions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bullen & Kenway, 2005).
Postone, LiPuma, and Calhoun (1993) write that the “position of a particular agent is the result of an interplay between that person’s habitus and his or her place in a field of positions as defined by the distribution of the appropriate form of capital” (p. 5). This interplay between habitus, capital, and field is what impacts the practice or actions of a social agent within any given social field. Rheinschmidt and Mendoza-Denton (2014) found that “undergraduates, particularly those from lower income backgrounds, may perceive their social class background as different or disadvantaged relative to that of peers and worry about negative social treatment” (p. 101). My study confirms this finding. These concerns about negative treatment can be especially threatening for low SES students within private university environments (Johnson, Richeson, & Finkel, 2011; Ostrove, 2003) and can significantly impact the social and academic experiences of these students. Participants lacked the dominant social and cultural capital valued within the social field of Harkness. This lack of dominant capital coupled with participants’ habitus (which predisposed participants to believe low SES was at risk for stigmatization) led participants to practice passing behaviors aimed at covering their low SES while within the social field of Harkness. This finding agrees with other studies documenting the passing behaviors of low SES college students (Beagan, 2007; Jones, 2009; Linkon, 1999; McLoughlin 2011; 2012; Steinmetz, 2008).

Service-learning: A Tale of Two Fields

Participants experienced disparities between the social class contexts of the fields they were required to navigate due to their participation in service-learning courses. The social field of Harkness required doxa and capital aligned with middle class value
structures for successful navigation. The service sites – Bad Wolf’s afterschool program, Lumic House, and Torchwood Haven’s free meal program – were social fields largely populated with working or poverty class individuals. Therefore, successful navigation required doxa and capital aligned with low SES value structures. How participants articulated and understood their experiences and practices within the social fields of Harkness and their service sites starkly contrasted and was influenced by their habitus and portfolios of capital. The contrast in experiences regularly drew participants’ attention to issues of social class disparity and privilege. Additionally, both courses highlighted social class as a regular topic of discussions, readings, assignments, and lectures. The result was that the social identity which participants were trying to cover (low SES) was a reoccurring topic and theme analyzed within these courses. This heightened scrutiny of social class sensitized participants to their perceived social class “otherness” at Harkness University, reinforcing and validating their belief in the need to fit in and pass as middle class on campus. This finding contrasts with the findings of several studies which indicate that service-learning can be socially and academically beneficial to low SES students (Henry, 2005; Lee, 2005; Reed & Butler, 2015; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Winans-Solis, 2014; Yeh, 2010).

**Habitus (mis)alignment on campus.** Habitus and field are well aligned during periods of personal and social stability. When habitus and field are aligned, change and new experience occur slowly, and habitus has stable periods of time in which to respond and evolve. It is at these times when a social agent is “a fish in water” (Hardy, 2008, p. 132). However, in periods of crisis or abrupt, catastrophic field changes (i. e.
transitioning to campus), habitus must evolve quickly and often unpredictably. This results in disruption, or misalignment, between habitus and field. During these times, social agents often feel like fish out of water, a feeling Bourdieu coined hysteresis (Hardy, 2008). How well social agents are able to cope with hysteresis depends on their existing habitus and the capital they possess. Individuals well-endowed with the dominant capital of the current field typically achieve the most desirable positions within the new field structures. Individuals possessing non-dominant capital will typically: 1) resist adapting to the new field structures; 2) will try to utilize outdated strategies no longer effective in the new field (Carter, 2003; Hardy, 2008); 3) or may experience prolonged periods of hysteresis before achieving habitus realignment. The lag time experienced in the latter scenario may be spent learning and mastering new doxa and attempting to acquire valued capital; both of which can assist an individual in achieving a desirable position within the social field. Study participants fell into the latter scenario; they entered Harkness in possession of social and cultural capital valued in working class fields. Therefore, it was non-dominant or of little exchange value within the Harkness social field. However, participants matriculated into Harkness aiming to learn middle class doxa and gain middle class valued capital; a process which required a significant length of time in order to be successful.

Participants were experiencing hysteresis within the social field of Harkness, albeit it to varying extents. Participants expressed these feeling as a sense of being “different” than their peers, not “fitting in,” and not “feeling at home” or “comfortable” on campus. The effects of experiencing hysteresis negatively impacted participants’
social and academic acculturation to Harkness University; however, several participants displayed evidence of habitus and field realignment. These participants-Sydney, Cliff, Arti, and Hector-were adapting to the Harkness social field through acquiring some dominant capital and learning the necessary doxa. Sydney and Cliff were the most adapted to campus life, likely because both lived on campus, were employed on campus, had formed some campus relationships, and were participating in campus life activities. Sydney and Cliff limited their contact with friends and family back home. Cliff lacked transportation to return home often, and Sydney admitted that she had begun to purposefully limit visits home and conversations with her family about college. She felt struggles at home were interfering with her academically, and her parents were becoming resistant to her plans for graduate school and study abroad. Sydney felt isolated when discussing college with her parents because they “just don’t get it.” Arti and Hector were nearing graduation; Arti was even planning on remaining at Harkness for graduate school. However, Arti and Hector were much older students. They had strong social support networks off campus, had previously enrolled in college, and had past employment experiences which had allowed each to acquire some middle class valued capital and assimilate some middle class doxa prior to matriculating into Harkness. The remaining participants-Priscilla, Emma, and Lucy-did not display evidence of habitus and field realignment, but remained deep in hysteresis. Priscilla and Emma were struggling both socially and academically. Both women struggled with the freshmen composition course, feeling that it was likely they would need to repeat it. Both women also had no social network of support on campus. Priscilla had begun forming one her freshmen
year, only to lose these connections by needing to move back home and increase her
hours at work when her father was laid off. Emma’s animosity toward what she believed
were her peers’ social class privileges and prejudice against people living in poverty
prevented her from even trying to form any social relationships. She spoke of the
majority of Harkness students with clear anger and disdain. Lucy’s inability to adapt to
the field of Harkness had caused her to initiate her long debated transfer to Gallifrey State
University, where many of her family and friends attended. Gallifrey State is a large,
urban state institution with a large population of working class students. Lucy believed
her friends on campus could help get her on-campus employment and that attending
Gallifrey would feel “more comfortable” than attending Harkness, even after completing
three years and living on campus at Harkness.

The participants experiencing realignment of habitus and field were those
succeeding in learning doxa and acquiring capital dominant within the Harkness field.
The participants still experiencing hysteresis were those who were not succeeding in
learning doxa and acquiring dominant capital; in essence, they were not realizing the
initial goals they had expressed hope in obtaining through attending a private institution.
These findings agree with Abrams and Ingram (2013) who found that working class
students can sometimes develop strategies that enable them to overcome the internal
conflicts caused by regularly being immersed within two contradictory fields. Abrams
and Ingram’s (2013) study focused on the contradictory fields of home and university,
while my study focuses on the contradictory fields of university and service sites.
**Habitus alignment within community.** In contrast to the barriers presented by being of low SES participants experienced on the Harkness campus, some participants believed their working class skills and abilities (capital and doxa) allowed them to excel with their work at the service sites. This finding agrees with other research finding that low SES students can acculturate easily to service-learning with social class in-group members (Lee, 2005; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006). Emma and Hector were both proud of the praise each received for their success with “difficult” children at Bad Wolf. Because of their effectiveness with children, Hector and Emma described being challenged with tougher, more skilled tasks by Miss Cassandra. Arti, Hector, Sydney, and Emma discussed developing meaningful relationships with service site clients and/or employees. Participants believed the latter could become important social capital connections in the future in the form of references, internships, or employment opportunities. This finding agrees with several studies finding that service-learning can assist students in the development of social capital exchangeable in these manners (Campbell, 2000; D’Agostino, 2010; Henriss, Ball, & Moncheski, 2013; Howard, 2006; Kahne, Chi, & Middaugh, 2006; Pucino & Penniston, 2014).

Service-learning also created opportunities for the development of social capital in the form of peer relationships, a finding which aligns with other studies (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Hatcher, Bringle, & Muthiah, 2010; Keup 2005-2006; Osborne, Hammerich, & Hensley, 1998). Five participants traveled to service sites with other Harkness students. The reasons for traveling with other students varied (see Ch. 4); however, the most common reason given was to assist peers in
acculturating to the service sites. Hector, Arti, and Sydney felt obligated to reach out to peers in order to help them feel more comfortable while at the service sites. These participants believed assisting their peers to acclimate to service sites would help peers become better volunteers. In this manner, participants were attempting to mitigate the harm they believed was being caused both to their peers and to the service site clients through these service-learning placements. Participants believed peers were not prepared well enough prior to service and that service experiences were reinforcing negative social class and racial stereotypes their peers held. Participants believed this unpreparedness impacted the quality of the service peers provided while within the social fields of the service sites, which caused harm to clients, albeit unintentionally. Study participants possessed capital and knew doxa which awarded them power and authority within the social fields of the service sites. This same capital which left participants lacking in skills needed to navigate easily at Harkness made them experts, members of the in-group, at the service sites. This expert status gave participants the abilities necessary to assist peers who lacked knowledge of the doxa and possession of social capital dominant within the service site social fields. Arti, Hector, and Sydney felt almost duty-bound to assist peers in this manner because they felt, due to lack of professional authority, course instructors did not adequately prepare students for service-learning.

On matters relating to social class, participants believed they possessed privileged knowledge which attributed authority to them, not to their instructors. It was this privileged knowledge to which participants attributed the ability to identify and analyze peer discomfort and mistakes at the service sites. From this position of authority, some
participants attempted to mentor peers who were struggling at the service sites. This mentoring was a calculated risk which could have outed the SES of the participants who took it. Notably, only Sydney, Hector, and Arti, participants who displayed evidence of coming out of hysteresis, felt comfortable enough to take this risk. Emma and Lucy continued to struggle greatly with hysteresis and purposefully kept such privileged knowledge to themselves, feeling no obligation to attempt to assist peers. The risk of stigmatization if their low SES were to be outed on campus was too great for Emma and Lucy. Even participants who attempted to mentor peers at service sites restrained from asserting such authority within the classrooms, where participants maintained their silence during discussions, lectures, and assigned reflections. Showing peers the ropes at the service sites only implied low SES (a low risk). Speaking from a position of knowledge and experience on social class issues in class and reflections would have made participants’ social class explicit. The latter was a risk no participant felt comfortable taking; believing the social and academic consequences of stigmatization would be too great.

While six participants regularly traveled with and/or interacted with peers at service sites, it was unclear by this study’s end if participants were able to capitalize on these peer relationships past the end of the service work. Relationships were often sparked due to participants’ feelings of obligation to mentor struggling peers. Therefore, these relationships were based on authority rather than personal affinity (discussed below in more detail), which made such relationships hierarchical and supervisory in nature.
Such informal peer mentoring relationships and the implications of authority are areas of potential further research elucidated by this study.

However, it is possible that service-learning assisted some participants in developing social capital in the form of new or strengthened peer relationships, which would agree with work by (Henriss et al., 2013; Reed & Butler, 2015; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Yeh, 2010). For example, Sydney was already casual friends with Mickey, but serving together appeared to strengthen that friendship. Sydney spoke often of Mickey (the only Harkness student she called by name, including when she discussed her boyfriend), especially during her second interview. By that time Sydney and her boyfriend had broken off their relationship and Mickey had been a great support to her. Priscilla spoke of continuing to “stop and talk with” Jack and Martha, the students she drove to and from Bad Wolf, when she saw them “around campus.” Arti discussed similar casual interactions with Sarah Jane and Amelia, with whom she had been in reading group with. Arti said she “caught up” with these students when she saw them outside of class and even “grabbed coffee” once. Whether or not working class students can capitalize on peer relationships formed through service-learning as beneficial social capital is another area of potential further study.

Questioning authority. Participants expressed feelings ranging from concern to anger at course content, assigned readings, and classroom discussions which they believed to be biased and untrue. Victimology students expressed offense at the deficit based nature of the course title. To these students, “Victimology” held strong negative connotations which implied that the populations discussed in that course were all
inherently victims. It was concerns such as these that led Arti, Hector, Sydney, and
Emma to conclude that their service-learning courses were reinforcing negative
stereotypes participants believed peers held toward many marginalized populations.
These participant concerns are supported within the literature (Butin, 2015; Erickson &
O’Connor, 2000; Green, 2003; Marullo, 1998; Mitchell, 2009). While service-learning is
often heralded as a pedagogical practice capable of breaking down stereotypes and
changing prejudice (Beling, 2003; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Strait, 2008), others caution that
changing any deeply held belief is a difficult process involving “no less than a change in
a person’s recognition and organization of their ego” (Erickson & O’Connor, 2000, p.
68). Requiring a limited time of service, even with some assessed reflection, similar to
the practices in these two Harkness University courses, is not adequate for challenging
caution that service-learning courses with such a design (note that design could be
influenced by multiple factors, e. g. institutional, community, and/or individual faculty)
can actually increase prejudice because students will often resist challenges to their
worldviews and concepts of self, which the authors describe as “cognitively digging in
their heels” (p. 68). When peers made disparaging remarks about service sites and
clients, participants attributed these remarks to peer prejudice, naiveté, ignorance, and/or
stereotypes. This conflict led to a lack of respect for peers, which extended to course
instructors. Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin were blamed for allowing students to express such
opinions without “correcting” them or “shutting them up.” By not challenging peer
prejudice and ignorance, professors appeared to validate such opinions. This perceived
implicit validation of peer prejudice by instructors, in addition to the course content and
assigned readings which participants questioned, led to loss of instructor authority on the
topics of social class and the service sites. This loss of authority was additionally
impacted by Harkness’s use of a centralized model of service-learning.

“Authority is a social relationship in which some people are granted the
legitimacy to lead and others agree to follow” (Pace & Hemmings, 2007, p. 6). By
agreeing to follow a leader, followers are granting that leader her authority, meaning if
followers begin to doubt a leader’s ability or knowledge that authority can be lost. Max
Weber (1947) defined several different types of authority, however professional authority
is the most salient for faculty because it is based on possessing the expertise needed to
achieve consensual aims (Parsons, 1947) and therefore demonstrates instructors’ abilities
to assist students in achieving learning outcomes (Metz, 1978; Pace, 2006). Instructors
who construct authority through assuming the role of professional expert do so through
strong command of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills (Pace & Hemmings,
2007). Participants formed significant doubts in the professional authority of Dr. Song
and Dr. Dhavin in regards to course content and service-learning design. Participants
believed instead that they were the content experts in regards to issues of social class
disparity and poverty because they possessed insider knowledge and lived experiences
that directly contradicted course information. This lack of instructor professional
authority led to student mistrust, which was exacerbated in the English course because
students additionally perceived Dr. Song as unfair and punishing (Erickson, 1986; Metz,
1978). When utilizing service-learning, the content of class discussions can vary
depending upon happenings at the service site. Students, then, become central to establishing the course of the class. This is why Manolis (2005) writes that establishing instructor authority becomes more complex in the service-learning classroom. How instructors establish authority within service-learning classrooms is a potential further area of study indicated by my research.

**Practice of passing validated.** Because many U. S. students don’t leave their home neighborhoods for extended periods of time before matriculating into college (Rheinschmidt & Mendoza-Denton, 2014) and neighborhoods are frequently segregated by social class (Lareau, 2011), colleges become places where class-based differences and privileges are encountered and confronted for the first time. Low SES students are often more sensitive to such differences than middle to upper class students are (Grossman & Varnum, 2011). Participating in service-learning courses where the service was completed within poverty based social fields and in which social class was a main focus of course content kept social class disparity and middle class privilege forefront regularly throughout the semester. Participants experienced stark contrasts in habitus/field alignment, power, authority, and valued capital between the social fields of their service sites and Harkness’s campus. Experiencing such contrasts repeatedly throughout the semester heightened the sensitivity of participants to contextual differences between the low SES environments of the service sites and the middle to upper class environment of Harkness. This heightened sensitivity made participants vigilant in regards to course content and peer and instructor behaviors and comments which participants judged as prejudiced in regards to low SES individuals. All of these factors were analyzed and
interpreted by participants as reinforcing to their beliefs that Harkness University was dominated by middle to upper class students and faculty who were predisposed to negatively stereotyping low SES individuals. All participants believed that being working or poverty class was unusual and not accepted by the other social agents within the social field of Harkness, meaning that participants were at risk for marginalization if their low SES were to be become known. Participants’ believed that if their working class status were widely known Harkness peers and professionals would judge them poorly or pity them. Participants believed they would then be treated differently (marginalized) and that this would limit their opportunities for gaining cultural, intellectual, and social capital at Harkness. Participants matriculated into Harkness with this as a structuring principle within each of their habitus. This principle was reinforced and validated by participating in these service-learning courses. Because this structuring habitus principle was reinforced, participants’ practices of covering their social class in order to pass as middle class continued. In other words, the belief in the need to pass and fit in (Jones, 2009) was validated as an effective practice for successfully navigating the social field of Harkness University. This finding agrees with other research confirming that low SES students often cover their social class in order to pass as middle class in order to avoid stereotype or stigmatization (Beagan, 2007; Jones, 2009; Linkon, 1999; McLoughlin 2011; 2012).
Limited by Passing

Participants practiced numerous behaviors aimed at covering their low SES. All participants ensured that their dress matched that of their peers. Sydney stated that no one could tell who had money at Harkness and who didn’t based on dress because “we all wear sweat pants” to class every day. Hector dressed in business casual for his first few days on campus before he realized this made him stand out. Some participants purchased at least one designer item in order to fit in with peers. Lucy admitted lying about what her parents did for a living because it was “embarrassing” that neither had a job. Priscilla, Emma, Lucy, and Sydney made various excuses when they had to turn down invitations for lack of money or because they had to work. Additionally, Emma, Hector, Arti, and Sydney hid their academic struggles rather than seek assistance. These participants felt that they were underprepared for college due to attending poor schools; a fact they wished to keep to themselves in order to cover their low SES. Some, like Emma and Lucy, had been actively hiding parts of their lives, like drug addicted parents, economic hardships, and homelessness, from a very young age; this covering had simply become habit(us). All study participants felt that if their social class were known, they would be “pitted” or “judged” poorly by their peers and professors. This was a situation they wished to avoid as they believed it would hinder their strategy of gaining social, cultural, and intellectual capital by obtaining a private university degree.

Limited academic participation. Because participants covered their low SES, they limited their full academic participation in their service-learning courses, particularly in regards to reflection. This compromised the academic benefits of theses
course for these students. Even though participants objected to and rejected course content and peer and instructors’ comments so strongly in our interviews, they rarely ever showed such passionate dissension in class. All participants had lived experiences related to course discussions of social class disparity and privilege, yet even in situations where these experiences were academically relevant or illustrative participants maintained their silence. Participants often felt they possessed better knowledge or authority on many of the course topics, yet they chose not to assert this authority. This finding agrees with Arzy, Davies, and Harbour (2006) who found that low income students were reluctant to contribute to in-class discussions because they did not want to draw too much attention to themselves. Drawing attention to their authority and lived experiences would have outed their social class status, a risk deemed not worth taking. Alternatively (or even additionally), participants may have believed that challenging course faculty or class peers would have negatively impacted their grades. Being able to remain a Harkness student in good standing may have been more important than being right.

This silence as passing extended into written reflections. Compared to the emotion, passion, and thought that participants displayed in interviews, written reflections were, frankly, bland. Rather than give opinions and personal analysis, students cited facts and statistics. Rather than illustrate with lived experiences, relating service-learning to their own lives, participants regurgitated citations, in some cases from the very course resources they viewed as incorrect or biased. Emma vehemently rejected several articles assigned for course reading as outdated and untrue, yet she wrote
reflections that agreed with these same articles. Emma, Arti, Lucy, and Sydney wrote their reflections from a decidedly middle class lens, as if the realities of the service sites were new experiences to them. There were several instances within written reflections that appeared to contradict opinions and lived experiences participants shared through interviews. Overall the omission, the silence, of these opinions and lived experiences was even more glaring when compared to the stories participants imparted through interviews.

Arti, Emma, Hector, and Sydney admitted they did not believe they had the skills to adequately convey what they learned through writing and that they much preferred oral reflection for this reason. Additionally Hector felt that his personal opinions or analysis were not “appropriate” or “important enough” to include in written assignments. It is clear that study participants either purposefully did not or academically could not (or both) convey the depth of feeling and learning in the assessed written reflections that they expressed to me through our interviews. Participants had thoughts, feelings, and learning that they were still internally processing, which they never put down on paper nor shared with peers or professors. Since it was clear to them that their professors had no firsthand knowledge of the service sites, there was no immediate academic risk (e. g. lesser grades) in withholding information. Participants did not feel that Dr. Song and Dr. Dhavin would recognize any inconsistencies or omissions because participants did not feel the instructors held professional authority over this subject matter. These covering behaviors utilized in the classroom prevented students from fully engaging in class discussions and
reflections, limiting their academic experiences and potential acquisitions of intellectual capital from these courses.

**Limited relationship development.** Study participants all expressed concerns about fitting in socially at Harkness. These are not unusual concerns for many students entering college, however low SES students often find it particularly difficult to transition from home or the workplace into a college environment. This difficult transition can be exacerbated by feelings of cultural disconnect and isolation, particularly if the student is estranged from family and friends back home (Head, Lamke, Murphy, & Haynes, 2011; Rendon, 1996). Participants in this study fall into this trend. Arzy, Davies, and Harbour (2006) found that low SES students maintained positive relationships with high school friends, but found themselves unable to form new, *equally positive* relationships with their peers on campus. This finding held true in this study as well. Arti, Hector, Emma, Priscilla, Sydney, and Lucy spoke of more salient off campus relationships than on campus relationships. These participants did not speak of any important friendships at Harkness, but only casual acquaintances. Sydney and Cliff did have friends on campus, although Sydney discussed “not trusting” these Harkness friends as much as friends back home. Sydney and Arti were beginning to distance themselves from family and off campus friends because these relationships were adding stress and interfering with academic goals. This distancing left Sydney and Arti feeling disconnected at both home and Harkness.

Participants were also limited in their participation in campus life activities, another common finding for low SES students. Several studies have documented that
low SES students were less involved with student organizations and governance, campus social life, and peer integration than middle to upper class students (Linkon, 2014; Rubin, 2012; Spangler, 1979; Walpole, 2008). Only Cliff and Sydney were actively participating in activities outside of the classroom. Other participants had never tried to take part in campus life or student organizations, or they had started but had to drop out due to issues of time and money. More pressing demands on their time and limited discretionary income were barriers to forming relationships and participating in campus life, however so were the participants’ own passing behaviors. Passing attempts to hide a marginalized social identity when it is deemed at risk for stigmatization (Ginsberg, 1996; Goffman, 1963). Hiding a significant aspect of identity inhibits strong, trusting relationships from forming. The fear of discovery of their hidden identity dimensions caused participants to self-isolate by closely guarding who they associated with, what personal (if any) information they shared with these associates, and what activities they participated in. This self-isolating as a consequence of passing limited the social and cultural capital participants could have acquired while at Harkness. However, participants naturally needed to interact daily with peers, instructors, and staff. To this end, Hector and Sydney described successfully developing abilities to code-switch, allowing them to pass as middle class and form relationships.

Because higher education “continues to promote and defend the social elitism of White, capitalist society,” students and faculty from marginalized populations must develop the ability to interact within different cultural fields and code-switch in order to become successful (Nelson, Englar-Carlson, Tierney, & Hau, 2006, p. 11). Participants
were aware of the need to develop these skills and even articulated this as a reason for attending Harkness. In particular, Hector was fully cognizant of and could articulate that he was able to code-switch within different fields, which he attributed to his time in the military and the banking industry. This agrees with other research which found that when White, low SES individuals describe the experience of acculturation into a more educated (middle class) field, such as a college campus, they also describe the development of a bicultural identity, which allows them to interact within their familiar (low SES) social fields and their new (higher SES) social fields (Nelson et al., 2006). In other words, participants found ways to “fit in and pass” (Jones, 2009, p. 297) within higher SES fields like Harkness, while retaining the capital and understanding of the doxa to continue to successfully navigate within familiar low SES fields such as home or the service sites.

The seven participants in this study were all White, and it is prudent to discuss how their Whiteness was important, maybe even vital, for their successful passing as middle class. For non-White, low SES university students the identity development discussed above is more complex. Nelson et al. (2006) found that White, low SES individuals (such as the participants in this study) were able to successfully pass as middle class in academia because they were White, something many students and faculty of color could not do. This privilege is related to the relationship between class and race/ethnicity within American (U. S.) cultural thought described by Ortner (1998); “that there is no class in America that is not always already racialized and ethnicized, or to turn the point around, racial and ethnic categories are already class categories” (p. 10). Non-
White, low SES university students must learn to get by in both educated (middle class) and White cultures, necessitating the development of a tricultural identity and learning two unfamiliar, complex sets of doxa (Nelson et al., 2006). Racial and ethnic minority individuals may even conceptualize “middle-classness” as unattainable because of its association or conflation with Whiteness (Archer, 2011). “Race and ethnicity has enormous cultural salience in the culture of social difference in the United States” (Ortner, 1998, p. 4) and American discourse about class is always “heavily racially loaded” (p. 7). For low SES, White individuals, passing is a privilege as it allows them to cover their low SES identity if they so choose; a privilege that non-White, low SES individuals do not possess. In other words, Whiteness can make social class invisible. How non-White, low SES students navigate and attempt to mitigate the challenges of this complicated identity development is another area of further research.

While White, low SES students are privileged in that they can cover their social class if they choose to, this privilege can have drawbacks in that it can leave them feeling “invisible, misunderstood, and unappreciated” (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 11). These feelings can significantly impact the social experiences of low SES college students and were some of the feelings study participants struggled with, further isolating them on campus. This study indicates that the implications of passing may be negatively influencing the abilities of low SES students to acquire necessary social, cultural, and intellectual capital while attending university. This may be an area for potential further research.
Capital Acquisition and Habitus Revision

Participants were purposefully trying to diversify their portfolios of cultural, social, and intellectual capital through obtaining a Harkness University degree. It is important to note that participants did not interpret this as replacing existing deficient, non-dominant capital with new, dominant capital. From participants’ perspectives, they were instead attempting to diversify their portfolios of capital, a finding which aligns with McLoughlin (2011, 2012). Participants valued their working class upbringings, and their family and friends back home. While they wanted the security and freedom they believed the middle class enjoyed, they did not wish to obtain this by sacrificing family, friends, and aspects of their working class identities, all of which they strongly valued. What participants were striving to accomplish is likely more difficult than obtaining a new identity (middle class) by abandoning the former (working class). They were striving to maintain multiple identities successfully; authoring new chapters while retaining old drafts. In this manner, each was attempting to build what Abrams and Ingram (2013) refer to as a “chameleon habitus,” but not all participants were experiencing equal success or were at the same stage in this process (or at the same place on the bridge, see analogy in Ch. 4).

Bourdieu (1999) addressed a similar concept when he wrote of a cleft habitus, which he defined as “a habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and its ambivalences, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of the self, to successive allegiance and multiple identities” (p. 511). Bourdieu implied that this divided, cleft habitus is a negative experience for a social
agent, one that creates suffering, conflict, and contradiction (Abrams & Ingram, 2013). However, Abrams and Ingram (2013) found that some students benefit from a cleft habitus in that it allows for adaptability and unique positioning in “third space,” a privileged and reflexive position for a social agent to occupy. Bhabha (1990) described this third space in terms of cultural hybridity which “displaces the histories that constitute it and . . . gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation or meaning and representation” (p. 211). Abrams and Ingram (2013) found that the displacement of histories that occurs within third space “creates a cleavage in the habitus that can generate dynamic processes of habitus revision” (p. 3).

My study aligns with Abrams and Ingram (2013) findings that low SES students who are successful at moving through the conflict of hysteresis into the reflexive position of third space are likely those who successfully navigate educational fields. By developing a chameleon habitus, which allows them to “blend in” within multiple social fields, it is likely that some of the participants in this study will achieve that goal. Arti and Hector displayed some of the reflective positioning of “third space” through their nuanced and analytical reflections about service-learning and their peers. Hector and Arti also appeared to be the most comfortable navigating various social fields; however, achieving this chameleon habitus was at the cost of significant delays in degree completion and careers. Sydney was nearing successful degree completion; however, she was disengaging from family and friends at home who were becoming resistant to her pursuing graduate school and study abroad. Rather than developing a chameleon habitus, she appeared to be beginning to revise her habitus to align more strongly with the social
field of Harkness. Lucy never moved through hysteresis or adapted her habitus to Harkness. Instead, she transferred to Gallifrey State where she could live at home and attend school with many of her friends. While there were significant economic benefits to this transfer, Lucy ultimately decided to enroll at Gallifrey because she would “fit in” better (i.e. her habitus was better aligned with the field of Gallifrey State University).

Priscilla and Emma struggled both at home and at Harkness, stuck in hysteresis within both fields. These women suffered from habitus tug; contrasting fields pulling them in different directions and causing suffering (Ingram, 2011; Reay, 2002). Cliff appeared to be adapting to the social field of Harkness; he was making friends, doing well in classes, and participating in sports intramurals. Whether his habitus aligns with the field of Harkness only or develops into a chameleon habitus remained to be seen. Understanding why some students are successful at habitus revision or development of chameleon habitus and why other students are not is an area of potential research that may benefit low SES students within higher education. Determining whether or not the understanding of two social classes (third space) and the ability to successfully shift between them (chameleon habitus) are skills that might be transferrable to accomplishing other kinds of intercultural or hybrid understanding is an additional area for further research.

**Contributions of this Study**

Much scholarship surrounding service-learning has focused on the “ideal type” student, identified as full-time, White, traditionally aged, single, childless, and middle to upper class (Butin, 2010). More recent studies show how service-learning is experienced
by students not fitting this description, students outside of the “ideal” (Conley & Hamlin, 2009; Henry, 2005; Lee, 2005; Reed & Butler, 2015; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Williams & Perrine, 2008; Winans-Solis, 2014; Yeh, 2010). This study contributes to that growing literature. Like Lee (2005) and Shadduck-Hernandez (2006), I found that low SES students were able to acculturate relatively easily to service sites and may benefit from interacting with in-group members. Victimology participants felt that the learning was more relevant and engaging because of the service-learning experiences, a finding with which Williams and Perrine (2008) and Conley and Hamlin (2009) concur. I found that service-learning potentially assisted students in acquiring social and cultural capital, which agrees with previous studies (Campbell, 2000; D’Agostino, 2010; Henriss, et al., 2013; Howard, 2006; Kahne, Chi, & Middaugh, 2006; Pucino & Penniston, 2014; Yeh; 2010). However, unlike previous studies, this study did not provide evidence that service-learning contributed to legitimizing lived experiences (Winans-Solis, 2014), assisting in positive identity development (Henry, 2015; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Winans-Solis, 2014), or empowering (Reed & Butler, 2015; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006; Winans-Solis, 2014; Yeh, 2010) low SES students. These positive benefits of service-learning were likely mitigated by the passing behaviors of the low SES students in this study. Passing behaviors were reinforced and validated due to participation in the service-learning classes from which I recruited participants. Passing limited participants’ full social and academic participation at Harkness. The potential to reinforce passing behaviors illuminates a potentially negative impact of service-learning on low SES students that demands further exploration. Therefore, this work adds insights into how
low SES students within small, selective, private university environments make meaning of and are impacted by participating in service-learning centered on examining issues of social class disparity. Additionally, this work demonstrates how the theory of practice developed by Pierre Bourdieu can be utilized to examine and understand students’ experiences in service-learning courses. Bourdieu’s metatheory could be considered for use in future research of this nature. Bourdieu’s metatheory applies itself well to examining service-learning because a social agent (student) is experiencing multiple social fields (service site and classroom), each with its own doxa and dominant capital. However, it is important to note that researchers should look beyond the work of Bourdieu as it has its limitations. Bourdieu’s writings on cleft habitus were not sufficient to explain the dynamic habitus revision elicited through this study because Bourdieu only viewed a cleavage in the habitus as negative. Bourdieu believed that only individuals who repaired such a cleavage through realigning habitus with one field would move through this type of hysteresis (Bourdieu, 1999, 2000, 2002). Additionally, it is important to note that the findings of this study could be explained by other theories; a point which will be addressed below.

**Implications for Practice**

Based on study findings, there are a number of implications for institutions of higher education that wish to better support low SES students on their campuses and positively influence their academic and social experiences. I chose to focus on initiatives I felt Harkness University or a like institution would be best able to enact based on institutional mission, history, structure, and resources. Specifically these initiatives are:
1) assisting (but not forcing) low SES students in diversifying and fortifying their portfolios of social and cultural capital; 2) creating a campus environment that values socioeconomic diversity; and 3) supporting faculty development initiatives which promote best pedagogical practices for integrating social class content into the curriculum in manners which embrace socioeconomic diversity.

**Building Portfolios of Capital**

The topic of what institutions are doing to better support low SES students has become developed into a salient and visible dialogue. Chief academic officers at a recent Council of Independent Colleges meeting debated whether institutions should focus on helping low SES students develop cultural capital (Lederman, 2013). Dialogue such as this may continue in light of recent federal attention to SES. In January of 2014, President Obama convened a meeting of more than 100 college and university presidents, along with about 40 businesses and philanthropic organizations, in order to promote a focus on greater access and success for low income students (Kahlenberg, 2014; McGuire, 2014).

Some institutions have developed programs to focus on developing the cultural capital of low SES students. Such programs include tuition credits for participating in student life, cultural activity graduation requirements, common reading initiatives, and freshmen experiences that include cultural events (Lederman, 2013). However, all of these programs require additional time and possible financial commitments, which may be burdensome or impossible for the low SES students they are targeted to assist. Additionally, low SES students may experience acculturative stress in relation to such
requirements; they may not have the proper attire or know the rules of etiquette. Therefore, it is possible that such events, if required, may actually be symbolically violent, and thus harmful, to the students they are aimed at assisting. Forcing students to develop cultural and social capital is not the answer.

Braxton, Doyle, Hartley, Hirschy, Jones, and McLendon (2014) believe that colleges should compile information from demographic data and admittance paperwork in order to predict the level of cultural capital that students enter their campuses with and then make this information available to advisors and other relevant staff. The aim of this practice would be to target students who are determined to be lacking in dominant capital, so that they can be given specialized support in acquiring the capital they lack. This advice assumes that capital is truly quantifiable and views low SES students in a capital deficit model, rather than as individuals with capital that is simply non-dominant in the academic field (Bergh, 2008; Carter, 2003; McLoughlin 2011; 2012). It is not that low SES students lack cultural and social capital; it is rather that they are in possession of non-dominant cultural and social capital within the field of higher education. Educators need to begin viewing capital not as value-based, but as diverse. Because the value of capital is context specific (Carter, 2003), it is in the best interest of any social agent to acquire a diverse portfolio of capital. By diversifying capital, a social agent can expand the range of social fields that she or he can successfully navigate.

The findings from this study indicate that low SES students are aware of the need to diversify their portfolios of capital and desire to accomplish this goal; it is one of the reasons for attending college at all and impacts institutional selection. Students in this
study chose a selective, private institution for the cultural capital they believed a Harkness degree could impart. However, low SES students should not be forcibly placed in programs designed within the context of the traditional academic field. Such programs utilize the established doxa of higher educational fields, which low SES students are not familiar with. The students in this study all had the desire to take part in campus life, student organizations, study abroad, and/or alumni events (and Sydney and Cliff were doing so). Institutions, like Harkness, would assist low SES students in diversifying their social and cultural capital best by helping to alleviate the burdens of time, money, and campus culture that prevent low SES student participation outside of the classroom. This is a complex and multi-faceted undertaking requiring institutional support in the forms of funding and physical resources, program development, and qualified program personnel.

In order to combat the financial and time burdens, institutions could offer more robust need-based aid programs (McLoughlin, 2011; 2012). This may be accomplished through targeted advancement initiatives or through seeking grant funds available to support low SES students. There are grant opportunities and programs available through federal Corporation for National & Community Service (parent organization of AmeriCorps) and TRIO that institutions can secure to assist low SES students (CNCS, 2015; USDE, 2015). The majority of these programs can replace students’ needs to secure outside employment and involve a community placement, which can assist students in forming relationships (social capital) and a sense of belonging to both campus and community. Harkness did not have any of these programs on campus at the time of this study; however, seeking the grants to implement such government programs would
align with its institutional mission and institutional commitment to community service and service-learning. Additionally, Harkness could increase need-based campus employment opportunities both within and outside of work-study programs. Harkness was utilizing federal work study programs, which many participants were taking advantage of, and Arti was employed directly by the institution in IT. Most participants expressed the desire to work more hours on campus, stating the only reason that they maintained off-campus employment was because the hours and wage offered on campus were insufficient. Developing more need-based campus employment opportunities may keep students who need to work on campus and possibly in employment related to their degree programs, rather than in off-campus service positions. On-campus positions are more likely to be flexible around students’ academic and co-curricular schedules and would likely cut down the amount of commute time needed. Both possibilities may provide more time for studying and campus life. On-campus positions could assist students in forming relationships with other working students and supervisory campus personnel; the latter of whom could provide valuable references later on. Therefore, obtaining campus employment could assist low SES students in gaining cultural and social capital.

Additionally, Harkness could consider discounting or waiving fees for extra-curricular opportunities for low income students so that cost is not preventing them from participating in capital developing opportunities. Sydney was not charged less, nor did she receive institutional aid for the trip to Washington, D. C., and she had not found any need-based assistance available to support her desires to study abroad. Her strategy for
payment was to increase her work hours and save. Study participants expressed that cost was a factor that kept them from participating in campus life. Harkness could target advancement initiatives at establishing a scholarship, fellowship, or endowment to assist low income students in taking part in extra-curricular activities and curricular immersion experiences, like study abroad or service-learning immersion experiences.

The co-curriculum can have a significant impact on creating a campus culture that not only aids students in diversifying capital, but that allows students to spend the capital that they come to campus with already (Barratt, 2012; Bergh, 2008). Harkness student life professionals could begin developing co-curricular activities that are more welcoming to socioeconomic (as well as other) diversity by utilizing a celebratory socialization model. Celebratory socialization is “an organizational theory that advocates institutional integration of the social and cultural identities and abilities participants” (Lopez, 2015, p. 125) already possess for mutual benefit of the institution and the individual (Van Maanen, 1984). The concept of celebratory socialization is grounded in critical theory because it promotes social justice goals and empowerment of students as change agents and active participants in their education (Tierney, 1992, 1997; Tierney & Rhoads, 1993). Both curricular and co-curricular offerings can be designed utilizing celebratory socialization. Programs and courses designed using this model provide students with opportunities to incorporate their cultural and social capital from their backgrounds, value that capital, validate students’ backgrounds within the college context, and instill confidence in students as they adjust to campus (Bergh, 2008). For example, Amherst increased campus dialogue around class differences and working class students were
invited to a fireside chat with the president in order to advise on how to address issues of social diversity in campus life. Convening off campus retreats which allowed students to discuss social class issues away from Amherst’s campus was one initiative started from these interactions (Duffy, 2007). Another initiative Amherst adopted, based on working class students’ advice, was to cover the expenses of families of working class students who wanted to take part in campus events, such as parents’ weekend (Duffy, 2007). A third option (which can be curricular or co-curricular) is institutional sponsorship of student philanthropy initiatives. Such programs form “foundation boards” of students who award small grants (programs are often grant or donor funded themselves) to non-profit organizations based on proposals submitted. Students research the non-profits who submit proposals and often complete service with the organizations in preparation for debate over which project to fund. All students hold the same authority as philanthropic board members who must decide which proposals to fund and which not to fund. Because this is a team-based model and has real world implications, students of diverse backgrounds can form a healthy, productive team because multiple skills sets and perspectives are necessitated (Huber & Mafi, 2013). Well-designed student philanthropy projects offer unique experiences which are humanitarian, engaging, and experiential. Such projects empower students and increase student community engagement, conceptual learning, critical thinking, collaboration and communication, and character building (Huber & Mafi, 2013). Because Harkness has a population of 35% first generation and/or low income students developing co-curricular programs that are accessible and
welcoming to this student population should be a priority and will likely enrich campus life for all students.

The rules that maintain culture and the cultural divides which maintain social hierarchies are often invisible, believed to be just part of everyday reality. Individual social agents either don’t recognize these rules or accept them as just and correct, which is why cultural norms and social hierarchies can be so difficult to resist and change (Deere, 2008; Schubert, 2008). However, culture can be changed, and higher education has a responsibility to attempt to do this, so not only physical access, but also a culture of inclusion and psychological access are ensured (George-Jackson, 2010). “By removing stereotypes, negative connotations of the ‘Other’ as perceived by the dominant group, and other psychological barriers that gravely affect these [marginalized] students, a culture of ethical acceptance will be fostered” (George-Jackson, 2010, p. 196). Accomplishing this cultural shift will likely benefit all students and will be explored further below.

Culture of Inclusion on Campus

Campus culture can negate any institutional efforts made to recruit, admit, and support low SES students if that culture is unwelcoming or even hostile to individuals from working class or poverty backgrounds. Culture is an aspect of campus life that an institution has arguably less direct control over than areas such as student services and academics; however, it is not an area that institutions should ignore. McGuire (2014) warns that without a “strong plan for managing student culture in a way that is welcoming and supportive of low income students, social isolation and outright discrimination can make life hell for the student transitioning into an entirely new way of
This study found evidence of social isolation experienced by the low SES participants on the campus of Harkness University; however, there are strategies Harkness could employ to begin to influence campus culture along the path to embracing socioeconomic diversity.

Harkness could develop recruitment and admissions initiatives aimed at increasing the socioeconomic diversity of its student body. These initiatives could include taking SES into consideration for admission (Oldfield, 2007), expanding recruitment territories into low income high schools not targeted previously (Hoxby & Avery, 2012), hiring recruiters with low SES backgrounds, and/or offering more robust need-based aid programs (Kahlenberg, 2014; McLoughlin 2011, 2012). Oldfield (2007) speculates that achieving a “critical mass” (p. 11) of low SES students on campus would assist these students in becoming more comfortable. Several studies have concluded that increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the student body could have benefits for all students (Fallon & Brown, 2010; Gale, 2011; Park, Denson, & Bowman, 2012; Thomas, 2014). Such benefits include more rich and diverse student contributions in the classroom (Fallon & Brown, 2010; Gale, 2011) and in the co-curriculum (Barratt, 2012). Additionally, Park et al. (2012) found that socioeconomic diversity supports the campus racial climate, promoting a more “fluid and equitable campus environment” overall (p. 27).

Beyond increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the student body, institutions like Harkness could make efforts to increase the socioeconomic diversity of their faculty and staff. Bergh (2008) found that “hiring faculty who reflect the class composition of
the student body could be a positive step toward creating a campus culture” that is welcoming to socioeconomic diversity (p. 105). Oldfield (2007) agrees that recruiting staff and faculty with greater socioeconomic diversity would bring more diverse perspectives that would enhance the academic and social environment. Oldfield (2007) postulates that this campus reform is a natural extension of the argument used to justify changing the race and gender composition of the faculty and staff, which studies have shown to contribute positively to student learning outcomes, research, and campus environments (Antonio, 2002; Fox, 2003; Millem, 2003; Millem, Clayton-Pederson, Hurtado, & Allen, 2001; Turner, 2000). However, all of the above recommendations can be problematic to employ due to financial, logistical, and ethical concerns and restrictions.

While increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the student body and college personnel at Harkness could be strategies adopted to positively influence the campus climate experienced by low SES students, both strategies present challenges. Firstly, Oldfield (2007) does not specify what the needed “critical mass” of low SES students on a campus is. Harkness reported 35% of its student body was first generation and/or low income at the time of this study. Over a third of a student body may arguably be a “critical mass.” However, this and other studies (Martin, 2015; McLoughlin 2011, 2012) found that low SES college students tend to cover their SES identities in order to pass as middle class, particularly on private or elite campuses. Therefore, simply increasing their numbers may do nothing to impact campus culture if they continue to cover their low SES identities. In illustration, consider Emma and Priscilla. Emma and Priscilla both
told me in interviews that they spoke frequently to each other in class, had a lot in common, and each stated that the other was the only other Harkness student she knew who worked heavy hours. However, neither woman thought the other was the same SES as her. Additionally, neither woman disclosed information to indicate SES to the other beyond discussing employment. The silence about social class that these students maintained is both cultural (doxa) in the U. S. and a passing behavior. “Critical mass” will do nothing to break this silence when each low SES student thinks he or she is the only one on campus. Secondly, increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the faculty and staff is challenging for similar reasons as passing behaviors carry on into the academic workplace and professoriate (Sowinska, 1993; Springer, 2012; Wright, 2015). But, also SES is difficult to target in hiring processes because it is invisible diversity (Duffy, 2007; Espenschied-Reilly, 2012; Kahlenberg, 2014). Demographics about race, gender, and ethnicity are often solicited for voluntary disclosure during position searches. Additionally, the names of candidates can provide indications of race, gender, or ethnicity, albeit often unreliable ones. Socioeconomic status is not treated in the same way during the hiring process, nor indicated by a candidate’s name or appearance. Therefore, recruiting and hiring low SES faculty and staff may be difficult to operationalize for an institution.

Due to the above challenges, institutions like Harkness may be better off channeling efforts into professional development, training, campus dialogues, and campus events that promote a culture of inclusion and awareness of SES diversity. Such targeted campus-wide initiatives may change the cultural and campus doxa that prohibit
discussions of social class. For many campuses this requires “a profound paradigm shift” (McGuire, 2014, para. 10) for all members of the campus community. Hockings (2011) specifies that a paradigm shift of this nature will require new ways of thinking for many higher education professionals in addition to a new level of self-awareness about how individual assumptions impact practices, interactions, and student learning and development. Campus professionals need to be more attuned to the social class make-up of the student body and explore and understand how the institution may unintentionally promote or perpetuate classism through policies, procedures, and pedagogies (Soria & Bultman, 2014). Developing these types of self, institutional, and cultural awareness and the abilities to promote and facilitate difficult dialogues and reflections about social class stratification and classism will require long term commitment to institutional change and a diverse offering of professional development opportunities. For example, Youngstown State University and Stony Brook University house centers for working class studies that offer safe spaces for students, university professionals, and the general public to hold “rigorous intellectual discussions on social class” (Duffy, 2007, p. 24). These centers promote multiple forms of scholarship, teaching, activism, and awareness related to working class issues (CSWCL, 2015; CWCS, 2015; Duffy, 2007). Youngstown’s center delivers courses in working class studies, organizes a biennial conference, publishes a newsletter, facilitates a professional association, sponsors an annual speaker series, and maintains a library and a bibliography (CWCS, 2015; Duffy, 2007). Stony Brook sponsors a working class studies association, maintains a website and listserv, disseminates models of working class studies, and provides approaches to research and
teaching about working class realities (CSWCL, 2015; Duffy, 2007). Harkness could utilize resources provided by either center or secure further, personalized consulting from either institutional center in order to assist in campus cultural change.

Harkness may also consider developing initiatives that assist low SES students in their acculturation to campus. Several private institutions offer optional bridge or transitional programs for working-class students (Barratt, 2011; Duffy, 2007). Some programs, such as Amherst’s, are offered to incoming, low income freshmen prior to their first semester in order to assist them with acclimation to campus and the rigors of college level work. Others, such as Harvard’s The Crimson Summer Academy or Frostburg State University’s Regional Math and Science Center, are offered to academically talented, financially disadvantaged high school students for multiple summers in order to prepare them for college (CSA, 2015; Duffy, 2007; RMSC, 2015). The latter examples can become new institutional recruitment pipelines for talented students and can be funded through donors, institutional endowments, or grant funds. Such programs can promote a sense of belonging if they include meaningful, positive interactions with peers, faculty, and staff (Barratt, 2011). If willing, students, faculty, and staff of working class backgrounds should be recruited to assist with such bridge programs or other mentoring programs. Bergh (2008) found that working class students who were successful in college have a strong desire to help others like them and promoting a campus climate which embraces socioeconomic diversity may make such individuals feel safe enough to come forward and volunteer as mentors. Soria and Bultman (2014) believe that academic advisors, in particular, can play key roles in the support and mentoring of low SES
students and should be integral parts of early bridge programs and other campus initiatives to assist low SES students. Academic advisors are institutional agents who can be key in transmitting valuable social and cultural capital to low SES students, which can assist these students in becoming better integrated into the campus (Soria & Bultman, 2014; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Culturally competent and proactive advisors can assist low SES students in identifying challenges that may be creating acculturative stress or hysteresis and can connect students to appropriate resources or campus services (Soria & Bultman, 2014). But this cultural competency requires appropriate training, self-reflection, and practice, all of which need to be supported and encouraged by the institution.

However, truly changing the culture of a campus to embrace socioeconomic diversity does not happen solely by targeting services at low SES students. Of equal importance are efforts aimed at encouraging class privileged students to “understand and appreciate the values reflected in poor and working-class students’ ways of life” (Oldfield, 2007, p. 9). In much the same ways campuses have targeted students to embrace multiculturalism through programs promoting racial, religious, ethnic, and sexual orientation diversity, it is time that campuses target, promote, and educate on socioeconomic diversity (Kahlenberg, 2014; Oldfield, 2007). Park et al. (2012) encourage campuses to “spur student engagement around the issue of socioeconomic diversity” because engagement that recognizes that “class matters is likely pertinent toward creating a sense of belonging among low income students” (p. 25). This engagement and discussion is not only for the classroom but must also be included in the
co-curriculum. Social class is often overlooked by student life professionals in the planning, promoting, and conducting of campus life experiences. Students will tend to interact with members of their own cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, and social class in-group if efforts are not enacted to promote multi-cultural consciousness and competence (Barratt, 2012).

Creating a campus climate that is welcoming to and valuing of social class diversity is a multi-pronged effort that truly involves all members of a campus. This is an entire institutional commitment and cannot be successful if addressed piece meal. Ensuring equitable academic and social experiences and opportunities should be a strong focus of institutions like Harkness University that have significant populations of low SES students. If institutions recruit and enroll low SES students, they have an obligation to support those students both academically and socially. These efforts go beyond financial aid and academic support and involve altering the campus culture to one of socioeconomic inclusivity.

**Creating a Culture of Inclusion in the Classroom**

Institutional culture change cannot stop at the doors of classrooms; faculty must also be involved. Many campuses have included curricular and pedagogical changes in commitments to acknowledge the roles of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation within society and on campus (Steinmetz, 2008), some of which have included employing a celebratory socialization model inside the classroom (Bergh, 2008; Lopez, 2015). In a similar manner, campuses should integrate social class content into the curriculum by “developing academic courses, presentations, and on-going dialogues
which explore the causes and consequences of poverty and class in America” (Steinmetz, 2008, p. 164). Such curricular initiatives assist students and faculty in examining the cultural and systematic ways in which classism and social class stratification are maintained. If faculty are not comfortable in assisting students to see past the “logic of the American meritocracy” (Green, 2003, p. 287) belief (or if faculty have yet to challenge this belief themselves), most students will continue to blame the individual for their own poverty and never examine the structuring cultural systems in place which replicate and maintain social class disparity (Royce, 2015). Some practitioners (Green, 2003; hooks, 1994; Roskelly, 1998) believe that in order to help students challenge privilege, whether racial or class based, faculty must explicitly model ways of talking about privilege. This begins with faculty challenging and reflecting upon their own experiences confronting privilege and becoming comfortable and adept with bringing narratives of their own experiences into the classroom (Green, 2003; hooks, 1994; Roskelly, 1998). Teaching in this manner involves risk as it eliminates the belief that faculty are all-knowing, makes the classroom personal, and sometimes stories about privilege are “not nice stories” (Green, 2003, p. 282). Such risk may not be appropriate, possible, or attractive to all faculty and could certainly not be institutionally mandated.

Through such pedagogical practices, faculty can participate in the support structure for low SES students and cross disciplinary dialogue and collaboration may be sparked between faculty from various departments and between faculty and staff (Steinmetz, 2008). Harkness has made efforts to begin some such curricular efforts as evidenced through the service-learning courses examined. The composition course was
themed around social class and education in U. S. society and Victimology examined multiple populations which are typically marginalized in U. S. society. However, simply having courses that incorporate content on social class does not ensure faculty are prepared to facilitate effective course dialogue and student learning around such a culturally taboo topic. This fact was evidenced by participants’ loss of trust in Dr. Song’s and Dr. Dhavin’s professional authority. Courses such as these and the faculty wishing to teach them can be supported through specific, targeted professional development opportunities.

One option available is to support the development of a faculty learning community focused on incorporating pedagogical approaches which create a culture of socioeconomic inclusion within the classroom. A faculty learning community (FLC) is a: cross-disciplinary faculty and staff group of six to fifteen members who engage in an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning and with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and community building. (Cox, 2004a)

Each member of an FLC chooses a focus course or project in which to pilot innovations, assess student learning, and prepare a portfolio on (Cox, 2004a). FLCs create connections for isolated faculty, establish networks for faculty pursuing pedagogical issues, foster interdisciplinary curricula, and build community within an institution (Cox, 2004a). Harkness has successfully utilized a FLC model recently in order to assist faculty in integrating technology into the classroom. The dean of arts and sciences has
approved a similar opportunity for another year. Members receive a stipend, course release, opportunities for several seminars and conferences, and first choice in reserving newly designed classrooms for teaching their courses (Dean Vastra, personal communication, Aug. 28, 2015). So, while new to Harkness, the FLC model appears to be successful, supported by faculty and administration, and has an infrastructure in place to support its implementation. Expanding FLCs to focus on other pedagogical issues of concern would be a strategy Harkness could employ. Harkness may be able to seek grant-funding for creating such teaching enhancement opportunities, which is how Miami University in Ohio was able to establish the Ohio Teaching Enhancement Project (OTEP), which assisted in the institutionalization of the FLC model on that campus and others, which Miami was able to assist through consulting and grant funding (Cox & Jeep, 2000).

Another recommendation is that Harkness University could implement professional development targeting best practices for designing and facilitating reflection. As a member of Campus Compact both at the state and national levels, Harkness has consulting, resources, and trainings available to faculty either free or at member-reduced prices. Utilizing best practices in facilitating, designing, and assessing reflection is critical for student learning. However, while valuable, reflection can be difficult to apply in educational practice, therefore faculty need support and developmental in order to utilize this technique well. Reflection activities must be structured along best practice models, students must be educated on how to effectively utilize academic reflection techniques, and instructors must be comfortable with and skilled at facilitating and
assessing reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2004; Carrington & Selva, 2010; Eyler, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hatcher & Bringle, 1997; Hatcher et al., 2004; Welch, 1999). Rigorous, academically beneficial reflection activities for service-learning courses must assist the student to link the service experience to specific learning objectives, be faculty guided, be regular throughout the course, receive feedback, be rigorously assessed, and should include opportunities to clarify values (Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). The reflection activities in both classes examined in this study incorporated most aspects recommended by Hatcher and Bringle (1997) for effective reflective practice. The composition course specifically modeled reflection activities from the Ash and Clayton (2004) DEAL model. However, neither course incorporated instruction on \textit{how to reflect}.

It is recommended that instructors teach their students how to reflect. Often students are told to reflect on service-learning experiences, but they are not given guidance on how to do so effectively (Carrington & Selva, 2010). Teaching students how to reflect requires skilled facilitation and appropriate, structured support (Nolan, 2008). Techniques for teaching reflection include: 1) assignment scaffolding; 2) reflective journal writing; 3) instructor and student dialogue; 4) intentional focus on past experiences to understand present experiences; and 5) engaging students with discussing and analyzing their own feelings, emotions, opinions, and behaviors (Carrington & Selva, 2010; Goldberg, Richburg, & Wood, 2006; Russell, 2005; Walker, 2006; Welch, 1999). These techniques involve clear expectations and guidelines, as well as active facilitation by the instructor. When instructors practice reflection with students, they model the appropriate techniques for reflection (Welch, 1999).
In summary, creating a culture inclusive of socioeconomic diversity in the classroom is a multi-faceted and complex endeavor and there is likely no one right way of doing so for every faculty member and every course. Faculty interested in such teaching practices could benefit by beginning with: 1) an awareness of the true socioeconomic make-up of the student body on their campus; 2) exploring, reflecting upon, and challenging their personal experiences and potential biases regarding social class; and 3) designing courses which incorporate language, readings, and topics that are inclusive of all class perspectives and experiences. Additionally faculty who wish to also incorporate service-learning into their efforts to create classrooms that welcome socioeconomic diversity would benefit by: 1) utilizing a critical model for service-learning (Butin, 2015; Mitchell, 2008); 2) creating a meaningful and direct relationship with the community partner, which involves knowing and respecting all academic and community goals for the partnership; 3) aligning student learning outcomes with service outcomes and making this relationship transparent to students; and 4) designing and facilitating reflection activities which are rigorous, guided, and aligned with the service and course objectives. The above recommendations are not exhaustive, but they are ones which Harkness and its faculty could adopt based on institutional mission, structure, and history. Creating a supportive campus for socioeconomic diversity is not a paradigm shift which can be easily or quickly implemented and it is one which involves all aspects of institutional culture.
Limitations and Future Research

While the findings of this study contributed to understanding the academic and social experiences of low SES private college students participating in service-learning directed at low SES populations, there were some limitations. This study was limited to only one small, Catholic, private, liberal arts institution. This institution was chosen because of its service-learning graduation requirement and readily identifiable service-learning courses. Because only one institution (and one institutional type) was utilized, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other college environments, nor can the results be generalized to other low SES students beyond the seven in this sample. Just like any group of students, low SES college students have diverse backgrounds and SES is simply one of many dimensions that make up the identity of any one person. While low SES students have some similarities due to life history and demographics, they are still distinct, individual social agents structured by unique habitus and in possession of unique portfolios of capital. This study did not consider the impact of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, nor the intersection of any of these complex dimensions of identity and how those may have colored the experiences of these seven students. While the results of qualitative research are not intended to be generalizable to a larger population like quantitative, positivist research is, the limited scope and small sample size is of note. However, these limitations leave room for further research into the experiences of low SES students within other campus environments and into how multiple dimensions of identity impact the academic and social experiences of low SES students.
Additionally, because I was interested in the participants’ perceptions of their experiences and how they made meaning of those experiences, I only collected data in the form of one-on-one interviews and written student reflections. I did not complete observations in the classroom or at the service sites, nor did I interview course faculty, community partners, or students of middle to upper class. All of these methods were considered, but I discarded these so that my focus would be on how the participants viewed their experiences. I did not want to color that analysis with experiences of others or with my interpretations from observations. How an individual perceives experiences and others can become her or his reality. The reality of being a low SES student enrolled in a private university’s service-learning course, serving a low SES population was specifically what I desired to understand. Companion studies examining the academic and social experiences of all the participants in a service-learning class (faculty, community partners, service-learning support staff, and students of various identities) may offer a more complete portrait of a service-learning course.

I made several suggestions for institutional initiatives that could be positive and supportive of low SES students – aiding low SES students in diversifying capital, changing campus culture to embrace socioeconomic diversity, and supporting faculty development focused on integrating social class content into the classroom effectively. Identifying institutions that have attempted any of these initiatives and utilizing those as research sites would be beneficial in determining what, if any, of these strategies are successful for supporting low SES students. Ideally, identifying institutions employing several initiatives would be a goal for future research, as it was recommended that not
any one of these initiatives alone was sufficient at supporting low SES students who are grappling with a multitude of barriers and competing priorities within the field of higher education.

Finally, there are theories besides Bourdieu’s metatheory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) which could have been utilized to explain the experiences of the participants in this study, specifically other practice theories (see Ortner, 2006 for an overview), stereotype threat (Croziet & Claire, 1998; Croziet & Millet, 2012; Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012; Murphy & Taylor, 2012; Steele & Aronson, 1995), the imposter syndrome (Clance, 1985; Clance & Imes, 1978; Sonnack & Towell, 2001), acculturative stress (Crockett, Iturbide, Torres Stone, McGinley, Raffaelli, & Carlo, 2007; Soria & Bultmann, 2014), classist microaggressions (Morales, 2014; Sarcedo, Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2015; Smith, Mao, & Deshpande, 2015), and likely others I’ve not mentioned. Any (or all) of these theories could provide alternative ways for understanding the experiences of the study participants and are also areas of potential further research. However, I do not believe utilizing a Bourdieusian framework for understanding social agent practice excludes incorporating other such phenomena. Bourdieu’s metatheory leaves space for including such complicating concepts (see Ch. 2). For example, if I suffer from imposter syndrome that will inevitably become incorporated as a structuring principle of my habitus and impacted my practices and perceptions within my social field.

Conclusions

The low SES participants in this study purposefully chose to attend a selective, private campus in order to acquire social and cultural capital believed necessary for
obtaining middle class financial, professional, and social security. The academic and social experiences of participants were significantly impacted by their perceptions of the Harkness social field and social agents within it. These perceptions were heavily influenced by participants’ predispositions or habitus, which were profoundly impacted and structured by their lived experiences as low SES individuals. Participants’ habitus inclined them to practice behaviors which covered their social class. Participants believed this necessary in order to fit in on campus and avoid social class discrimination or stereotype. Rather than provide a refuge from campus, service-learning served to reinforce participants’ beliefs in their need to practice passing behaviors. This was due to participants’ perceptions of what they believed to be a strong bias against low SES expressed by their peers and (albeit to a somewhat lesser extent) course instructors. The passing behaviors prevented participants from benefiting fully from attending a private campus both academically and socially. Specifically, passing impacted their ability and desire to form relationships, which could have been converted into social capital. Passing also impacted their full participation in the academic experiences of the service-learning courses, which could have been converted into cultural and intellectual capital.

Bourdieu’s metatheory provides a framework for conceptualizing the experiences of low SES private college students participating in service-learning courses. Such a framework can inform pedagogical practice, campus culture management, and co-curricular design in order to support all students and address socioeconomic diversity. Ultimately, such practices could provide positive academic and social experiences for all students. Additional research is needed to more fully understand how social class impacts student
experiences within higher education, however the findings of this study contribute to the existing scholarship and provide directions for further research.
APPENDIX A

CONSENT DOCUMENTS
Appendix A

Consent Documents

Informed Consent

**Study Title:** A critical constructivist study using a Bourdieusian framework of the experiences of low socioeconomic, private liberal arts undergraduate students in a service-learning course focused on serving a low socioeconomic population

**Principal Investigator:** Amanda Espenschied-Reilly

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information about the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to understand the experience of low socioeconomic status students in service-learning courses.

**Procedures**

If you choose to participate in this project, I would like to interview you about how your experience in the course (course name) and at the service-learning site. Your participation would involve two 60-90 minute interview sessions during the Spring 2012 semester, as well as the submission of any written course reflections (e.g., service-learning journal) to the researcher.

After each of the two interviews, you will receive a $75. gift card to the supermarket or gasstation of your choice in order to compensate you for lost time at work or study.

**Risks**

- There are no foreseeable risks for your participation in this study
- You may experience discomfort due to discussing social class. You may decline to answer any questions.
Benefits

• Your participation may benefit you through the opportunity to reflect on your service-learning experiences with the researcher. This may help you to process your service-learning experiences in a more meaningful and impactful way.

• Your participation will help to inform better practice in service-learning courses for other students in the future.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms in any dissemination of the research. No one other than the researcher and her faculty advisor at Kent State University will have access to any identifying information about you. No one at your institution will know of your participation in this project. All data collected will be stored securely.

Participation

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time with no consequences. You may also choose to not answer any questions during the course of the study.

Contact Information

If you want to know more about this research project, you may call me at 330-827-4040 or email me at mogwai6363@yahoo.com or my advisor Dr. Susan Iverson at 330-672-0653 or siverson@kent.edu. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330-672-2704.

You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Amanda Espenschied-Reilly

Graduate Student, Higher Education and Student Personnel Kent State University

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop it any time.

________________________________________  ______________________
Signature                                             Date
Study Title: A critical constructivist study using a Bourdieusian framework of the experiences of low socioeconomic, private liberal arts undergraduate students in a service-learning course focused on serving a low socioeconomic population

Principal Investigator: Amanda Espenschied-Reilly

I agree to participate in an audio-taped/videotaped interview about socioeconomic status and service-learning as part of this project and for the purposes of data analysis. I agree that Amanda Espenschied-Reilly may audio-tape/video tape this interview. The date, time and place of the interview will be mutually agreed upon.

Signature

Date

I have been told that I have the right to listen to the recording of the interview before it is used. I have decided that:

_____ want to listen to the recording  ______ do not want to listen to the recording

Sign now below if you do not want to listen to the recording. If you want to listen to the recording, you will be asked to sign after listening to them.

Amanda Espenschied-Reilly may I may not (circle one) use the audio-tapes/video tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

_____ this research project  _____ publication

_____ presentation at professional meetings

Signature

Date

Address:
Appendix B

Demographic Questionnaire

Please respond to the items below. You may skip/leave blank any items about which you are unsure and/or do not wish to answer. If you are not interested in participating in this research study, then please return the blank questionnaire. Thank you.

Name:

Phone number:

Email:

Age:

How many years have you been in college?

Major/Minor: ______________________ /

Race:

Ethnicity: (circle one) Hispanic not Hispanic

Sex: ______________________

Relationship status (Married, civil union, have a life partner, divorced, separated, widowed, single):

Religion:

Did any of your parents or primary caretakers attend college?

Do you currently work as well as attend college? YES NO

If yes, please describe what you do, how many hours you work per week, and approximately what you earn per hour.
How are you paying for college? Please circle all sources utilized.

- Pell Grant
- AC Grant
- SMART grant
- Stafford Loan
- Private Loan
- Tuition Waiver
- Tuition Discount
- Academic Scholarship
- Athletic Scholarship
- Needs Based Scholarship
- Family Support
- Personal Support

Other (Please describe):

How many people live in your permanent household and who are they in relation to you?

How many dependents, if any, do you have and what is their relationship to you?

Did your primary caretaker(s) own a business?

In 2-3 sentences, please describe your hometown:

Have you ever or are you now on any government assistance programs? Circle all that apply:

- Medicaid
- Head Start
- WIC (Women, Infants, Children)
- SNAP (food stamps)
- Unemployment
- GPA (General Public Assistance)
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
- Rental Assistance
- Prescription Assistance
- HEAP (Energy Assistance)
- Free or Reduced School Meals

Other (Please describe):
Please fill out the following table to the best of your knowledge about your primary caretaker(s). This is the person or people who are/were financially responsible for you while you were under the age of 18. I have included 2 examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to you</th>
<th>Job description and years they’ve held that job (use most recent or current job)</th>
<th>Wage Earned (Minimum, hourly with tips, hourly above minimum wage, by the job, salaried, commission)</th>
<th>Did they graduate high school? Y or N</th>
<th>How many years did they attend college?</th>
<th>Did they graduate college? Y or N or currently attending</th>
<th>Did they have any schooling after undergraduate college? Y or N</th>
<th>What college and or graduate degrees do they hold?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Engineer – over 20 years</td>
<td>Salaried</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>BS and MS in Mechanical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Musician - 5 years</td>
<td>By the job</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

FIRST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Appendix C

First Interview Protocol

1. Tell me a little about yourself and your life before college. Now tell me how your college experience has been so far?

2. Focus now on your service-learning class this semester; tell me about it. Describe for me your experiences in the classroom. Include both academic experiences and peer interactions.

3. Compare these to your experiences at the service site. Describe your service site for me and what you do there. What are your academic experiences and peer interactions there?

4. Do you feel or act differently at the service site than in your classroom? Do you notice differences in your classmates between the service site and the classroom? What are you learning at the service site compared to in the classroom?

5. What issues or topics about social class have you encountered or discussed both in your classroom and at the service site? What are your opinions or feeling about these issues and topics?

6. Tell me about your upbringing compared with the people you are helping at your service site. Now how do you think your upbringing compares with that of your fellow students in this class?
7. What characteristics make you who you are? Meaning, in what ways do your gender, race, social class, religion or other characteristics affect your academic and service experience?

8. Describe for me what social class means to you. What social class do you feel you belong to and why? How do you feel this status impacts you in the classroom and at your service-learning site? How do you feel it impacts your relationships with your class peers? How about with your instructor?

9. What social class do you feel the people you are serving at the service site belong to? Is it the same social class as you? Why or why not? How do you feel this impacts your interactions?

10. What about your classroom peers and instructor? Do they belong to the same social class as you? Why or why not? How do you feel this impacts your interactions?

11. How do you feel your reflection assignments contribute to your learning in this course? Do you feel you are successful in explaining what you are learning to your instructor through them? Why or why not?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to share or that you wished I would have asked you?
APPENDIX D

SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Appendix D

Second Interview Protocol

1. It’s been several weeks since we last spoke. How has everything been going for you at college? What about in your life outside of college? What about in your service-learning class?

2. Some writers say that we learn ways of behaving socially from parents and schooling. This is called “social capital” and it is presumably earned by different experiences that we have. In this way, working class college students often have a more challenging start in college because they don’t have the resources (i.e. parents who attended college) to tap. Tell me about your college experience compared to that of your peers. Do you feel it has been different? If so, how and why?

3. Other than finances, are there challenges that you face in college, both academically and socially? What are these and what do you think they are related to?

4. How has your experience been in your service-learning class? Describe for me your academic experiences and peer interactions since the last time we talked.

5. Now, let’s focus on your recent experiences at the service site. Describe for me your academic experiences and peer interactions since the last time we talked.
6. Do you feel that your ability to detail and describe your learning and experiences at the service site through your reflection assignments has changed? Please explain. Do you feel that these have aided your learning? Why or why not?

7. Looking back at your experiences in this service-learning course, in what ways do you think your social class mattered? Are there ways in which you feel that it hurt you? Are there ways in which you feel that it helped you?

8. Are there other characteristics about you which you think had an impact on your experiences in your college classroom and at your service site? Think of your race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. What were these impacts?

9. Did you ever share personal experiences from your own life with your instructor, your classmates and/or anyone at your service site? If so, could you please describe those instances for me? Why did you choose to share? Or, why did you choose not to share?

10. As a working class student, how has this service-learning experience impacted you? What were the benefits to you and what were the drawbacks?

11. It has been suggested that service-learning courses such as this one are beneficial for working class students both academically and socially. Do you agree or disagree and why?

12. Is there anything else that you would like to share or that you wished I would have asked you?
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


Johnson, S., Richeson, J., & Finkel, E. (2011). Middle class and marginal?:


