Increasing Shared Understandings between Educators and Community Members through
Intentional Collaborative Interactions

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Abstract

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This study examines the experiences of the teachers and community business representatives that have partnered in a community engagement initiative to address career exploration for students. The goal of this collaboration is to bridge the gap between education and employment. This qualitative study uses a phenomenological approach and gathers data through a series of three interviews with five participants from the community engagement process. Data collected are coded and analyzed through a phenomenological lens in order to extract the textural and structural essence of the process. Data revealed that boundary crossing by the educators and business representatives increased shared understandings due to shared participation in community engagement activities. The research provides an intimate look at the approaches used to directly connect teachers and community members. These findings are beneficial to educational leaders and community leaders.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Rick Werry who is ready to get his wife back 😊
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Study

Teachers are responsible for teaching children. Does this responsibility include engaging other adults in the process? “Few educators are prepared to work with businesses, agencies, and institutions in their students’ communities to promote student success in school and beyond” (Epstein, 2011, p. 5). This statement implies that educators are responsible for creating community engagement opportunities. Longo (2007) adds another perspective by stating that “underachieving schools simply pass along the inequality of resources from families and communities, while high achieving schools pass along family and community privileges” (p. 2). This perspective implies that schools may not be equipped to elevate the outcomes for underachieving students through engaging community resources. Sanders (2006), adds to this conversation by stating that there are “mounting responsibilities placed on schools by a nation with children and youth who are increasingly placed ‘at risk’” (p. 1). Involving the community in education is important for school functioning, economic and community development, and the well-being of students (Sanders, 2006). Community involvement in schools can also facilitate the provision of assets that can help improve educational systems (Longo, 2007). At the same time, the focus of education in schools in our society has narrowed to such a fine point on standardized test results that other sources of education outside of school have been ignored (Longo, 2007). If teachers and educational leaders aren’t prepared to engage the community (Auerbach, 2012), then who is supposed to create the bridge between
education and community? Schools have become synonymous with “education”, but education is the responsibility of all members of a community (Epstein, 2011; Longo, 2007).

The social capital of a student is often facilitated by access to the social capital of the student’s family (Bathgate & Silva, 2010). The definition of social capital in this case is the social relations that one has based on ties between people, such as family, close friends and loose friends, work mates and social groups (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Deficiencies in familial economic situations and fragmented family structures can create challenges for students, as they can result in disadvantages for students who lack access to social capital building opportunities (Bathgate & Silva, 2010; Sanders, 2006). Schools and other organizations can be conduits to the social capital of students, but providing access to social capital for students cannot be facilitated by schools alone. Students, therefore, need to be connected to their communities in order to increase the social capital that is absent due to challenging family structures (Sanders, 2006). Longo (2007) feels that the community should be involved in education in order to increase student understanding of and participation in democracy. Epstein’s (2011) research focuses on utilizing parent and community members to increase student achievement. Before engaging community members in the work of building social capital for students, Sanders (2006) suggests that an overarching goal for the work should be established. Sanders, Longo, and Epstein together provide the context within which connections can be made.

Mourshed, Farrell, and Barton’s (2012) study highlights the disconnection between education and employment. Mourshed et al.’s research includes data from nine
countries, and suggests that the disconnections between the two sectors developed into high levels of unemployed youth, and shortages of youth with critical job skills. This data indicate that one possible goal of community engagement could be to make direct connections between education and employment. Two common elements of effective programs connecting education to employment are that they have educators and employers stepping into one another’s worlds, and that they work with students early and intensely (Mourshed, et al., 2012). Connecting educators and local employers could address deficiencies in student social capital and achievement, economic and community development, and the quality of school functions. This depends, of course, on how local assets are utilized. The research conducted for this dissertation focuses on the utilization of community assets to address the goal of increasing career awareness, and development opportunities for K-12 students.

A community group called Building Bridges to Careers (BBC) located in Southern Appalachian Ohio is comprised of community business and organizational representatives and educators. This group worked collaboratively with local residents and educators to determine a goal and created community engagement events and programs to reach their goal. The stated goal is to bridge the gap between education and employment. One of the community engagement initiatives, the problem scenario project, created by this group has set the stage for conducting research on this topic.

**Need for the Study**

Relying on teachers to make community connections is an obstacle to community engagement for two simple reasons: teachers feel that they do enough, and their
schedules do not coordinate with others in the business world (Sanders, 2006). On the contrary, Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon (2011) clearly expect educators to take part in the process of engaging community members. Guidance counselors are expected to make substantial contributions to help students become career-ready, according to Gysbers (2013), by helping students engage in real-life contexts, make good decisions, develop personal and social knowledge, and address career development skills. According to an Ohio guidance counselor job description (http://www.dublinschools.net/Downloads/hsguidance.pdf), engaging community members is not a job requirement. The lack of clear expectations about community engagement may contribute to a school’s lack of capacity for making community connections (Senge, 2012). Also, the current environment of educational reform is taking its toll on educational providers, particularly in the public K-12 arena. Legislation and educational policy changes at the state and national level have driven these reform efforts (Longo, 2007). While these policies have increased accountability, the amount of initiatives being implemented at the same time combined with lack of clarity and variation of implementation have made worse the narrow focus of education on standardized testing that Longo (2007) points out. Educational time is a resource that is being drained by multiple reform initiatives and, inadvertently, this puts efforts to engage the community low on the list of priorities.

**Ohio legislation and policy.** In recent years, accountability reform initiatives have been put in place due to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act regulations that were revised in 2001. The following Ohio accountability information is
outlined on the Ohio Department of Education’s website: education.ohio.gov. Public school districts are required to assess their students using an approved assessment that is then used as part of the teacher’s evaluation. The assessments are given one time per year and cover the state-required curricular standards that teachers teach. The current curriculum was adopted in 2010. The math and language arts curricular standards that were adopted by Ohio is based on the Common Core State Standards released by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers in June 2010. The controversy surrounding the Common Core only creates additional stress as support wanes for continued use of the standards. According to Bidwell (2014), teacher support of the standards decreased from 76% in 2013 to 46% in 2014 after groups opposing the standards began to campaign against them. The main source of aggravation for those that oppose the Common Core is the additional student testing that follows implementation (Bidwell, 2014). There are additional layers of accountability in Ohio that include the Third Grade Guarantee, The Resident Educator program, new high school graduation requirements, and College Credit Plus. These accountability and program reforms have all been put in place since 2010. All K-12 public districts are rated according to multiple indicators and given a yearly report card based on an A-F rating system. Each teacher receives an individual report that determines if they have successfully helped their students achieve a year’s worth of growth in a year’s worth of teaching. Information in the report is partially based on the yearly assessments that comprise 50% of the teacher’s evaluation. The other 50% is based on teacher performance in the classroom. All evaluation results are now reported to the state,
and they follow the teacher to any school in which they teach in the state of Ohio. Even in schools that provide the support and time necessary for teachers to conduct engaging teaching activities, the culture of accountability takes precedence and the activities are not implemented (Carrier, Tugurian, & Thomson, 2013). Understandably, teachers, guidance counselors, and principals are focusing on the state standards, their test scores and mandated reforms, which only works to intensify the isolation in which schools are currently working. Sanders (2006), clearly states that the community can help improve school functions, but the school has to reach out to the community in order to benefit from it (Senge, 2012). Looking at this issue from the student lens, “when schools are not inclusive of the ‘community’s’ languages, practices, and knowledge, they tend to alienate students and their families” which does not support a culture of connecting and interacting” (Philip, Way, Garcia, Schuler-Brown, & Navarro, 2013, p. 175). It seems that educational reform could be supported by engaging community resources, but the focus on reform has diminished the time available and the desire.

**Lack of clarity.** Within the required state standards, there are expectations that districts prepare students to be college and career ready upon graduation. The specific standards are listed in the Common Core State Standards. While there are multiple indicators of students’ readiness for college, less is known about students being ready for a career. Parents, teachers, and guidance counselors can determine a student’s readiness for college using several academic indicators such as: GPA (An, 2012; Atkinson & Geiser, 2009; Hein, Smerdon, & Sambolt, 2013; Porter & Polikoff, 2012; Roderick, Nagoaka, & Coca, 2009); participation in dual enrollment courses, Advanced Placement
courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and early college high school (An, 2012; Hein et al., 2013; Reid & Moore, 2008; Roderick et al., 2009); and reaching the national benchmark scores on the ACT/SAT (Deil-Amen & Tevis, 2010; Hein et al., 2013; Lee, 2012; Maruyama, 2012; Porter & Polikoff, 2012). When researching career readiness only related topics are found such as career adaptability, career indecision, career factors, career programming, and career decision-making readiness. Also, multiple instruments are referred to by authors that can be used to assess various career ready attributes: 1) Career Adapt-abilities Scale (CAAS) (Tolentino et al., 2014), which measures adaptability resources that individuals possess; 2) Individual Contextual Model of Career Development (ICM) (Sung, Turner, & Kaewchinda, 2013), which identifies work readiness skills that students have acquired; 3) Career Factors Inventory (CFI) (Akos, Konold, & Niles, 2004), which measures antecedents to career indecision and aids in the process of career intervention; and 4) Career Indecision Profile (Abrams et al., 2013), which identifies factors that might interfere with career decision making. Throughout the articles discussing related topics and instruments, a definition of career readiness is difficult to come across. The changing nature of employment (Longo, 2007; Mourshed, Farell, & Barton, 2011) adds to this difficulty. Educational institutions need to keep up with these evolving changes so that students can be prepared (Sung et al., 2013; Tolentino et al., 2014; Walbert, 2010), however, Bathgate and Silva (2010) do not think that schools can do this work alone.

A coalition was created in 2012 to help define career readiness. This coalition, called the Career Readiness Partner Council, includes members from education, policy,
business, and philanthropic organizations across the United States. Even this group
concedes that career readiness is difficult to define:

There is an often-confusing mix of definitions, frameworks, policies and
implementation strategies for career readiness. Some viewpoints center around
learning skills for a specific entry-level job, while others define career readiness
as a broader understanding of workplace skills. Still other definitions focus on
knowledge and skills for a particular industry sector such as health sciences or
marketing. Career readiness is a convergence of all of these definitions.

http://www.careerreadynow.org/sample-page/

Reform implementation. Implementation of reform initiatives vary widely by
school, and can be dependent upon the culture of the school (Imants, Wubbels, &
Vermunt, 2013). The culture of the educational work environment for teachers impacts
the implementation of reform initiatives. In other words, “definitions of and attitudes
toward the same reform differ considerably among teachers, suggesting a variety of
sense-making and positioning options” (Imants et al., 2013, p.344). Imants et al. (2013)
reported that teacher implementation of the same reform initiative at eighteen different
Dutch secondary schools varied widely due to the following: attitudes of teachers toward
the initiative; the level of collaboration and cooperation among teacher teams; and the
support of leadership. These findings became apparent during the implementation of a
single instructional reform initiative. Currently, schools in Ohio are implementing
multiple school reform initiatives that affect all levels of K-12 education at the same
time. The findings of Imants et al. imply that Ohio schools could be experiencing
increased difficulty and variations by implementing multiple reforms simultaneously. Considering the impact of the reform effort in Ohio, teachers may view community engagement as another initiative to add to their plates. It seems that educators could benefit from making community connections that support the work that they are already expected to do.

**Statement of the Problem**

Ultimately, schools are meant to prepare students to transition to the next part of their lives, which is commonly called post-secondary. However, teachers are not career readiness experts. "Schools cannot fulfill the wide range of learning and development needs of youth alone, outside community organizations are increasingly called on to provide additional support and enrichment education activities to supplement learning that occurs in school" (Bathgate & Silva, 2010, p. 66). What occurs in the post-secondary phase for students varies widely, but should ultimately lead to the employment of students following graduation. The global study conducted by Mourshed, et al. (2012), found that only half of youth believed that their post-secondary education improved their chances for employment and that employers do not feel that students are prepared to enter the workforce. Employability skills “such as leadership, civic engagement, global awareness, and teamwork” (Bathgate & Silva, 2010, p. 67) could be addressed through the inclusion of community employer representatives in educational activities. With teachers buckling down to address state initiatives that may determine their employability, the gap between education and employment becomes more difficult to address and remains a problem to be solved. By working together, adults in the
community can “reconceptualize ‘communities’ as a source of learning, support, and agency for individual and collective empowerment” (Phillip, Way, Garcia, Schuler-Brown, & Navarro, 2013, p. 75). Basically, there is a need to bring adults together in order to harvest community assets that can support student development.

**Purpose of the Study**

To extend the ideas of Epstein (2011), Longo (2007) and Sanders (2006), I am studying aspects of engagement between educators and local community members in order to determine if these social interactions influence the perceptions and understandings of the participants. Specifically, I am examining a community engagement process created by (BBC) that includes intentional collaboration between members of the community that work for local employers and teachers. The goal of the interactions between the community members and the teachers is to make specific connections between work life problems and the state’s required curricular standards by exploring case problem scenarios. The resulting problem scenarios are incorporated into classroom instruction with the aid of the community members. The expected outcome for students is increased awareness of local career options, employment expectations, and increased experience with problem solving. The overall purpose of conducting this research is to determine the impact of the social/collaborative interactions on the adults involved in order to improve upon the process for future iterations.

**Significance of the Study**

Shultz and McGinn (2012) have pointed out the lack of understanding around the concept of ‘participation’ for community members in education. This could leave those
interested in working with their local schools frustrated. Coupled with this is the fact that little research has been conducted on school and business partnerships over the last decade (Bennett & Thompson, 2011). Schools that utilize the knowledge of community business people can create an exchange of information. Teachers could develop an understanding about career readiness and aspiration, and about local career options for their students. Community members would have the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of education. The learning is reciprocal (Bainer, Halon, & Williams, 1996), and could work to break down invisible barriers between the two types of organizations.

Increasing interactions between two of the spheres (school and community) that impact children (Epstein, 1995) can improve school and community conditions (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2011; Cervone, 2010; Reeves, 2005); increase the effectiveness of school functions (Sanders, 2006); address economic and community development (Longo, 2007; Sanders, 2006); increase student achievement (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005), and increase student engagement (Laursen, Liston, Thiry, & Graf, 2007; Welch & Billig, 2004). Discovering what develops during the interactions of the adults throughout the community engagement process will provide evidence about what works and what doesn’t work from their perspective. Sheldon and Epstein (2005) believe that “if researchers produce better information about the results of specific involvement activities, more educators should be able to select and implement the activities most likely to produce the goals that they have set for their students” (p. 197). For this reason, data gathered through this study will provide educators with steps that can be followed to add real-world connections to their pedagogy. Making real-world connections is an
expectation of Ohio teachers according to the Teacher Standards adopted by the Ohio Department of Education in 2005, which form the base of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System legislated in 2010. Community members interested in engaging with their public school system can also use the data to identify educational objectives that they can support with their time and resources (Epstein, 1995).

**Theoretical Framework**

Two theories of interaction will be used to support this research. These theories include Epstein’s (2011) model of the three spheres of influence, and the sociocultural learning theory as described by Rosenthal and Zimmerman (1978). Epstein’s model of the three influential spheres of adults around children will provide explanations for increasing interactions between the spheres. To better understand the results of the interactions between the spheres of adults participating in the community engagement process, the theory of sociocultural learning with information provided by multiple researchers will be explored and connected to the overall theoretical framework.

**Three spheres of influence.** According to Epstein’s (2011) model (see Appendix D), adults fall into three spheres that influence a child’s learning throughout each day, 1) school, 2) family, and 3) community. These three spheres, or contexts within which children learn, can be pulled together or apart, and the direction is dependent upon the types of interactions that may or may not occur between the spheres. Bathgate and Silva (2010) remind us that partnerships that get created to increase interactions need to be “part of a larger system that integrates in-school and out-of-school learning and improves outcomes for youth” (p. 69). The three spheres model provides a framework for such a
system that places the child in the center. Epstein (1995) also points out that collaboration between the adults in the different spheres can help to integrate resources, strengthen school programs by matching community contributions to school goals, and inform families of community programs to support students (i.e. mentoring, tutoring, business partnerships).

The model of overlapping spheres of influence developed by Epstein (2011) is used to explore the relationship between family, school, and the community in terms of the influence of these entities on children. The model includes an internal and external structure. The external structure depicts spheres representing school, family, and the community that push together or pull apart based on various forces. The age and grade level of the child and the historical/social conditions occurring within the school and community during the time the child is in school is represented in force A. An infant represented in the center of the model will show very little overlap of the spheres. Once the child gets older, the spheres will move closer together due to the child’s school and community interactions. These patterns would occur naturally without the influence of parents (force B), school (force C), and the community (force D). Each of the three forces adds variability to the level of overlap experienced by each of the three spheres that impact a particular child. The experience, philosophy, and practices of forces B, C, and D will impact the degree of overlap. The overlap between forces C and D, school and community, is the focus of this research study.

Epstein’s (2011) model also includes an internal structure that uses arrows to show the relationship and influence patterns of the three forces with the child in the
center. The interactions and influence can occur within each of the represented organizations and between each of the organizations. Organizational communications, like schools to families, and individual communications, such as teacher to parent, represent the two levels of interactions that can influence the relationships between each component. Essentially, the “interlocking histories of the institutions and the individuals in each, and the continuing, causal connections between organizations and individuals” (p. 35) will influence student motivation, attitudes, and achievement. The recent focus on career readiness by the Ohio Department of Education and the influence of participation in multiple state grant opportunities for school districts in the studied county has led to the creation of the BBC community group. This organization is now included in the “experience, philosophy, and practices” (p. 32) of the community and the schools and has worked to increase the overlap of the two spheres. The specific interactions and influential patterns that have resulted from the increased overlap of forces C and D (as outlined above) will drive the work of this research.

**Sociocultural learning.** Along with the framework developed by Epstein (1995, 2011), sociocultural learning theories will be utilized to set the premise for the results of the interactions between adults within the school and community spheres. Rosenthal and Zimmerman (1978) state that human interactions involve changing responses of the participants based on the actions of the other people included in the situation. It is a reciprocal process between the two or more people. The researchers go on to explain that the sociocultural background of each individual can predetermine the behaviors exhibited by each of them. Social norms, cultural practices, commonly held beliefs, and past
experiences work to influence the behavior of those involved in the interactions (Epstein, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978). Acquisition of knowledge from the interactions is greatly influenced by the backgrounds of each participant. Phan’s (2012) theoretical article provides a slightly different perspective and attempts to expand on the sociocultural concept by focusing on the external forces that influence individual learning. After referring to sociocultural learning as a system, Phan explains that individual learning takes place within the context of three different interactive processes: 1) the community and its social influence; 2) the immediate family and its expectations; and 3) the individual and his/her cultural beliefs and values (p. 2). The reciprocal interactions between the facets listed by Phan influence what is learned by individuals and demonstrate that external forces are at work in the process of learning and determining behavior, even for adults. The sociocultural system that affects individual learning connects directly to the theory of influential spheres of learning for students.

The model of the three spheres combined with the sociocultural learning theories that connect to the three spheres will be used to interpret and analyze the adult interactions that occur as a result of the community engagement process created by BBC.

**Research Question**

This study proposes to explore the community engagement process provided to the community and the schools by the BBC. Community adults work together throughout the process to create a problem-based activity for students to complete in the classroom. In order to determine what interactions occur between teachers and community business
representatives and to discern how those interactions affect the participating adults, I ask the following question: When included in a community engagement process established for the purpose of student career awareness what did teachers and local business representatives learn and experience?

Limitations of the Study

Limitations can include features of a study that are not within the control of the researcher (Roberts, 2010). Limitations of this study focus on transferability and subjectivity due to the social context surrounding the work of BBC and the relationship of the researcher with the community group. Generalizability is not expected for qualitative phenomenological studies (Van Manen, 2014).

The research will take place in a rural county with a county seat of between 13,000-15,000 (suburbanstats.org) people in Southern Ohio. There are six public K-12 school districts and a Career Center for grades 11-12, which recruits students from the six surrounding high schools. Four of the school districts have been a part of a collaborative project, which included other school districts from southern Ohio counties. This work began in 2010 and was instigated by the federal Race to the Top initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Due to participation in the project, four districts have been heavily involved in cross-district collaborative work to implement many of the legislated school reform initiatives mentioned previously. One area of focus for the collaborative was the college and career readiness expectations found within the new state standards. This means that there was a lot of discussion and ideas implemented for addressing this expectation among the four county schools participating in the
collaborative. As a result of this work, a community/business/education engagement group was formed called BBC in August 2012. The main purpose of BBC is to create community networks that increase interactions between educators, students, parents, local organizations and businesses to support career awareness for students in the county. The intentional collaborative interactions referred to in the title of this dissertation were designed and implemented by this community group. Recruiting teachers and local business representatives to participate in the engagement process is part of the networking culture created by BBC that has had a chance to grow over the three years of its existence. The community engagement process being used for this research is only one of many events and projects developed and implemented by this group. Transferability of the findings of this study is reduced due to the nature of the work completed by BBC up to the point of this research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The community engagement process described is based on the community in which it occurs, which has developed a networking culture that includes education, community, and business. While the process can be duplicated, the actual experiences cannot be duplicated.

Another limitation of the study is the potential bias of the researcher. The researcher, in this case, is the person that has facilitated the community group, BBC, for the last three years. Given this fact, the researcher had a hand in recruiting the local business representatives to partner with the teachers that decided to participate in this opportunity. Relationships between the research participants and the researcher are in existence already due to the interactions necessary for planning the engagement process and the networking culture of BBC. Also, the researcher is a part of the committee that
designed the intentional collaborative interaction process that is the focus of this research. Researchers conducting backyard research are prone to having certain pre-determined expectations of the study, and may struggle with the closeness that exists with the participants and closure of the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The perspective of the researcher may have an impact on the final results and conclusions.

**Delimitations of the Study**

Delimitations can be signified by the boundaries of a study (Roberts, 2010) that keep the results from being relevant to similar situations. A delimitation of this study is the focus on the structure and process that was created to provide a means for engaging teachers and community business representatives in collaboration. Communities have differing cultures which may decrease the need for or relevancy of a structured community engagement process. School districts have varying capacities for providing direct professional development to teachers. Therefore, this study will not extract experiences from participants that are relevant to all education/community business engagement activities.

**Building Bridges to Careers**

At the time of this study, BBC was entering its fourth year in existence. The group work was kicked off in 2012 by a collaborative session which established sub-committees and provided a basis of the work the three committees would complete. A chance opportunity was provided by a local college’s graphic design department which equipped BBC with a logo and mapped out a potential website. In the second year grants were written based on the needs of the sub-committees and several of the BBC projects
and events went through their first iterations. The official mission and vision was created in the second year. The third year included an organized fund raising event, three successful grant proposals, and the creation of a communication sub-committee. Several of the projects were implemented for the second time and improved upon by committee members. There are currently seven BBC projects that work to achieve the mission of the group, with more grant proposals and projects planned for the fourth year.

**Background and Role of the Researcher**

My career choice was education and this led me to complete the MEd. Program at the Ohio State University. After substituting for two years, I started as a full-time teacher in 1999 at a middle school in southern, Ohio. I taught five years at the middle school, sixth and seventh grade, and then I taught seven years at an elementary in the same school district, third grade and fifth grade. Throughout my teaching years I was always trying to find ways to include other adults in the community in my lessons and in the lives of my students. The schools in which I taught had high rates of economically disadvantaged students who experienced non-academic barriers to learning that kept them from achieving their full potential. In my mind, increasing their interactions with caring adults in the community might be able to help them overcome some of their barriers. This community engagement work, which spanned about eight years of my teaching experience, provided many useful lessons when it came to including community members in the educational process of local students. I even learned a lot about the desires and expectations, or lack thereof, of the other teachers with whom I was working.
When Ohio was awarded the Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) grant in 2010, things began to change. The school district in which I was teaching decided to take part in two major state initiatives. Both initiatives were derived from federal grants and implemented through the collaboration of the Ohio Department of Education and Battelle for Kids. My school district also had its own Race to the Top (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) grant funds that were to be used for school improvement alongside of the other state initiative funds. Because of the need for someone to manage the work of these grants, the school district created a Grant Coordinator position. I came out of the classroom to take over this job. This propelled me into a district leadership position in which I was mostly responsible for implementation of grant requirements in my school district. The grants required community involvement and engagement, along with many other requirements. For this reason, a communication plan was put into place and implemented that included presenting to local civic groups and encouraging local community members to get involved with the schools. Because of the connections that were made throughout this communication campaign, a desire to create something more permanent arose from several community members. This is when the idea for BBC came to fruition. The local Family and Children First agency already had experience with an initiative of this type. It turned out that there were several smaller entities/groups that were working toward college and career awareness of some kind, but were not working together. The BBC community group is an attempt to coordinate, not duplicate, the career efforts in the county. I am one of three founding members that worked to create this community engagement group.
Other experiences that I learned from in the district leadership position include: coordinating professional development days for the district; facilitating district teams focused on value-added, instructional practices, and college/career readiness; creating dual-enrollment opportunities for our high school students in collaboration with a local community college; leading the team that created the grant initiative plan each year; facilitating the implementation of the new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System for our district, which included the implementation of teacher created student learning objective plans; writing grants to fund the projects of BBC; and keeping track of budgets and timelines for all grants under my management.

The community engagement process has been provided three times for teachers and interested community business representatives through the efforts of a BBC sub-committee. Improving the process for those involved is part of the reason that it is being included in this research study. After the first year of implementation, many augmentations were made. In 2014 the process included: 1) a full day of professional development for teachers in which half of the day is spent with their community business partner creating a problem scenario related to the work of the business partner and connected to the curriculum of the teacher, 2) implementation of the problem scenario in the classroom which includes two days of in-class participation from the business partner, and 3) a follow-up reflection session in which teachers and their paired business representative have the chance to share the results of implementation and make improvements to the original scenario. What occurs during step two is not visible to the members of the sub-committee, nor are the reactions of the participants to the overall
process. Not knowing what occurs during the second step of the process hinders further improvements that could be made by BBC to the overall process.

My passion for bringing people together to help children is the driving force for this research. I work diligently to convince adults in the community, and sometimes teachers, that our students need multiple adults in their lives in order to succeed. I am also fully aware of the time and resources needed to manage a classroom and make sure all students are learning. Part of the reason for creating BBC was to reduce the burden of finding outside resources on classroom teachers. There isn’t always time to build the type of relationship needed to convince community adults to take part in a student’s education. Finding ways to incorporate the time for relationship building into work that is already being done takes multiple perspectives and lots of knowledge about the inner workings of education. The information gathered during this research will not only help fulfill the requirements for a Doctoral Dissertation, it will help to perfect a process that can be used over and over again to create relationships between caring adults in order to support the education of our students.

**Assumptions**

One assumption that underscores this research is ontological in nature and based on the definition that Creswell (2013) has offered. This study is assuming there are multiple realities involved in the research stemming from the perspectives of each participant and their role/s in the community: whether or not they are a parent, have students in the school system, or care in general about the future of the community in which they live. The researcher also assumes that the participants are acting, in a sense,
as social constructivists. This occurs when “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell, 2013, p. 24). The reason for this assumption is that the teachers chose to participate in the professional development opportunity that provided them with needed graduate credit knowing that the process laid out for them to follow is not one that they have been exposed to before. The business participants are also engaged in a process with which they are not familiar and that directly connects them to the local public school system. With this assumption in mind, the data collected relies on the memories of the participants and the ways in which they interpreted the interactions that they had with the other participants throughout the process.

Definition of Terms

Community: For the purposes of this research, the researcher includes references to community members, business representatives, or local community business members. These references include adults that live and/or work in the research county that have an interest in engaging with the local educational institutions. These adults may or may not have children in the local school district and they may or may not have been educated in one of the county’s school districts.

Community engagement: The term community engagement used in this research will refer to direct connections made between community members and teachers and students that are currently in the K-12 public school system. The purpose of the direct connections is for using community resources to support children (Longo, 2007).
Epoché: A reflective method used by researchers to set aside their own experiences with a phenomenon in order to investigate the origins of the experience from the research participant’s perspectives. (Van Manen, 2014)

Ohio public school systems: School systems in Ohio free for children to attend fall into three categories: traditional schools, community schools, and home schools. Community schools, also known as charter schools, include brick and mortar schools and eSchools (education.ohio.gov). (Note: Research conducted for this dissertation only includes traditional schools.)

Rural: In Ohio a location is considered rural if the population is less than 50,000 outside of a census urban area. There are three tiers of rural, populations between 10,000 – 49,999, populations between 2,500 – 9,999, and 0 – 2,499 (http://www.ers.usda.gov/datafiles/Rural_Definitions/StateLevel_Maps/OH.pdf). The county where the research takes place falls into the smallest tier, except for the area that includes the county seat.

Conclusion

In conclusion, chapter one has introduced the concepts most relevant to this study. This research focuses directly on the interactions that occur between adult participants in a community engagement process. This process is intended to utilize community resources throughout the education of local students. Connecting the engagement of teachers and members of the business community to the goal of career awareness creates an additional focus on local employers, and adds the perspectives of a pool of adults. Knowing what effects the collaborative interactions have on the adults that participated
could possibly help other educators and community members that are working towards community engagement. The theories chosen to support the work both focus directly on social interactions between people and help the researcher sort through the data. Theoretical frameworks also help the researcher identify results that can improve the overall community engagement process. Knowing that teachers in Ohio are currently involved in multiple reforms and changes, this work is being conducted in order to support them and their students.

Organized of the Study

The purpose of chapter one is to introduce the concepts of the research study and frame the work within the context of current educational issues. Chapter two reviews pertinent literature in four areas related to the research topic: 1) the impact of community engagement on stakeholders, 2) the social aspects of education, 3) educational leadership, and 4) chain reactions of community engagement. Chapter three goes on to explain the processes that will be used to collect data and analyze it in order to answer the research question. This study is a qualitative phenomenological study that will utilize interviews to gain insight into the experiences of people that participated in the same phenomenon. Chapter four is designed to introduce the participants to the reader and highlight pertinent data collected during the series of three interviews. Chapter five will discuss the findings in relation to previous studies and will also suggest topics for further research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Increasing community engagement opportunities to support a school or district is an initiative that is multi-faceted, and important.

Simply put, I learned that it takes a village to educate a citizen. This idea is founded on the premise that schools are essential for the civic growth of children, but inadequate to the educational equation. Communities must also be educative. I’ve since realized that, as a society, we’re not doing so well at this. We rely too much on a single institution to solve all of our problems. Education has become confused with schooling (Longo, 2007, p. ix).

Longo’s thoughts support the three spheres model developed by Epstein (2011), as the model depicts the three main sources of education in which students are exposed. Only one of the three is school. Including local community members in the educational process requires support and structure, which can take the form of leadership and professional development, as required in any educational initiative. The topics chosen for this literature review are based on the needs of those involved in implementation of community engagement as an educational initiative, which include: 1) the impact of community engagement on the various stakeholders; 2) the social aspects of learning through professional development; 3) educational leadership needed for community engagement; and 4) community engagement and organizational change. A graphic visual of the connections between the topics of this literature review is included in the appendices (Appendix B). The visual shows the path of implementation of community
engagement as a district initiative and the perceived connections between the initiative, the outcomes, and the potential impact on the organization.

**Impact of Community Engagement on Stakeholders**

Community engagement is multi-faceted and can be utilized in different ways for different reasons. The following section reviews research focused on community engagement in relation to 1) students, 2) the community in general, and 3) schools/teachers.

*Community engagement and students.* School districts that pursue community engagement might do so for the benefit of their students. This benefit may come in the form of increased student engagement (Bathgate & Silva, 2010; Duffin, 2004; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Welch & Billig, 2004), and student academic improvement in a particular subject (Bonnette, 2006; Laursen, Liston, Thiry, & Graf, 2007; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Laursen et al. (2007) conducted a study that is similar in nature to the research for this dissertation. The Science Squad program implemented in Colorado is a ‘scientist in the classroom’ model with the goal of stimulating student learning, interest in science, and increasing consideration of science careers. Over a ten year period, the Science Squad typically reached 14,980 students and 273 teachers per year. A non-random purposive sample of 16 teachers and 24 Science Squad members was interviewed. The results revealed the following: 1) teachers and Science Squad members concurred about the increase in student interest and engagement (88% of teachers; 92% of Science Squad members); 2) There was some agreement as to whether the students had increased their understanding of science concepts and their relevance to real life (38% of teachers; 33%
of Science Squad members); and 3) whether students gained new views of science and scientists was not something that the teachers (44%) and the Science Squad members (100%) agreed upon.

Due to Laursen et al.’s (2007) focus on recruitment of quality Science Squad employees, this article implies that the student benefits occur because of the program’s successful recruitment strategies. The authors suggest that “program designers must make appropriate design choices depending on their goals and that they should use research findings to anticipate the outcomes of their choices” (p. 62). In relation to the research of this dissertation, aspects of the community engagement process, not just knowledge gained by participants, need to be included in the interview questions to gain insight from the participants on this topic.

While not empirical, Bathgate and Silva's (2010) article highlights the benefits of sharing resources and responsibility for student learning. After reviewing several examples of successful extended learning opportunities that utilize community resources and assets the authors make the point that these programs help students buy in to the importance of learning. Common elements of the programs included in the article are that they provide students with fun, relevant, and interesting activities to address learning within different contexts. Such programs also address employability skills such as leadership and teamwork, civic engagement, and global awareness, by utilizing adults from outside of education that are “free from the established and often bureaucratic management practices of public schools” (p. 67). The connection between the article and this research study is directly related to Epstein's (2011) three spheres of influence model.
Bathgate and Silva (2010) clearly state that the strong and healthy relationships between students and community adults made possible by these types of programs are the most critical for student success and increased engagement.

**Community engagement and the community.** While not directly connected to community engagement, Cox and Tucker (2011) focused on students in their study of place- and community-identity of high school students in northern New Hampshire. The authors surveyed 330 high school seniors from the class of 2009, 67% of whom were born in the research area. What they found was that students with a more positive community identity also reported higher self-esteem, did not feel as compelled to leave the area after high school, and rated finishing college as important. Since participation in community engagement activities increases a student’s connection to the community in which they live (Duffin, 2004), there may be further benefits to the community in the future (Cox & Tucker, 2011). The following section discusses benefits of community engagement on the community in general and is divided into two sub-sections: benefits associated with individual community participants and benefits associated with the surrounding community.

**Benefits experienced by individual community participants.** Community members that participate in community engagement activities with schools can experience benefits due to their participation (Bainer et al., 1996; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Laursen et al., 2007). The Science Squad, previously described, found the following gains for the graduate student participants: 83% gained skills in teaching, communicating, and management; 92% made gains in understanding issues surrounding
education and diversity; 83% reported personal gains in confidence and intrinsic awards; and 96% reported gains in terms of their career (i.e. transferable skills, resume enhancement, and clarification or confirmation of their career plans).

To further demonstrate the impact of community engagement on participating community members following is a summary of research conducted by Bainer, Halon, and Williams (1996), which focuses on agency personnel and professionals that participated in elementary partnerships for one to six years. Mixed methods were used to gather data during phone interviews with 18 participants: natural resource professionals (n=7), business and industry (n=6), and health professions (n=5).

The first finding that stood out was that all 18 participants stated that they would recommend partnering to their colleagues and agencies. The natural resource professionals showed minimal increases in 72% of eight skills and competencies, with the greatest increase in interpersonal skills and personal qualities, thinking and basic skills, and managing resources and information. For the business professionals, 56% of the skills and competencies were reported to have increased with the most gains occurring in communication with others in the workplace. The interviews also revealed changes in the way the business professionals participated in their workplace activities.

The health care professionals actually had four areas of competencies in which there were no perceived increase; acquires and evaluates information, organizes and maintains information, interprets and communicates information, and reading. Although the percentage of competencies and skills that increased was not reported for the health
professionals, the researchers did state that the “health care professionals expressed more focused professional growth than did the natural resources professionals” (p. 25).

Bainer et al.’s (1996) unique approach of focusing on community members is similar in nature to the research that is to be conducted for this dissertation and the implication is that the partnering community business representatives may learn or improve in an unidentified category as a result of participating. This article supports the goal of the research question. What was not mentioned by these researchers is whether the resource professionals that were included received training of any kind before beginning their partnership. Discussing what was learned through participation in the community engagement process during interviews with participants could precede a discussion about training content or topics that would be appropriate for future participants in the process.

**Benefits associated with the surrounding community.** Some methods of community engagement have students completing work for the improvement of the community, instead of vice versa. These types of projects can work to bring benefits to the parts of a community involved in the project (Blank et al., 2011; Bonnette, 2006; Casey, Davidson, Billig, & Springer, 2006; Cervone, 2010; Smith & Sobel, 2010).

Bonnette’s (2006) article describes a community outreach project undertaken by students in technology courses that connects a real-world problem to the technology course standards. While not an empirical article, the teacher followed a service learning model which requires the connection of the project objectives to the appropriate learning objectives. The graphic representations of houses to be built for Habitat for Humanity
created by the technology students provided the unskilled volunteers with visuals used to help complete the project properly. The students that participated in this project went through training that addressed altruism, integrity, caring and compassion, respect, responsibility and accountability, excellence and scholarship, and leadership. The author of this article implies that the students that participated in the community outreach project will be more desirable to future employers because of the experience gained through this type of real-world exposure.

Technology learning standards were the nexus used to connect the community outreach project to classroom learning, which is similar to the community engagement process that is to be the source of data for this dissertation. The types of interactions between students and local adults that take place in Bonnette’s (2006) work speak directly to the call for action that is made by Smith and Sobel (2010). Having students provide time and energy to address community issues/problems places students in the community and can “stimulate the creation of what might be called a ‘learning community’” (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. 96). Implementing the concepts of place- and community-based learning in the classroom allows schools to become a conduit for social capital to regenerate throughout a community. The authors provide multiple examples of projects that can make the connections needed to solve various community problems in areas such as the environment, safety, health, and even the local economy. Ultimately, Smith and Sobel emphasize that students and adults, school and community, need to cross boundaries in order to regenerate and stabilize a community.
Implications of Bonnette’s (2006) article suggest that the community engagement process put in place by BBC may have an impact on the social capital of the students, teachers, and local business representatives that participate due to the interactions that take place.

**Community engagement and schools.** Another angle to community engagement is creating connections for the purpose of improving the school itself. School improvement from community engagement can come in the form of exposing achievement gaps (Reeves, 2005) and creating connections/partnerships for the purpose of improving school conditions (Blank et al., 2011; Chrzanowski, Rans, & Thompson, 2010; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Reeves, 2005; Sanders, 2006; Schultz & McGinn, 2012).

Goldring and Sims’s (2005) article describes the relationships between community leaders, university leaders, and public school leaders that partnered to improve Nashville public schools. The Principal Leadership Academy of Nashville (PLAN) is the focus of this qualitative case study. PLAN provides professional development to principals and assistant principals from Nashville public schools.

Researchers interviewed fourteen leaders, for 1-2 hours each, who participated in PLAN: school superintendent, dean of the college of education, president and executive director of Nashville’s Public Education Foundation, Rotary Club’s education coordinator, members of PLAN’s curriculum design team and academy leaders. The results indicate that the connections created in this case study needed multiple layers of leadership in order to be successful. The leaders were categorized as top-level leaders (dean, president), front-line leaders (experienced principals, faculty members), and a
“bridger” leader. Conclusions drawn from the researchers include the importance of the bridge leader’s role in helping the members of the partnership overcome identity boundaries represented by the various community organizations involved, avoid turf wars, and establish trust. This conclusion shows the importance of the “bridger” role played by BBC between education and employment, also referred to as boundary spanning (Goldring & Sims, 2005; Hogg, Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012). Including this topic in the interview guide for this research study may reveal the perceptions of the participants about the importance of boundary spanning initiatives.

Reeves (2005) provides another example of community members working together to address school conditions. The qualitative case study included the collection of documents and semi-structured interviews with 22 people involved in Maximizing Achievement of African America Children in Kanawha (MAACK). In this case, community members worked to expose achievement gaps being experienced by minority groups in the urban school system their students were attending.

The way in which the community and the schools pulled together to address this issue led to legislation from the state level in the form of a West Virginia House Bill. The bill established Professional Development Schools developed specifically to solve the problem. The results of the case study revealed the steps leading up to the creation of MAACK and the momentum that pushed the minority student gap into the light for the whole state. Also revealed were the problems that MAACK faced that ultimately hindered progress. Reeves reports that lack of a strategic plan, with long-term and short-term goals, resulted in the reluctance of members to stay involved with the project. At
one point, the MAACK organization let the relationship with school leadership lapse by not holding meetings at the school and not informing school members of upcoming meetings. Communication processes were diminished throughout this period of the organization. Topics revealed during Reeves’s research, specifically strategic planning and maintaining relationships, would benefit this research study and imply the need for them to be included in the interview guide.

**Summary.** The benefits of reaching out to community members for educational purposes can be far-reaching, as indicated by the literature reviewed thus far. In consideration of the research to be conducted for this dissertation the following concepts need to be included in the interview guide: processes put in place to make direct connections between educators and community members; understanding of the plan and the purpose of the process by both the teachers and the community business representatives; perceived benefits of participating in the process; and the utilization of boundary spanning initiatives.

**Social Aspects of Professional Development**

Education, in general, is a social undertaking with interactions that occur between teachers and students, teachers and parents, school staff members and community members, teachers and teachers, etc. Much research has been conducted on these social aspects of education and is discussed using terms such as sociocultural learning, social capital, and social networks, and. The following section seeks to define the social interactions that take place in education for the purpose of teacher learning, i.e. professional development, and then highlights research conducted on the topic.
**Sociocultural learning and professional development.** Sociocultural learning theory takes into consideration the background of the person doing the learning (Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978). The theory is that the person's interactions with family, their community, and their own personality traits will affect the way in which they accept and incorporate new information (Epstein, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978). Due to the reciprocal nature in which interactions take place, the responses of participants are impacted and continually changing based on those exchanges (Dudley, 2013; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978). Therefore, each individual who is a part of the exchanging of ideas brings a unique background to the conversation, and the various backgrounds impact the learning that takes place by the participants at that moment in time (Dudley, 2013; Imants et al., 2013; Phan, 2012; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978).

The people included in the exchange of information for the purpose of learning can influence behavior of others in positive ways or negative ways, as demonstrated by research conducted by Imants et al. (2013). In this study, 18 teachers from 15 different Dutch upper secondary schools were interviewed via a semi-structured interview process. Each school was in the process of implementing mandated reforms, particularly ‘active and self-regulated learning’ (ASL) which is an instructional strategy.

After analyzing the multiple cases for this study, the authors found that school leadership affected the implementation of ASL. When teachers were encouraged by their principals they felt motivated to try out the new pedagogy. Where there was a lack of interest from principals the teachers didn’t see the need to attempt implementation.
Teachers who perceived that their work group collaborated well were motivated to learn through experimentation with ASL. However, collaboration that was considered ‘bad’ was perceived as counterproductive and did not move forward the implementation of ASL. For each of the 18 teachers included in the ASL study, the definitions of and attitudes toward the ASL initiative were quite different.

Imants et al. (2013) conclude that there was a relationship between the perceived conditions of the school and collaborative work groups and the individual teacher’s interpretation of the ASL reform initiative. In relation to this dissertation, the teachers and community business representatives that take part in the intentional collaborative interactions could experience different reactions from their organizations or their assigned partners, which means there is the possibility of variations in the implementation of and attitudes toward the community engagement process itself.

**Social capital and professional development.** Schools have in recent years utilized ‘constructed social organization’ (Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991) for professional development. Professional learning communities (PLC) have been worked into building schedules in order for teachers to be able to collaborate about their practice (Dudley, 2013; Sleegers, Brok, Verbiest, Moolenaar, & Daly, 2013). In Brazil, communities of practice have been created to improve the professional development opportunities of high school science teachers (El-Hani & Greca, 2013). Whatever the name, the purpose of organizing social time is to increase the social networks of the teachers, and consequently increase their social capital for the purpose of improving instruction (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Bourdieu & Coleman, 1991; Moolenaar, 2012).
Social capital has various definitions depending on what academic branch – economics, education, psychology, etc – is using the term. Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) researched the term in order to determine common facets amongst the prominent authors that have written about social capital. Some commonalities in the various definitions are as follows: 1) collective benefits are based on the individuals that are included; 2) individuals benefit by achieving certain goals that would otherwise be impossible; 3) people are tied together by informal social relations and membership in social networks; 4) social ties can be based on shared norms, values, attitudes and behaviors; and 5) reciprocity declines over time and the social relations vanish if not maintained.

The authors also break down the types of social capital into categories based on why and how the people are connecting. Structural social capital is similar in nature to what Bourdieu and Coleman (1991) termed ‘constructed social organization’, which are social relations based on structures such as membership in associations and clubs. These types of social capital building situations have rules, procedures, and precedents. Cognitive social capital is based on a set of shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs and benefits those involved by fostering the development of trust.

Bonding, bridging, and linking social capital are divided by how close the participants are in terms of their connections. Bonding ties are among family members or close friends, bridging ties best describe the link between loose friends and workmates, and linking ties bring together individuals and groups that occupy different social
positions. The social capital included in these types depends upon the strength of the ties between the individuals and groups.

Research conducted by Spillane, Kim, and Frank (2012) looks at the ways in which social ties help to develop the social capital of teachers in elementary settings. The point that the researchers are trying to make is that social ties create access to social resources. The research sample included staff from 30 elementary schools in one school district with 1210 respondents in 2005, and 1194 respondents in 2007. The questionnaire asked the staff members to list who they turned to for advice or information for either math or language arts, and also asked about the school’s organization and norms.

Based on the data, ties between staff members were analyzed, and the analysis included the attributes of the teachers. What the researchers found is that more ties were created based on race and gender, and older teachers were less likely to receive advice or information. The organizational structure of the school affected the ties that were created as leaders were more likely to give advice, teachers of multiple grades were less likely to give advice, and teachers of the same grade were more likely to exchange advice and information. Professional development affected the ties as well, because those teachers that had participated in more professional development for their subject (math or language arts) gave more advice and received more advice.

The conclusion drawn from this article that resonates most with this dissertation is that social capital supports school improvement, but social ties that could increase social capital are not a given. The ties that were made in the elementary school settings were mostly made because of gender, race, formal leadership status and the grade level.
structure of the school. Therefore Bourdieu and Coleman’s (1991) constructed social organization concept seems appropriate for increasing the social capital of teachers.

**Social networks and professional development.** The concept of social networks is related to social capital, but the difference, according to Moolenaar (2012), is that social capital is a social structure for acquiring resources and social networks can reveal patterns and mechanisms within that social structure. Smith and Sobel (2010) describe social networking for school principals as the cultivating of relationships that necessitate time away from the school. Longo (2007) stated that social networks and relationships are used to build social capital. And, Sanders (2006) describes social networks as “horizontal ties with the community” (p. 3). Moolenaar adds more to this conversation by explaining that resources flow through social networks, but that these same social networks may provide opportunities or barriers to the amount of resources that are available.

In terms of education, “teachers can only benefit from the resources that are available in their school's network, and a lack of valuable resources or an abundance of less desired or undesired resources may also constrain a school's capacity for improvement” (Moolenar, 2012, p. 11). Research conducted on social networks in school settings tend to focus on two concepts, 1) social networks across schools or districts and 2) social networks within schools or districts, such as that reported by Spillan et al. (2012) who researched the ASL initiative.

D’Ardenne, et al. (2013) researched social networks created across school districts. In this example, reading teachers in grades three through five from seven
schools within the same county were given time to work together to improve their reading instruction. The chosen format was that of a professional learning community in which the teachers collaborated through cycles of interrogation and reflection on reading lessons that were implemented by each teacher. The reading teachers that were involved were taken out of the isolated position of being the only reading teacher in their building and given opportunities to capitalize on the experience and insight of the other group members. Creating this social network for the teachers led to improvement in the reading achievement levels of the students involved.

Cross-school professional learning communities could be an example of what Moolenaar (2012) calls interventions that could help teachers learn to access expertise and resources. Moolenaar also mentions that social capital interventions have not been well researched. Based on this information, the community engagement process created to connect teachers with local community business representatives that is the focus of this dissertation could be considered a social network intervention that helps teachers utilize the resources that are found in the surrounding communities of their school.

Professional development spillover. To draw this discussion to a close, one last example will be summarized to demonstrate the possibilities of the social interactions that occur in schools and districts. Sun, Penuel, Frank, Gallagher, & Youngs (2013), researched the spillover effects of effective professional development. The authors define spillover as “the effects of school-based professional development on instructional practices above and beyond the direct effect on teachers who participated in the professional development” (p. 345).
Middle school writing teachers are the focus of the research conducted for this article, and the researchers specifically studied knowledge flow within schools that occurred through social interactions. Data was gathered from a longitudinal study used as an evaluation of the National Writing Project’s School Partnership Program. Twenty schools participated in the Local Writing Project and received the professional development designed for the program in the first year. Nineteen schools were considered delayed partnerships because they did not participate in the professional development for the first two years of the program. Similar to the research conducted by Spillane et al. (2012) this study asked teachers to list other teachers that helped them with writing instruction in all 39 schools. The teachers were also asked to discuss their use of writing instructional practices and student engagement.

What Sun et al. (2013) found was a difference between the partnership schools and the delayed partnership schools in terms of the eventual number of hours that teachers received professional development and the number of active learning strategies used in the classrooms of the teachers from the partnership schools. One thing to note was that the professional development (PD) used in this research followed guidelines of effective PD due to the fact that it was sustained over time, the content was anchored to practice, and activities were included that were meant to help teachers learn along the way. Effective elements were pulled from multiple research studies on the topic of PD.

In terms of the spillover effect of professional development participation, the expertise gained by teachers spread to other teachers and some to the extent that the effects were equal to actual participation in the professional development. Recall that
Moolenaar (2012) pointed out how social networks can benefit teachers if valuable resources are available. The partnership schools’ social networks worked to spread the valuable resources infused into the school through effective professional development provided by the National Writing Project.

**Summary.** It is clear that the social interactions that take place in schools can work to create social capital (Dudley, 2013; Imants et al., 2013; Sleegers et al., 2013; Spillane et al., 2012) through social networks that are naturally occurring or put in place purposefully (D’Ardenne et al., 2013; El-Hani & Greca, 2013; Sleegers et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2013). Creating purposeful social connections for teachers in order to increase the use of local community resources could produce positive social connections that may or may not be spread through other parts of the school’s organizational structure. These social connections could also lead to other social connections depending on the social networks of the participants. Therefore, questions regarding the benefits of the community engagement process beyond those that are inherent will be included in the interview guide for this dissertation.

**Leadership and Engagement**

Educational leadership can influence community engagement, but one needs to remember that leaders aren’t leaders without followers and social influence (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Oc & Bashshur, 2013). Leadership is actually a result of mutual influences and social interactions within various contextual factors (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). For example, people who have informal authority, with no title, still contribute leadership to an organization due to their personal behavior and attributes (Hoy &
Miskel, 2013). Educational leaders work within a system that can encourage and support or restrain and hinder their efforts of engaging community members. The level of community engagement pursued by educational leaders depends on the formal or informal leadership roles of educators and the contextual factors present in the school (Schein, 2010). It is important to remember that in order for educational leaders to engage the community, educational leaders need to cross the boundaries between the school environment and the territory outside of the school (Longo, 2007; Smith & Sobel, 2010). Educational leaders who navigate the relationship between school and community and engage community stakeholders successfully are called “boundary spanners” (Goldring & Sims, 2005).

The following section will define two concepts that may impact leaders’ attempts to address community engagement for their school district or building. Organizational culture will be defined in order to illuminate the concept of contextual factors. Characteristics of open-systems organizations will also be discussed in order to address characteristics that various organizations may have in common. Research from the field of organizational management and behavior has been included in this literature review to provide support for the suggestion that both the school and community spheres, included in Epstein’s (2011) model, take part in the work of engagement.

Aspects of leadership and characteristics that are associated with building social networks and relationships will be listed in the second section including: 1) the social influence of followers, 2) self-expansion theory, 3) crossing group and organizational boundaries, and 4) empowering leadership. These two sections will be followed by a
review of research literature conducted on educational leadership involved in various engagement processes and how the leaders involved impacted the process.

Organizational culture. All organizations have a culture and culture varies from organization to organization. Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as the patterns shaped by the behavior of group members that have been put in place to solve problems, provide stability, consistency, and meaning, and are the social order rules that are conveyed to others that become a part of the group/organization. The author also states that organizational culture is created, embedded, evolved, and manipulated by leaders, as they play an important part in the evolution of the organization’s culture. Leadership influences culture and creates the conditions for new or different cultures.

In addition, Schein (2010) believes culture can guide and constrain behavior, it can create mindsets and frames of reference, and it provides the basis for daily functioning within the organization. To connect the concept of culture to the previous section on social interactions, Schein also indicates that culture is a product of social learning and that it is reenacted and created by our interactions with each other. Leaders that are working at engaging members of different organizations could benefit from an understanding of the cultures they are attempting to engage.

Open system organizations. Traditional public schools are organizations that would not exist without the community that surrounds it. The community provides the students that attend and often times the staff members. Communities are impacted by the local school systems that educate their children (Sanders, 2006). For these reasons, schools and school systems can be considered open-system types of organizations
(Burke, 2014). Understanding characteristics of open systems is important for leaders, as leaders will need to navigate the organization.

Burke (2014) defines the open-system as an organization that is dependent on the continual interactions with the environment in which it resides. This is true of traditional public schools and school systems. Burke’s definition describes businesses that operate for profit, but for the purposes of this research the definition is applied to schools. The author describes the input-throughput-output loop process. For schools, the input would be the students who go through the system. Other inputs would be the resources used to support teachers and principals during the education process. The process of educating students is what occurs during throughput. Students are then released from the system by graduating and then they are “put back” into the community from which they came, so to speak.

Burke (2014) mentions identifying the boundaries of the open-system in order to determine what is in and what is out of the system. This concept brings up questions regarding whether parents and other stakeholders are considered to be in or out of the system. These questions can probably be answered by the apparent culture of the school and what they consider to be resources included in the input part of the process. In consideration of these questions, Burke lists characteristics of open-systems and the first one is importation of energy.

Organizations draw energy from outside of the system in order to survive. This may mean that engaging stakeholders and community members is necessary for school’s to survive. Burke (2014) lists another characteristic that may relate to community
engagement, and that is differentiation. The author explains that organizations have to work to negate the entropic process (the process that leads organizations to disorganization and death). In order to do this, organizations can differentiate the work of the personnel. This means that schools could work to address the community that provides input by having teachers or teacher leaders take on some of the administrative responsibilities normally assigned to the principal. Burke gives the example of having front-line customer service personnel analyze data and survey results when they are not with customers. Either teacher leaders could be responsible for including the community members in the educational process, or they could support building administrative responsibilities in order for the principal to have more time to address community engagement.

Having teachers and principals differentiating their practice in order to include community members in the educational process could work to achieve the building’s goals. Plus, there are multiple ways of achieving community engagement goals which is another characteristic of open-systems described by Burke (2014). Helping educational leaders and community leaders understand the systemic processes that occur in education, and elsewhere, could help with the boundary crossing that occurs between the spheres of school and community.

**Leadership and social networks.** This section is divided into four sections: 1) social influences that affect leadership, 2) self-expansion, 3) leading across organizational boundaries, and 4) empowering leadership.
Social influences that affect leadership. Leaders have a definite impact on the process of community engagement for schools and districts (Bennett & Thompson, 2011; Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2011; Gordon, 2012; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). But, again, leaders won’t have much influence without followers.

Oc and Bashur (2013) focused their research on followers, as opposed to leaders. The authors did not conduct a study, but they offer up several propositions for others to use in future research. Oc and Bashur propose several ideas around the concept of the social influence that flows from followers to leaders. First, followers in higher positions exert more influence on the leader, and followers can exhibit persuasive and supportive behaviors that influence leaders. Also, the psychologically and physically more immediate followers and followers that have more frequent interactions with leaders exert greater influence over their leaders. Larger groups have more influence over leaders as long as they agree upon their purposes. It is more difficult for an individual to have social influence over leaders as the group gets larger. And finally, leaders that are dependent upon their followers for information are more likely to be influenced by them.

The propositions are largely based on the social impact theory, first described by Latané (1981). Latané describes social impact as a result of various social forces. The strength, immediacy and number of forces work on the target in various ways, just as followers may work on an individual leader. Strength can be determined by such characteristics as status, age, or prior relationships. Immediacy is the closeness in space or time between the force and the target (follower and the leader).
Oc and Bashur’s (2013) propositions provide much to be considered when thinking about the relationship between leaders and followers. It would do educational leaders well to understand the dynamics involved and the social influence of those around them. The authors also state that social influence by followers can be positive and negative, and that past relationships between the follower and the leader can affect social influence. The possibility of negative follower influence relates to Moolenaar’s (2012) warning that social networks can be negative when cliques are formed and become a barrier to outside influences and resources. The propositions listed by Oc and Bashur imply that leaders who have a grasp on the social influence of their followers may have better results achieving their goals.

**Self-expansion.** Related to the concept of social influence is the self-expansion theory. Dansereau, Seitz, Chiu, Shaughnessy, and Yammarino (2013) provide a literature review that attempts to connect various leadership theories through the self-expansion theory. The authors provide much fodder for other researchers to consider.

Self-expansion occurs during the process of relationship building when one person decides to include another person in their concept of self. The authors cite the work of Aron, Aron, Tudor and Nelson (1991). This original research included three experiments that addressed various aspects of including others in the self: 1) 24 students answered questions on a computer about dividing money between them and another person, follow-up experiments were completed with real money; 2) 20 students took part in an activity in which they were to associate a list of nouns with either themselves, their mother, or Cher, and a follow-up experiment was completed that included a female friend
in place of Cher; 3) 13 married individuals rated characteristic traits adjectives in relation to self and their reaction time to each trait was recorded, the follow-up experiment used a different population. The results of the group of experiments suggest, according to Aron, Aron, Tudor, and Nelson, that including others in self can be contextualized through the concepts of resources, perspectives, and characteristics.

Dansereau et al. (2013) utilize this information about including others in self to explain a concept that can impact leadership. Once relationships are formed between leaders and followers, there is a resistance to de-expansion of self and this helps to perpetuate the relationship process. Expansion of self can occur between two individuals and within groups. A group’s success can be considered one’s own, and the self has expanded to include the entire group. Continuing the author’s explanation, this occurs because of the desire to increase physical and social resources. These resources can then be used to achieve set goals. This idea is related to the concept of social capital building and increasing social networks.

Dansereau et al. (2013) connect self-expansion to leadership because followers determine whether they want to expand their concept of self to include the person working as the leader. In turn, leaders determine the ways in which they will self-expand and whether their self-expansion will include followers. The desire for self-expansion, or lack thereof, within an educational leader may impact community engagement processes for a school or school district.

Leading across organizational boundaries. As stated previously, leaders involved in community engagement with schools need to be able to navigate the various
types of organizations that may be encountered. Hogg et al. (2012) address this leadership struggle in their article focused on leading across group and organizational boundaries. The authors state that a leader responsible for crossing boundaries needs to socially identify with the group they are working with and needs to help group members do the same. Social identification, referred to by Hogg et al. as intergroup relational identity, needs to occur regardless of which organization the group members represent in order to reach group goals. Having a desire for self-expansion (Dansereau, et al., 2013) would help to build intergroup relational identity.

Hogg et al. (2012) propose the theory of intergroup relational identity with several propositions to be tested in the future. The authors explain: "effective intergroup leadership is called for to transform subgroup self-interest and detrimental competition between groups into collaboration and cooperation that optimize intergroup performance” (p. 235). Thankfully, the researchers identified four actions that leaders can take to build intergroup relational identity: 1) apply rhetoric that champions the value of intergroup collaboration; 2) work at spanning the boundaries in order to exemplify the intergroup relationship; 3) form a boundary-spanning leadership coalition; and 4) apply rhetoric that will stimulate transference of intergroup relational identity to new comers.

Educational leaders responsible for crossing organizational boundaries to accomplish the goals of community engagement could benefit from including the concepts and process of intergroup relational identity. One such example is described by Chrzanowski, Rans, and Thompson (2010). This case study report includes interview data from 21 separate interviewees. A Chicago charter school desiring to create a relationship
with their surrounding community worked with the Asset Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University. The goal was to create a Community Connector position in order to have someone responsible for crossing the organizational boundaries of all community sectors.

The Community Connector was expected to discover community resources and assets, build relationships, connect resources to the school and vice versa, act as a bridge between the school board and the community, open opportunities for school staff and students to partner with community groups, and assist in recruiting students to the school. The authors list characteristics of the Community Connector which were deemed effective: a) listen for possibilities, b) find relevant connections, c) make the connections effectively, and d) garner the trust of the community. Specifically related to Dansereau et al.’s (2013) intergroup relational identity, Chrzanowski et al. (2010) explained the ability of the Community Connector to “recognize affinities between people who don’t know each other yet” (p. 16). This information speaks to the ability of the community engagement process, and the people that work to implement the process, to connect community resources to school classrooms effectively by crossing organizational boundaries. Questions addressing these connections and the ways in which they were made will be included in the interview guide.

**Empowering leadership.** Educational leaders, especially at the district level, may not be able to manage the work of community engagement directly. They may need to rely on building level leaders, like principals or teacher leaders, to facilitate the process of community engagement. In cases like these, educational leaders that utilize empowering
leadership may actually increase the creativity of the followers they are expecting to complete the work (Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

In an empirical study conducted by Zhang and Bartol (2010) links were found between empowering leadership and creativity. The researchers analyzed surveys from an IT company in China. The sample included 498 employee surveys and 164 direct supervisor surveys. The researchers discovered that worker psychological empowerment was higher for employees supervised by empowering leaders. Psychological empowerment was positively related to intrinsic motivation, which in turn has an impact on creative process engagement. Therefore, the creativity of these particular workers increased. The use of the term creativity by the authors for this research is as an outcome, meaning the production of novel ideas that can solve problems. Zhang and Bartol remind us that employees need to view empowerment as part of their work role identity for this theory to work in other situations, all the more reason for leaders to know and understand their followers through the creation of relationships. These findings indicate that district educational leaders can intentionally empower school leaders for the purpose of increasing their capacity for creatively solving problems that arise during the process of engaging community members.

**The impact of leadership on community engagement.** Three articles were chosen for this section and each highlight a different perspective of educational leadership. The first article compares two different schools in different states. The second focuses on one school with two consecutive superintendents, and the third looks at the culture created by school leaders and the impact of this culture on parent involvement.
To illustrate the difficulties experienced by educational leaders working to increase community engagement, Gordon (2012) conducted a comparative case study of two schools in different states using qualitative fieldwork methods. The purpose was to determine how family and community engagement policies and practices filtered from the district level to the school level. A total of 93 interviews were completed over a three-year period which included school and district leaders and various community stakeholders. Both districts had a designated administrative boundary spanner and district-level community engagement policies. Despite these structural pieces, Gordon found that the policies and practices of the district and district leaders were loosely coupled with practices at the school level. Findings revealed that district-level policies were unclear, the principals were not held accountable for engagement practices, and district leaders did not provide support to the school leaders. Teacher leaders and principals expected to follow district policies need to be trained how to authentically engage parents and community members, as suggested by the author.

Gordon (2012) also suggests that district leaders need to actively support and encourage the work of engagement at the school level, which is a strategy supported by the empowering leader research conducted by Zhang and Bartol (2010). The results of a study conducted by Epstein et al. (2011) corroborate with the findings of Gordon in that the support of district level leaders for the implementation of partnership programs improved the quality and longevity of the programs over and above programs without district leadership support. Also, sustained support from district leaders over three years increased the activity level and specificity of the programs. Based on the findings of
Gordon (2012) and Epstein et al. (2011), it can be concluded that district level leadership support and school level accountability is important to the fulfillment of engagement activities conducted at the individual school level.

Bennett and Thompson (2011) conducted research in a similar manner to Gordon (2012) in that they focused on school leadership, policy, and practices utilized for community engagement. The difference in this research is that a single school, with two consecutive superintendents, was researched in the case study. The focus of Bennett and Thompson’s research is the capacity of a superintendent to understand the complexities of school and business partnerships. The authors identify institutionalization as a connecting theory, which is the process of institutionalizing a program in order to sustain it.

The school in this case study had a superintendent who worked diligently to institutionalize school/business partnerships. Steps taken by the superintendent included becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce’s education committee and working directly with them to develop and fund a coordinator’s position (boundary spanner) that would support the schools with the work of creating partnerships. Similar to Gordon (2012), Bennett and Thompson (2011) state that “school and business partnership participants will need sufficient understanding of the vision and purpose of this policy as well as the skills, competencies, and resources to sufficiently carry out the tasks and overcome related barriers” (p. 839). An emergent finding from Bennett and Thompson’s data was that school level leaders had an expectation of reciprocity for the engagement, implying a willingness to be involved. The superintendent utilized trust building activities
and deliberate political tactics to create relationships that would serve the school’s needs. Assuming the program was institutionalized, the second superintendent who took over part way through this work decided to stay out of the way and let the process proceed on its own.

Because of the assumption on the part of the second superintendent, professional development to help overcome barriers to full institutionalization of the business partnership program was never put in place. Eventually, the need for the coordinating boundary spanner waned in the eyes of the funders and the position was cut. The researchers feel that the capacity of the second superintendent for maintaining the relationships created by the first was not there. Essentially, standing out of the way of the program may have been perceived as indifference and the Chamber of Commerce felt that they were left to lead the program by themselves. As stated by Bhanduri and Yasunobu (2009), reciprocity declines over time and social relations vanish if not maintained. Implications of Bennett and Thomson’s (2011) study show the importance of continued district level support for engagement activities and that continual boundary spanning interactions are important to sustainability.

The final article for this section emphasizes the importance of organizational culture in reaching set goals. Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013) researched the impact of school culture on parent involvement. Using role theory as the basis of their discussion, the authors point out that roles are assumed in social settings and expectations for role creation are learned through interacting with individuals and groups within the setting in question. The researchers hypothesized that parents’ understanding of their role
in supporting their child’s learning is influenced by their perception of the school’s expectations of parents as relayed through the individual school climate.

Two middle schools in the same large metropolitan school district were included in the study. One had a well-developed parent involvement program with a program coordinator, and one without. Anonymous surveys completed by parents at both school districts provided the data for analysis. Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013) discovered that the amount of teacher invitations to come to the school were significantly different between the two schools. Parents from the school with the parent involvement program reported being invited to the school four-five times a year and only one-two times for the other school.

Overall, findings indicated that the parents’ perceptions of what the school expected of them, the climate of the school, and the invitations to students to become involved are what predicted parents’ beliefs about their role in the involvement of their child’s education. The authors suggest school leadership and staff need to understand the connection between school climate and overall culture and the behavior and expectations of the parents involved. Implications of this research suggest that the organizational structure of schools need to include community involvement programs that are embedded in the culture of the building in order to increase and sustain involvement. As stated previously, organizational culture can guide and constrain behavior (Schein, 2010).

**Summary.** In summary, educational leaders are an integral part of the community engagement process, whether they are teacher leaders, principals, or district level leaders (Bennett & Thompson, 2011; Epstein et al., 2011; Gordon, 2012; Whitaker & Hoover-
Dempsey, 2013). Longo (2007) believes that it is important for these leaders to understand their community and to simply "be local" (p. 124). Understanding the community and the various leaders that are present in the community relates to an understanding of organizational culture (Schein, 2010) and the various systems present within the community organizations (Burke, 2014; Senge, 2012). Leaders that have an understanding of their own social networks and the types of influence that can occur within those networks may have an easier path to becoming local and creating community engagement opportunities (Dansereau et al., 2013; Hogg et al., 2012; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

And finally, educational leaders interested in pursuing community engagement for their schools or districts cannot forget about the internal policies and practices of their own organization (Gordon, 2012; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). In terms of this research study, it will be important to find out about the connections between leadership in the various organizations represented by the participants and the community engagement process. Therefore, questions pertaining to this topic will be included in the interview guide.

**Bringing it All Together through Organizational Change Theories**

The concepts underlying organizational change and organizational learning connect to the previous three sections of this literature review, which were: 1) impact of community engagement, 2) social interactions that lead to teacher learning, and 3) leadership necessary for implementing community engagement practices. The ideas of
two seminal authors will be used to bring together the concepts included in the previous three sections and to analyze their reciprocal nature.

Senge (2012) provides cohesion for community engagement via the organizational learning theory. Burke (2014) outlines a framework of organizational change that places the previously discussed concepts within an organizational structure that helps to explain the reciprocal impact of these concepts. These two theories are not used as the theoretical framework for this dissertation because the focus of this research study is on the interactions of the individuals involved in the community engagement process. The assumption is that gains will be made by each participant due to the social interactions that occur. The purpose of including organizational learning and organizational change theories is to highlight the chain reactions that could occur as a result of implementing a process to increase community and school staff interactions. Another assumption is that chain reactions will likely be found during the analysis of the collected data, and this assumption is based on what was discovered through the review of literature conducted thus far. The following section will review the connections between the theories of Burke and Senge and the articles chosen for discussion in previous sections of this review.

Senge’s 2012 book applies the original Fifth Discipline concepts to education and is titled *Schools that Learn*. He points out that a school is not “an isolated entity but an interconnected set of processes and practices, linked by its nature both to the community around it and to the classrooms and individual learning experiences within it” (p. 15). Essentially, the author goes on to say that it is necessary to have open dialogue and public
engagement in order to expose the perspectives and assumptions of all stakeholders. Change and learning need to take place at the classroom, school, and community levels because of the interactions that occur between the three, and because not all of the interactions are visible (Senge, 2012).

Boundary spanning has been discussed as a way of broaching the intersection of school and community (Bennett & Thompson, 2011; Chrzanowski, Rans, & Thompson, 2010; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Gordon, 2012; Hogg et al., 2012). Understanding an educational system that includes all aspects of a community through the work of boundary spanning practices can prevent one of Senge’s (1990) organizational learning disabilities, ‘the enemy is out there’. As an organization, school staff has a tendency to blame parents and the community where a child has been raised when issues arise. Whichever boundary spanning practices are implemented: designating a boundary spanning position, creating a boundary spanning committee, or helping group members find ways to feel associated with each other, the school system can learn from the interactions that take place during the activities (Senge, 2012).

The social interactions that occur through boundary spanning activities also connect to organizational change in the fact that they impact cognitive learning (Burke, 2014). Burke (2014) explains that cognitive learning occurs after the initial activity or change action has taken place. This is also a social effect in that the people included in the boundary spanning activities react to the activity and to the other participants (Burke, 2014), which comes directly from the definition of sociocultural learning described previously. According to Burke, schools and/or community members need to induce the
actions that can lead to the type of cognitive learning that is needed to understand and sustain the change that has occurred. Bennett and Thompson’s (2011) article provides an example of action inducement through the strategies of the first superintendent. However, the second superintendent did not take advantage of the cognitive learning that took place through the actions of the first.

Another process that helps organizations learn is creating a shared vision (Senge, 1990). Learning that takes places in an organization through various activities is driven by the vision, or a lack thereof. Several authors emphasized this concept in relation to creating school/community partnerships (Blank et al., 2011; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Laursen et al., 2007; Reeves, 2005; Sanders, 2006). Educationally, a vision that is understood and shared by all stakeholders can help educational leaders make sound decisions (Senge, 2012). Having the vision in place means that the content of a desired change has been identified, and then, Burke (2014) explains, the process of the changes that are necessary can be determined. This change process includes planning, launching, more fully implementing, and then sustaining the desired behaviors. Changing the behaviors of individuals is what will lead to the desired change outlined in the shared vision (Burke, 2014).

Community engagement processes can actually work to change the behavior of participants through the social interactions that act as embedded professional development (Bainer et al., 1996; Blank et al., 2011; Bonnette, 2006; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Laursen et al., 2007; Reeves, 2005). Once behaviors begin to reflect the shared vision then changes in mental sets or mental models can take place (Senge, 1990; Burke,
The community engagement process at the heart of this dissertation is meant to induce action which is expected to change behaviors of participants, as Burke (2014) suggests. It should create movement in the direction of the shared vision that has already been created by BBC, which Senge (2012) has deemed to be important.

Knowing that change may occur in various organizational components as a consequence of implementing the community engagement process, understanding organizational chain reactions would be helpful. Burke (2014) explains that organizations are open systems that follow an input-throughput-output process. The throughput part of the process is expanded in the Burke-Litwin Model of Organizational Performance and Change (p. 225) to show the various dimensions present within an organization in the form of boxes, with double-sided arrows connecting each of the boxes. The organizational model is encircled by a feedback loop that flows back and forth between the external environment dimension and the individual and organizational performance dimension.

In the case of education, the external environment can include influence from community institutions, parents, private businesses, local media, and even state and national governments (Senge, 2012). Understanding the ways in which the feedback loop works and that it can be the instigation for change through the external environment is important when contemplating community engagement. The discussion of community engagement thus far has exposed benefits to the community, or the external environment, (Bainer et al., 1996; Blank et al., 2011; Bonnette, 2006; Casey et al., 2006; Cervone, 2010; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Laursen et al., 2007; G. Smith & Sobel, 2010) and has
connected community engagement to the reciprocal nature of social interactions and the increase in social capital (Bhandari & Yasunabu, 2009). The reciprocal nature of social interactions is reflected in the organizational change model through the use of double-sided arrows.

Senge (2012) describes the community as one system within the three nested systems of activity for schools, which are the classroom, the school, and the community. Because of this nested system, the community can be a component that learns along with the classroom and the school itself. Helping the community system learn through community engagement processes may impact the authenticity of feedback from people of the external environment. A similar concept was demonstrated through the work of Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013). Parents from two different schools within the same district learned what was expected of them in terms of engagement through the signals sent by school staff and leaders. In other words, the individual and organizational output from the schools set the stage for the types of feedback and interactions received from the external environment (Burke, 2014). Making changes that can affect feedback and the feedback loop is important, according to Senge (2012), because feedback becomes a reinforcing process that can help or hinder a system.

Leadership is at the apex of most of this discussion. Burke (2014) places leadership at the larger-system level in the change model, which has more impact on the organization than the other dimensions. There are three organizational levels represented in the change model: larger-system level (mission and strategy, leadership, and culture); group or local work unit level (management practices, structure, systems, work unit
climate); and individual level (motivation, task requirements and individual skills, and individual needs and values). No matter where the change process begins, leadership ends up involved. External environments can instigate change, and this dimension is directly connected to the leadership box.

Leaders can be influenced by followers (Oc & Bashur, 2013), so change instigated at the individual and work unit level can also impact leadership. The Principal Leadership Academy of Nashville program described by Goldring and Sims (2005) is an example of change that came from the external environment that included all of Nashville. The city leaders saw a need to support educational leaders in the work of making the schools better. This infusion of resources in the form of increased social capital at the leadership level had the potential to impact the whole school. However, because the leader is responsible for the culture of an organization (Schein, 2010) the expected chain reaction is not guaranteed to occur. This is evidenced in the work of Gordon (2012) and Epstein et al.,(2011). Both articles demonstrated that school policies and district level expectations do not always translate into the desired action steps at the school levels. Stakeholders in the educational process that desire change may need to infuse resources at the individual level to activate a chain reaction.

It is the individual level of an organization that is the focus of this dissertation. Teachers benefit from increasing their social capital and improving their social networks for the purpose of instructional improvement (D’Ardenne et al., 2013; Dudley, 2013; El-Hani & Greca, 2013; Imants et al., 2013; Moolenaar, 2012; Sleegers et al., 2013; Spillane et al., 2012). The benefits may come in the form of increased motivation, increased
skills/abilities, and/or having individual needs and values met according to the
organizational change model (Burke, 2014). When these particular dimensions are
changed, the model indicates that the changes can impact the organization’s performance,
which then impacts the feedback loop connecting to the external environment.

The work unit climate, systems and policies and the structure can also be affected
due to their direct and reciprocal connections to the individual level dimensions. Change
in the work unit affects the system-level dimensions, as stated previously. Oc and Bashur
(2013) pointed out that followers have influence over their leaders depending on the
proximity of their space and the frequency of their interactions. Combining all of this
information and these connections implies that infusing resources into the individual
level of an educational organization through community engagement can impact the
entire organization. It is the assumption of the author of this dissertation that chain
reactions within the organization of the participants will be revealed, educational and
otherwise. In order to discover how the infusion of resources affected participants and
what chain reactions occurred as a result, participants of the community engagement
process designed by BBC for the purpose of addressing career awareness will be
interviewed about their experiences.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative study used phenomenology as the research approach. Qualitative studies strive to obtain in-depth interpretations. They are emergent in nature due to the inclusion of participant voice (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is enacted in naturalistic settings, draws on multiple methods, and focuses on context (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The phenomenological approach is used to describe the experiences of individuals interacting with the chosen phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

This study focuses on multiple people who are a part of the same community engagement process. Specifically, the BBC community group developed a process that includes local teachers and community business members who collaborate to create an activity for classroom instruction that is designed to increase student opportunities to solve work related problems. This process is new for the community group and the participants. The question driving this research is the following: When included in a community engagement process established for the purpose of student career awareness what did teachers and local business representatives learn and experience?

The following chapter will provide details about the appropriateness of the research methods in responding to the research question. This chapter will also provide specifics about the ways that the research participants were selected for this study. The researcher will elaborate on data collected during an interview approach outlined by Seidman (2013). A section outlining the collection of relevant documents will also be included. Descriptions of the data analysis procedures include guidelines set forth by
Moustakas (1994) and Saldaña (2013), Moustakas focusing on phenomenological processes and Saldana on coding processes. After discussing the ways in which the research design addresses validity, the chapter ends with recognition of the research design limitations and a summary.

**Research Methods**

Qualitative methods were used to conduct this research study. Process oriented inquiry lends itself readily to a qualitative research design (Patton, 2002). The process orientation of this study is derived from the multiple steps taken to connect teachers and community members over an extended period of time. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that "qualitative researchers are more likely to confront and come up against the constraints of the everyday social world" (p. 12). Learning about these constraints can help to improve the design of the community engagement process by focusing on data that addresses how a social experience is created and by exposing meaning in the data that is applicable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative methodology was used to find out what participants learned as a result of participation in the intentional collaborative interactions (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative strategies assisted in identifying what meaning the participants attached to these activities (Roberts, 2010), and simply describing the experience of those that participated (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

**Rationale for phenomenology.** Specifically, the researcher used a phenomenological approach to cultivate responses to the research question. The concept of phenomenology as a research method varies philosophically (Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014), however there are similarities within the method that are
discussed by multiple authors. Phenomenology focuses on understanding lived experiences and the intentional relations between people and the world or other people (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2013; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014). Intentional in this context refers to the meaningful connections that people have with the objects and people of the world (Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014). Intentional relations that already exist can manifest and appear after reflecting upon a phenomenon (Vagle, 2014).

Phenomenological inquiry develops conversational and argumentative understandings and delves deeper into the lived experience to gain insightful descriptions from those that have experienced the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2014). These descriptions are used for reflection by the researcher to cultivate the essences of what was experienced by the participants (Moustakas, 1994).

The essences can manifest through the intentional relations as various emotional reactions, such as confusion, respect, resistance, hope, etc. (Vagle, 2014). The role of the researcher will be to capture what makes something what it is for the participants in connection to the phenomenon. To answer the research question for this study a phenomenological approach was used to gather the subjective understandings of the participants through reflective questions and to reveal intentional relations that exist and occur between participants and the process under inquiry.

**Site Selection**

Moustakas (1994) states that an investigation can begin with any type of phenomenon and in this research study the phenomenon determined the path of research. For this reason, the site where the research took place was not selected, per se; the site is
where the phenomenon occurs. To reiterate, a sub-committee of BBC created a community engagement process for the purpose of connecting teachers and community business representatives. This connection is hoped to lead to increased career awareness and development for students that are involved because of what is learned and experienced by the adult participants of the process. BBC as a community group exists in a southern county of Ohio and is a result of the current educational and economical context within which it was created. Marshall and Rossman’s (2011) research design guidance is clear: decisions made about the setting, site, population or phenomenon must serve as a guide to the design of a study. In this case, the decision to focus on a particular phenomenon created a site-specific research study.

**Participants**

The phenomenon under study for this research provided eighteen people that took part in the problem scenario process as it was implemented during the summer and fall of 2014. In order to work with these participants, approval was secured from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix C). The IRB process includes submission of a project outline and accompanying data collection documents.

Due to the nature of this research study two sampling procedures were used to choose participants (Patton, 2002). The initial sampling procedure included identifying participant criteria (Moustakas, 1994), which is called criterion sampling (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). The criterion is based on the research question, as suggested by Creswell (2013). To be eligible for the sampling pool, potential participants must have fulfilled the following two conditions:
1) participation in the summer professional development session (intentional collaborative interaction) that included both teachers and business representatives working together to create a problem scenario; and

2) participation in the problem scenario implementation that occurred in the classroom with students during the school year.

In order to decrease bias from backyard research, teachers that were employed in the district of the researcher or business partners that had past connections to the researcher were eliminated from the potential pool of participants. This left nine participants to choose from for the research study. Table 1 outlines the use of the two sampling procedures in order to narrow the pool of participants. Van Manen (2014) states that phenomenological studies can benefit from as little as one example to a great many examples and Creswell (2013) suggests between three and ten (Creswell, 2013). A maximum variation sampling process was used to choose final participants from the sampling pool to be interviewed (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Seidman, 2013). Maximum variation sampling is used to provide a wide variety of perspectives (Creswell, 2013) which will help to find participants “who collectively represent the range of multiple, partial, and varied contexts” of the phenomenon (Vagle, 2014, p. 128).
Table 1

**Sampling Procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Employment type</th>
<th>Professional Development Participation</th>
<th>In-class implementation participation</th>
<th>Previous connection to researcher</th>
<th>Included in participant pool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Implementation did not include partner</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Implementation did not include original partner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Achieving maximum variation for this research was dependent upon the inclusion of both business and education, which are the distinct institutions that the participants represent. Out of the nine people left in the pool, a total of six participants were identified for participation in this research based on their place of employment. Three schools were represented by the remaining teachers, indicating the need for three teachers. Of the remaining business people, three were identified that represent different local businesses. Only two business representatives responded to the request to participate. Van Manen
(2014) states that “phenomenology looks not for sameness or repetitive patterns” (p. 353) and data saturation is not the goal, therefore a sixth participant was not deemed necessary for this research study. Specifics of the five participants are included in the participant profiles in chapter four. Individuals selected for this research were invited to participate in the study through a letter of invitation sent via email.

**Data Collection**

Two types of data, interviews and documents, were gathered and included in the analysis process. Interviews are the primary source of data collection when following qualitative phenomenological research methods (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2013). Residual documents of a phenomenon can be included in the data to provide information not collected during interviews (Patton, 2002). Documents can be used to provide paths of inquiry for the interview process (Patton, 2002), and/or to reinforce information gained during the interviews (Glesne, 2011). Either way, multiple data sources increase the trustworthiness of conclusions made about encounters occurring during the phenomenon and were included in the collection of data used for analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2011; Patton, 2002).

**Rationale for interviews.** Experiences are temporal and transitory for individuals, meaning “the ‘will be’ becomes the ‘is’ and then the ‘was’ in an instant” (Seidman, 2013, p. 16). Because of this change in perspective and consciousness about an experience, Seidman (2013) states that it is important to ask participants to reflect on their lived experience. This can occur through interviewing. The process under scrutiny
in this research study has the potential for positive reactions and negative reactions to manifest. Individual reactions and varying intentional relations can lead the participants to view the experience of participating differently (Vagle, 2014). Taking the framework of social construction (Creswell, 2012) into consideration, it is important for the researcher to try to determine how the social interactions that occurred throughout the process may have led to participants’ constructed opinions about the process as a whole. Because the experiences and perceptions of individual participants in the process are unique, they could impact the overall outcome (Patton, 2002). The phenomenon in this study is that of the full community engagement process designed by BBC, which includes intentional collaborative interactions between teachers and their community business partners. With the goal of having “the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study” (Seidman, 2013, p. 14), individual interviews were used to gather data for analysis.

**Interviews.** Interview data was collected through a series of three interviews with each participant. The three interview approach is an interview process described by Seidman (2013). Quality interviews were needed to collect relevant data during each of the three interviews. Utilizing interview techniques can increase the quality of the questioning sequence, which includes such behaviors as active listening, using the interviewees’ specific language to determine follow-up questions, and following the instinct to pursue a particular line of questioning that is not included in the interview guide (Seidman, 2013). Seidman also suggests that the researcher keep notes during the interview process in order to address topics that require further elaboration. Each of the
three interviews in Seidman’s process has a different purpose. The purpose of interview one is to gather data that describes the context or background of the participant. The second interview focuses on specific and concrete details of the phenomenon in which they were a part, in this case the community engagement process. The third interview is meant to collect reflections of the participant and their understandings of the experience. The reason for choosing the three interview structure is because “the phenomenal experience becomes increasingly clarified and expanded in meaning as the phenomenon is considered and reconsidered in reflective processes” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 50).

Having each interview focus on different aspects of the participant and the phenomena helped to distinguish between data that represented noema and noesis. Moustakas (1994) explains that noesis is the background information or historical experiences that a person carries with them into every situation. Noema can be described as the meaning associated with or reactions to a current situation that people have due to their individual noesis. Distinguishing between the two types of data aided in the analysis process and in making connections to the sociocultural learning theory.

An interview guide was used during the data collection process due to the number of participants and the number of interviews that were conducted. The purpose of an interview guide is to make sure that the same line of questioning occurs during all interviews (Patton, 2002). The interview guide (Appendix A) contains a series of questions derived from the literature review that address the focus and purpose of each of the three interviews described by Seidman (2013). This arrangement of questions was needed, so that the foundation and detail provided by each interview in the series
remained intact (Seidman, 2013). During each interview, the guide was followed, however, further probing questions were asked about various topics. Data collected during the interview process was organized by each participant’s pseudonym and interview number in the series, was transcribed by a hired transcriptionist, and stored on the researcher’s personal computer, which requires a password for access.

**Documents.** As stated, documents can provide further insight into a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2011; Patton, 2002). The community engagement process studied for this research generated particular documents that provide insights beyond the interview data. Teachers participating in the community engagement process did so with the understanding that they needed to complete certain activities and attend two class sessions in order to receive a graduate credit for participation. The second class session in the process is dedicated to reflecting on the implementation of a problem scenario and revising the activity to better address the intended student audience. During this session, which occurred in December 2014, three BBC sub-committee members each worked with a small group that included teacher and business representative pairs to guide and capture the reflective discussion. During this discussion, a common set of questions were asked of each group and notes were taken by the sub-committee members. Documents that include the questions asked and the notes taken during the reflection discussions are included in the data that was analyzed due to the nature of the content. The content of these documents reflects historical social interactions (Glesne, 2011) and reflective processes (Moustakas, 1994) that occurred between the original participants of
the process. Utilizing these documents affords the researcher an opportunity to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

**Data Analysis**

The purpose of the phenomenological research approach is to arrive at the overall essence of the experience for the participants (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2013; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014). ‘Essence’ is the subjective experience of the phenomenon by each participant (Moustakas, 1994) that determines the elements of the lived experience that make it a phenomenon (Seidman, 2013). In order to get to the essence of an experience, Moustakas (1994) outlines a scientific process called transcendental phenomenology which has three phases: epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation. The epoché phase works to provide the researcher a fresh look at the phenomenon without any previously determined understandings or judgments. The researcher is expected to suspend “one’s presuppositions, biases, and taken-for-granted assumptions” about the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2014, p. 347). This phase is necessary because researchers that share professional identities with participants, as in the case of this research study, need to be cautious about making assumptions during the interview based on their personal experiences in the same profession (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The phenomenological reduction phase provides a non-repetitive description of the textural essence of each participant’s experience with the phenomenon. The textural essence includes descriptions of the phenomenon that help the reader see the composition of the experience using thoughts, feelings, examples, ideas, details, etc. These data coincide with the focus of the second
interview in the series of three and assisted the researcher in painting a picture of the community engagement process from the participants’ perspective. The third phase, imaginative variation, is meant to list the structural essences of the experience. Structural descriptions are meant to provide a “picture of the conditions that precipitate an experience and connect with it” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 35). Data relating to the structural essences were collected during the first and third interviews in the series providing the researcher with data that reveals the sociocultural experiences of teachers and business representatives and their opinions related to the phenomenon under study. Once collected, the textural and structural essences were synthesized to determine the overall essence and meaning of the phenomenon. This analytical process described by Moustakas relies on the abilities of the researcher to achieve epoché, which “requires unusual, sustained attention, concentration, and presence” (p. 88).

Coding. Due to the nature of transcendental phenomenology as an analytical process, coding procedures described by Saldaña (2013) were used during analysis in order to provide the researcher a structure for completing the process. Eclectic coding is a coding process that allows the researcher to use a combination of coding methods. Eclectic coding is described by Saldaña as being appropriate for beginning qualitative researchers. It includes first cycle coding, second cycle coding, and memo writing throughout the entire process.

Two affective codes (Saldaña, 2013) were used for the coding of data collected during interview one, which focused on the background of the participants. Emotion coding was used for the first cycle of coding and values coding was completed for the
second cycle. These particular coding processes “tap into the inner cognitive systems of participants” (p. 105) by labeling and assessing participant feelings and belief systems. All coding for interview one was completed before coding interview two in order for the researcher to gain background perspective for each participant. This method was followed in order to help the researcher work toward epoché.

Questions for interview two purposefully concentrated on the three steps of the community engagement process. The first cycle coding used for this data set was structural coding (Saldaña, 2013), which allowed for the collection of descriptions that emphasized what each participant experienced during the phenomenon. Once the reduced data set was created, causation coding procedures were applied for the second cycle. Causation coding identifies various attributes that lead to outcomes, similar in nature to cause-effect relationships (Saldaña, 2013). Attributes found in the data in the form of actions, events, or feelings are tied together in a series leading up to a final outcome. The process helped the researcher identify textural essences needed for phenomenological reduction. Since the collected documents included reflective statements about steps one and two of the process, they were also coded using causation coding. Attributes and outcomes were then further organized by the three steps of the process and sub-headings were applied for similar content.

Interview three provided the participants an opportunity to reflect on the overall community engagement process and to provide further insight into the interactions that occurred. Data from interview three was explored first by applying holistic coding. Saldaña (2013) describes this process as a preparatory approach needed before deeper
analysis takes place. Whole units of the data are given a single code word and then the units are organized for second cycle coding. The researcher recorded patterns discovered during the holistic coding process and combined them with themes developed in the literature review in order to create sub-codes. Sub-codes help bring data together when there are multiple participants involved in the study (Saldaña, 2013). At this point, the sub-coded chunks of data were reorganized to prepare for theming.

Theming the data is an optional process that synthesizes repeating ideas, transitions, similarities and differences, etc., in the data (Saldaña, 2013). In order to theme the sub-coded data key concepts from the literature review, such as community engagement, networking, leadership, etc., were used to develop key words for the theming process. Concept phrases, such as: community engagement is, learning occurred when, participant was surprised about; were developed to further theme data from interview three. The researcher completed this final step of analysis to fully understand the structural essences that may have impacted each participant’s lived experience with the phenomenon.

Data coded and analyzed from all three interviews in the series were used to complete the final phase of analysis described by Moustakas (1994), imaginative variation. Structural and textural essences collected during the various coding processes were synthesized in order to determine the overall essence of the phenomenon for the five participants in this study.
Validity

The term validity is borrowed from quantitative research, but when used for qualitative research it is reduced to its basic definition: the truthfulness of the findings (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Creswell (2013) lists ways in which the validity of qualitative studies can be increased. The approaches that were applied to this study include: prolonged engagement, bias identification, and triangulation.

**Prolonged engagement.** Prolonged engagement with the people under study is one of the ways researchers can increase validity. Prolonged engagement occurs when the researcher spends enough time in the field to build trust with participants and learn about the culture and context of the researched situation (Creswell, 2013). Because of the way in which this study came to fruition, the researcher has been involved with the community engagement process since its inception. Specifically, the researcher has had previous interactions with the potential participants of this research study. The researcher was responsible for communicating the opportunity to local teachers, providing graduate credit, working jointly on session agendas, and recruiting community business partners to participate. While prolonged engagement can work to increase the validity of the findings, in this case it also increases potential bias of the researcher.

**Identifying researcher bias.** Researcher bias has been known to impact the validity of a study (Creswell, 2013). Biases that were identified through the analytical epoché process (Moustakas, 1994) and first round coding (Saldaña, 2013) are included in this report. The three main areas of bias identified were the level of involvement of the
participant’s leaders, attitude toward state accountability assessments, and the expectation of chain reactions within the represented organizations.

This inclusion of biases is an acknowledgement that the researcher was mindful to remain objective throughout the research process. Because the researcher was highly connected to the process, the data collected included only the voices of the participants in order for the emergent findings to truly reflect the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Although the documents collected and included for data analysis were created with assistance from the researcher, the researcher did not participate in the reflection discussions of the participants captured in the notes taken by the BBC sub-committee members. These reflection documents provide a second data source that is an avenue for participant voice, along with the interviews, collected without intervention from the researcher. The inclusion of the documents as data provides additional information needed for triangulation.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation is a validity-enhancing strategy recommended by Creswell (2013), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Marshall and Rossman (2011), and Patton (2002), and it is included in the methodology for this research. Triangulation can be achieved by using a variety of data sources and a variety of methods for data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). The methodology of this research study fulfills triangulation because a variety of data sources were analyzed through the combination of two different analytical methods.

**Collection.** Maximum variation sampling was used to determine which participants to interview. This type of sampling increased the variation of data collected
directly from participants, which increases the strength of small samples (Patton, 2002). Ensuring a variety of participants allowed the researcher to capture the "core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon" (Patton, 2002, p. 235). Variety within the data was achieved by using Seidman’s (2013) three-interview process to collect different categories of data from each participant. Utilizing this process allowed time for reflection between each interview. This reflection time allowed for the participants and the researcher to re-address any areas that needed clarification. And lastly, collecting reflection documents created during the community engagement process provided the researcher with two types of data, thereby addressing data triangulation (Patton, 2002).

**Analysis.** Patton (2002) describes a type of triangulation called methodological triangulation, which consists of using multiple methods to study the problem. The problem, in this case, is determining the overall essence of the phenomenon for the participants of the community engagement process. Methodological triangulation was achieved through the combination of two different analytical processes used to determine the overall essence: the three phases of transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994) and Eclectic coding (Saldaña, 2013). Based on the analysis concepts outlined by Moustakas (1994), coding choices were made that allowed the researcher to address these concepts. Saldana’s (2013) descriptions of coding provided the means for pulling appropriate data for further analysis in order to arrive at the essence of the phenomenon.

While there is no single way to guarantee that the interpretations of the researcher are valid, the interpretations focused on the views and voices of the participants in the
study (Whittemore et al., 2001). Additionally, adhering to triangulation and acknowledging bias can serve to support validity in the study.

**Limitations of the Research Design**

Limitations of the research methodology are apparent in two areas: participant sample and the researcher’s connection to the study.

**Participant sample.** Patton (2002) states that the sample affects the findings and that there are always strengths and weaknesses when determining how to choose participants. One way that the participants in the sample can affect the findings is in their willingness to participate (Patton, 2002). The level of willingness to participate for the teachers in this research study is assumed to be high based on the fact that they self-selected into the community engagement process. Teachers from districts in the county were invited to participate and were offered graduate credit in exchange for their participation in the community engagement collaboration between educators and members of the business community. Course requirements included participation in two class sessions, one in July and one in December, and implementation of the problem solving activity with students in the classroom. The business representatives in the criterion pool were invited to participate based on the connection between their job and the subject taught by the teacher. The business representatives also had to be willing to commit to attending the first class session and visiting the classroom twice during implementation of the problem-solving activity. Specifically, the generalizability and representativeness of findings may be affected by self-selection of participants into the community engagement process (Seidman, 2013). Another limitation that may affect the
findings is the chance of recall error (Patton, 2002) on the part of the participants. For example, interviews occurred twelve months after the initial class session took place in July 2014. After that initial class, the partners implemented their problem scenario during the school year, and many participated in the follow up reflection process as part of the course requirements.

**Researcher’s connection to the study.** The researcher has been directly involved in the community engagement process and shares a professional identity with a number of the participants. These facts are limitations of the overall study and of the qualitative research design. Specifically, the researcher had to transition from the role of teacher and facilitator of the process with the participants to the role of researcher. The researcher also had to set aside the professional identity of being a teacher. Switching from a more familiar role to that of an interviewer and researcher required a conscious effort. This effort to remain objective was necessary so that researcher biases did not affect data collection, the analytical process, and the overall research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

**Summary**

In summary, the topic of this research is inquiry into a community engagement process that is considered the phenomenon under study. Therefore, a qualitative phenomenological approach was used to investigate the research question. This phenomenon is occurring in southern Ohio, and five interview participants were chosen from the pool of people who completed the community engagement process. Documents that contain reflective discussion notes from the participants were included in the data
analysis process in order to strengthen the findings through triangulation. All data was analyzed following the scientific phenomenological procedures suggested by Moustakas (1994) and were coded using procedures outlined by Saldaña (2013). The multiple connections of the researcher to the phenomenon under study created an optimal situation for data collection however the reader must remain mindful of potential researcher bias that can impact the findings. The researcher worked to achieve epoché throughout data collection and analysis in order to report unbiased findings that add to the body of academic research on this topic.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Introduction

Chapter four provides an overview of the five participants selected for this research study and their responses to interview questions during three distinct interview sessions. Each of the three interview sessions were designed to elicit different categories of qualitative data in order to fully understand each participant’s perspective of the phenomenon that they experienced. Structural descriptions are provided in this chapter by including profiles of each participant and examples of predetermined expectations and preconceived perceptions. Structural descriptions paint a picture of the conditions that precipitate a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994), and in this case the structural essences are determined by the experiences of the participants. The participants’ voices are then used to provide textural descriptions of the phenomenon. The purpose of textural descriptions is to explain what participants experienced during the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994), and to partly address the research question. Excerpts from the data corpus stating what participants learned are added to fully answer the research question, which is: When included in a community engagement process established for the purpose of student career awareness, what did teachers and local business representatives learn and experience? Chapter four concludes with identification of the overall essence of the phenomenon.

Participant Profiles

Five participants are included in this research study because of their participation in the community engagement process designed by Building Bridges to Careers (BBC).
Three participants are teachers, and two participants are community business representatives. Maria and Kay were partnered with each other throughout the process. The partners of Katherine, Vaughn, and Lefty are not included in the study as participants, but are referenced by them throughout chapter 4. Each participant’s place in the county of the study is briefly described before moving on to the way in which each one came to be in their current working situation. The profiles include a description of a turning point in the life of the participant, as this is a pattern revealed through data analysis. Each profile concludes with more recent background information meant to help the reader understand structural essences of the phenomenon that provide a “picture of the conditions that precipitate an experience and connect with it” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 35).

**Katherine.** Katherine is the mother of three school aged children and is currently a teacher in the sports medicine/athletic training program at the county career center. Her children attend one of the public school districts in the county, which happens to be a district represented in this study. All regular school districts in the county are feeder schools for the career center where Katherine teaches.

**K-12 schooling and the career pathway.** Katherine started Kindergarten by hating school and faking sick to stay home. This behavior persisted until a teacher intervened during first grade. After she was influenced by her teacher, she thrived. She lived in a suburban area and had support at home for school, which helped her excel. She eventually won awards and participated in leadership experiences during school. Even
though most of her classmates attended private schools in high school, of which there were many, she attended the public high school.

During high school she actually wanted to be a marine biologist, but her parents didn't have the money for her to take SCUBA lessons. Based on a personal experience and knowing someone in the field, she decided to be an athletic trainer during her junior year. The experience was that of being injured herself. Also, her friend's dad was an athletic trainer. Once this decision was made, she had the opportunity to participate in a week-long job shadow with her friend's dad at a local university. This experience strengthened her decision to pursue this career. During her senior year she developed her own independent study course with the help of her PE teacher that focused on sports medicine and athletic training. Together they found a book on the subject, and she worked through the book independently. Through the creation of this independent study she overcame a barrier to learning more about her field of interest because there were no electives available in her high school that addressed this particular career. She practiced the skills of the career on her friends. After graduating from high school in 1994, she was accepted into a college athletic training program.

Having spent time with her friend's father gave Katherine knowledge about the skills and necessary qualities for this type of work, as well as the demands of the position. Two other experiences seemed to have solidified her career choice. During her freshman year in college, all of the athletic training students participated in a thumb-taping challenge. Of the entire student body in the program, freshmen through seniors, hers was the best. This experience inspired her to try harder to get better at her work.
Each athletic trainer student is placed with a sport in order to practice their skills. During her sophomore year she was assigned to an athletic team. During the first game of the year a freshman player experienced a traumatic accident and she was required to work with that student athlete. The experience really affected her and she struggled with the implications. The athlete was only 20 years old and the life he knew was over. She questioned her life and what she really wanted to do with it. A sports psychologist worked with the team to help overcome this incident. She ended up involved in the injured player’s rehab and was able to see him after the incident. The hands-on experience that she gained was in the trenches of the job and really let her experience the work that she would do within her chosen career field.

**Turning point.** After working in the field of sports medicine/athletic training in the business world for six years, and then in the K-12 athletic world for an additional seven, an opportunity arose for Katherine to combine her years of experience and teach in her chosen field. The local career center had decided to add a sports medicine/athletic training program to their list of programs and Katherine applied for the job. This was a significant decision at the time, with two children at home and the added requirement of schooling in order to take the position. She was hired and then she helped to develop the program at the career center. At the time of this research study, she was entering her fifth year as the teacher of this program.

**Background details relevant to the community engagement process.** Katherine felt the need to be open-minded about the community engagement process. She came to teaching later in life and has previous experience in the field of her business partner. This
is not a surprise because she teaches at a career center in a very specific program. Because she has been out of practice for three years, she was very interested to hear about the trends that are going on now in her previous profession. She has also encountered the specific business of her partner prior to this work, so she was already familiar with the business plan of her partner’s employer.

Katherine mentioned that she tends to think that her way is right. Despite this tendency, she wanted to welcome new ways to teach and to address the different ways for students to learn. She really felt the need to open her mind to this process. When Katherine was in graduate school she participated in week-long clinical rotations at various places. Due to this experience, she reflected that she would like to implement a clinical rotation into her program using the business that she was partnered with during the process.

Kay. Kay is an elementary teacher at one of the school districts in the county. Her children are beyond school age and are living on their own. She graduated high school from one of the six districts in the county, which is not the same school in which she is currently teaching.

K-12 schooling and the career pathway. It seems as if Kay has blocked out her experiences after school consolidation occurred during her middle school years, 7th or 8th grade, she didn't seem sure. She has very concrete memories of her small school in the rural outskirts of the county; knowing the teachers, remembering what they taught, noticing the reaction of the community to the new teacher, etc. When speaking of her move to the city school with which her smaller school was consolidated, there seems to
be very little recollection of the experience; she had been terrified, no clue what was going on, no familiar faces, not sure what she was supposed to do, and didn't even remember one lesson from that time period. Even though things were a little better after students were moved into the newly-constructed high school building, she still cannot pinpoint a memory of that time. The only thing that stands out is the fact that she received two detentions during high school. One detention was for being late to class, and it was a traumatic experience for her.

After graduating high school in 1970, Kay married and started her family. There really was no specific career direction or plan. She did a very wide variety of jobs between high school and the time that she went to college for the first time. A legislative change that occurred while she was working as a pharmacy technician at a local hospital is what prompted her to attempt a college course. It was believed that all pharmacy technicians would need to be certified. After taking her first few courses, she decided to continue on and graduated with a teaching degree.

_Turning point._ Kay didn't believe that she was capable of going to college because she was always told in high school that she wasn’t "college material". After taking a college course in her late 30's due to some legislative changes that were to occur with her job, she kept wondering what she was missing. She expected college to be seriously difficult, and then she received A's in the two courses that she completed. This experience made her realize that she actually was college material, which prompted her to continue on with her education.
**Background details relevant to the community engagement process.** Kay came to teaching late in life, and therefore has experience in a hospital setting. This is relevant due to the fact that she was partnered with an administrative nurse from the local hospital for the process. No other significant background details emerged from interview three for Kay.

**Vaughn.** Vaughn is a high school English teacher at a different school district in the county than where Kay teaches. Vaughn is the only teacher in the study that has been teaching for his whole career, and his whole career has been spent in his current school district. Vaughn’s children are also grown and out of the house, and they attended a city school district other than where he teaches within the same county.

**K-12 schooling and the career pathway.** Vaughn grew up amongst many other baby-boom generation kids in his suburban neighborhood. At the zenith of the population explosion, school districts were building new buildings to accommodate the students that were attending. After going through elementary with all of the kids from his block, he attended a new building that was designed with the latest educational advancements of the time, no walls between classes. The open-room concept school housed grades 7-9. Because it was a new building utilizing a new concept of teaching, the teachers were handpicked to teach in the school. The staff was young and worked hard to provide the coolest experience for their students. Vaughn’s teachers were collegial and outdid themselves in terms of providing educational experiences. Due to this exposure, Vaughn thought that teachers were the coolest people.
Vaughn grew up in a very homogenous neighborhood. All of the 20-30 houses on his block had a five-year-old, and all of the five-year-olds had one or two older siblings in the 7-8 range and in the 9-10 range. He was the youngest of three, with two older sisters. The parents were all in or around their 30's, and dinner was expected to be at the same time each night within each household. During dinner, Vaughn's mom and dad would start with the oldest sibling to find out about their children's day. The oldest didn't have much to say and neither did the middle child. But, when it came to be Vaughn's turn to share he did a lot of talking. This was the only time that he could compete with his older sisters, as he was considered to be the dummy of the family. Talking is his favorite thing to do. Once Vaughn entered junior high English and discovered that he was expected to read books and talk about them during class, he was ecstatic. He could not believe that he was getting A's for something that he did not consider to be any work at all. It was his favorite subject. In high school, he would have taken English electives every period of the day if they would have let him. His high school actually had enough electives that he could have done it. The suburban high school had several feeder junior high schools and Vaughn graduated with 1000 other students in 1976. After high school he attended a state university and completed his education degree. His first teaching job was gained immediately after college.

**Turning point.** Vaughn had discovered his love for English as a subject in middle school, but it wasn’t until a teacher told him to participate in the elementary tutoring program as a ninth grader that he realized that he would be a teacher himself. From that
time forward he knew that he would be a teacher because this same revered teacher told him he would be.

Background details relevant to the community engagement process. Vaughn had previous experience as a facilitator at a challenge course, which he described as the same type of problem solving that the students were expected to do during implementation. He really felt that he was in his wheelhouse with this project because research is what he does with his students regularly. Vaughn's responses were very college/university oriented, especially with respect to what students would do after graduating from high school. As he is now teaching dual enrollment courses, meaning that his composition course earns students high school and college credit at the same time, he started going to conferences where other adjunct faculty would attend.

Vaughn’s willingness to participate so fully in the community engagement process was increased due to the way in which it connected to the standards that he was teaching anyway. Curricular connections are important to him, as evidenced by his opinion of the job-shadowing opportunities that students receive at his school. He wants to know "what educational goals that are listed in our curriculum are we meeting with this substantial investment of our student's time?" He feels that job shadowing should take place on a college campus instead of the work place.

Lefty. Lefty works for a government agency that specializes in community development. Even though the agency’s region covers more than the county of this research study, the agency’s offices are located in the county. Lefty attended the private
college located in the county seat. He has one child who is currently an infant and therefore not attending school.

**K-12 schooling and the career pathway.** From the beginning, Lefty pretty well knew that school was important. Despite moving to different states and schools three times before high school, he still enjoyed school. He knew that he had to be there. He experienced high school in a rural area within a district that had the largest square mile radius in the state. Students had long bus rides; however students from other schools transferred to this school because of the quality of the education. Lefty lived in town and walked to school, and felt a great pride in his community. He still takes pride in his high school to this day. He even felt that his high school courses were harder than the college courses he took his freshman year at his alma mater.

At the young age of 18, he knew that he would not be successful at a large college because of the social pressures that would be difficult to resist. Attending a high school that had 160 students per graduating class made him realize that he needed something similar for his next level of education. Due to his familial situation (deceased mother and handicapped father) he also knew that he was on his own for this next level of education. He had to get in and be done in four years. His high school visit to the college he would attend solidified his decision, as he had family members on staff at the college and the school recruited him to play soccer. The smaller town and smaller class sizes also appealed to him. He started college undeclared and didn't make a decision about his major until the very last day possible.
In order to make a decision about what major he wanted, he took a wide variety of classes. Through this experience, he landed on political science. It was interesting and he received good grades in those classes. After a series of internships, it was actually a chance meeting his roommate had that landed him his job. His roommate was doing a project with a local government agency and created a rapport with the director. The director told the roommate about an internship that was coming up and was asked to share the opportunity with someone. The roommate told Lefty about the internship, and Lefty pursued it. From this internship position, he was able to apply and receive a position with the agency after graduation. He is still employed with this agency as of the time of this research study.

**Turning point.** Lefty's turning point came after a lunch conversation with a person in the career field that he had originally chosen for himself. At one point he wanted to continue on to law school after college, but a chance meeting during a required internship changed his mind. A colleague at the company knew about his desire to go to law school, so he set Lefty up on a lunch date with one of their corporate lawyers. This lawyer told him that law school prepares you by teaching you to be critical of everything. However, this critical view of things doesn't stop with work; it bleeds into every aspect of your life. Essentially, the lawyer stated, a person becomes critical of his/her spouse, his/her family, his/her finances, everything. This realization made Lefty change his mind, and he made the abrupt decision not to go to law school after the lunch date.

**Background details relevant to the community engagement process.** Before the first step of the process, Lefty had been given the opportunity to participate in classwork
at his college alma mater. This experience clued him in to the concept of fitting materials to specific curriculum and gave him access to curriculum in general. Therefore, he was able to have a clearer understanding of his role in this part of the community engagement process. He also taught a course at a local community college. Because Lefty does a lot of public speaking for his job assignment, implementation in the classroom wasn't a challenge for him. However, he never really had this type of interaction with middle school students. He pointed out that this experience would have been a high-school-level thing during the era that he was in school, as he graduated in 1997.

Lefty came into his particular career quite by accident. There was a connection between his roommate and the director of a local government agency, as mentioned previously, which gained him an internship experience. After completing the internship, he was hired. During his reflections of the community engagement process, he discussed how he would like to help students learn about what he does, as he was not even aware that this was a job himself. He would like to hire "people that make this type of work their focus."

Maria. Maria works at the hospital in the county and does not have children. She is new to the county and has only lived in the area for about two-and-a-half years at the time of this study. The hospital is the largest employer in the county and has branches and satellite offices in various towns throughout the county.

K-12 schooling and the career pathway. Maria initially had some trepidation during her school years but overcame them when her situation seemed to 'right' itself. She started school in one building and then was moved to a different building when a new one
was built. Her family moved, which put her in her third building during grade four. It was this building that provided a bad experience for her. The building itself was run-down and she felt as if the teachers that taught there were also run-down. The run-down building was closed the very next year, which moved her back to her original school. From there she was able to grow. During junior high she participated in extra-curricular activities, was placed in accelerated courses, and felt she received attention from the teachers. In high school she was placed in the college preparatory courses. She really felt prepared for anything that came along after high school, but she didn't think the high school teachers were as serious as she thought they should be. Some teachers were serious about their work, others were not.

Nursing was always Maria’s choice, although her sixth grade career essay told a different story. She wrote her essay about being a race car driver. Her teacher basically told her that girls weren't race car drivers, and she had to redo her essay. In her second essay, she wrote about being an architect. As a child, though, she was always 'fixing' the pets and other kids in the neighborhood.

Maria applied and was accepted to a technical college and was ready to begin a nursing program after graduating high school in 1973. However, she got married immediately following high school and her college plans were put on hold. She was divorced seven years later. Maria attempted to go back to college when she was single and was accepted at a different state college than the previous one. She could not receive financial aid, however, because of working full time. She went ahead and took one class. Part way into this first class, she was in a car accident and never went back. She did a
variety of jobs during the interim, insurance agencies, bookkeeping and accounting type jobs, and then ended up in a pharmacy chain. This is where she met her current husband. Finally, 11 years after her first attempt at college she tried it again with the support of her new husband. Maria eventually completed a two-year associates degree in nursing and has been a nurse ever since.

**Turning point.** One of Maria's turning points occurred very early in life, at age 17. She had been accepted into nursing school and was planning to begin classes during the fall after high school graduation. However, one conversation with her mother changed that plan. Her mom told her that she would not be able to see her boyfriend as much while in college because of the time needed to focus on school. College was very different. Because of this conversation, Maria chose to get married at age 17 and did not attend college. It took two more tries at nursing school before she successfully finished the program more than 11 years later.

The second turning point occurred during her successful years of schooling. She took an evening clinical course with a nurse who was working in the field, and based on this experience Maria decided that she would also teach nursing students in a clinical level. Just two years into her practice she applied and was accepted to teach a clinical experience for nursing students through her work. She went on to teach at the college level, as well.

**Background details relevant to the community engagement process.** Maria had previous experience in education, as she taught clinical rotations and courses for nurses at multiple institutions. Maria was partnered with Kay, a teacher who came to teaching late
in life and therefore had experience in a hospital pharmaceutical setting. Inadvertently, the partners had background experience in common with each other. During Maria’s reflection interview, she admitted that she arrived late to the professional development session that kicked off the whole process, and she felt discombobulated. Even though there was a seemingly extra connection between the two, Maria’s late arrival affected the interactions between the two partners throughout that day.

Maria went on to explain during her reflections that in her teaching experience there was always a pre-test, a presentation, and a post-test to make sure you were effective. This is why she created all of the above and meant to use them during the classroom implementation phase of the process. However, she did not know where she was going while on her way to the school building which made her late. Once she arrived at the school building, she could not find the classroom. All of this made her crazy by the time she arrived in the class, and she was frustrated throughout the time she was there.

Exposed Expectations and Perceptions

The previous participant profiles are meant to detail the background of each participant and give the reader a sense of the structural essences of the phenomenon. The following section is derived from analysis of data collected from interview three, which required participants to reflect upon their experience with the community engagement process as a whole. Data from interview three went through a sequence of analysis that exposed predetermined expectations, perceptions, and background details relating to each participant that are different from details divulged during interview one.
To highlight the voice of the participants this section includes words, phrases, concepts, and in vivo codes pulled from the data that are not rewritten in academic prose. Some sentences and word phrases will appear awkward for this reason. This process is called codeweaving (Saldaña, 2013). The purpose of writing the section in this fashion is to begin to bring participant opinions together as a whole for the reader. Saldaña (2013) suggests this method in order to find the networks among the data components and to show how the components weave together. Codeweaving at this juncture is also a way to demonstrate that the researcher worked to achieve epoché. The responses of the five participants in this section are synthesized around patterns revealed in the data, and the two overarching patterns are: a) predetermined expectations and b) predetermined perceptions.

**Predetermined expectations.** Each participant came into the community engagement process with certain expectations, and these expectations revealed themselves throughout the third interview. There were predetermined expectations about the students, about education in general, and about the implementation phase within the classroom.

**Predetermined expectations about students.** In regards to the students, Vaughn was not surprised at what his students failed to do during the implementation process, as they did not complete very necessary research to back-up their opinions. Katherine chose to implement the project with a group of seniors, mainly because this group would already know her teaching and what is expected in class. Katherine was sure that they would perform well with this task. In terms of implementation, Maria was not expecting
the students to perform at such a high level. Lefty was not expecting the students to really
care about the problem scenario. Interestingly, Vaughn does not think that any of his
students would end up working in the hospital that employed his business partner, even
though the students learned that this is a viable job option. Vaughn also expects all of his
students to matriculate into some kind of two-year or four-year University.

*Predetermined expectations about education.* There were some overarching
expectations about education in general that may have influenced the reactions of the
participants. Lefty did not expect the students he was interacting with to have an appetite
for what he was to do with them. He referred to it as applied learning. It surprised him
that the eighth graders were so interested. Lefty revealed that he would not approach a
school principal on his own to complete this same project with a teacher because he
doesn't think it would be a very appetizing opportunity to the principal. Maria had a
general expectation that in education there is a very set amount of time to accomplish a
very specific thing. Vaughn reiterated this feeling by stating that these are the things that
we're going to be teaching and this is the ideal way for our students to learn these things.
Vaughn also expressed multiple thoughts and opinions about the way that his school went
about providing students time to complete a job shadow experience. He does not feel that
it is enough to just tell students that there is life after school, and he feels that students
would be better served by job shadowing in college courses instead of in a place of
employment.

*Predetermined expectations about implementation of the community*
*engagement process.* Discussion of the implementation process revealed uncertainty on
the part of the participants. Maria described being nervous, wanting it to be perfect, and not wanting to make a fool of herself with the elementary students. Katherine stated that she needed to have more confidence in herself, and that this was definitely out of her comfort zone. Vaughn did not realize how hard it would be to complete the research of the project when he tried it himself. Kay stated that the students went in totally different directions from each other and this was not expected. In general, the participants were surprised at what occurred because it was different from their vision of the work that they had in the beginning.

**Preconceived perceptions.** By reflecting on the process, participants continually divulged preconceived perceptions. The perceptions were often manifested through emotions. For example, both Maria and Katherine were actually scared and nervous about implementing the problem scenario in the classroom, mainly because the implementation part of the process could not be visualized. Upon further questioning, the concept materialized into perceptions that the participants thought other people harbored. Katherine initially perceived her business partner to be timid. She also perceives that no one really knows what she does. On the other hand, Lefty feels that part of anybody's job should be taking the time to let others know what you do. Overall, Lefty believes that everybody wants to be recognized for what they do and appreciated for what they do. Getting involved in this particular community engagement process seems to be a nexus for these three perceptions. And as Vaughn pointed out, they wouldn't have gotten involved if there was too much on their plates.
The following structural descriptions are divided into perceptions about students, education, community engagement, and schools.

**Preconceived perceptions about students.** All participants were adults, and through reflection the adults revealed some pre-conceived notions about students. Katherine perceives that coming into a classroom full of teenagers is difficult and that a leader is needed just to keep kids on track, as they tend to go off into tangents. Vaughn perceives that students will realize that they have to earn a living someday, but Lefty thinks students have already made up their mind about their career by high school. These two perceptions are juxtaposed. In general, Lefty discussed how students are only exposed to about five jobs and that the conversation that may implant ideas about careers needs to start way sooner than high school.

**Preconceived perceptions about education.** Participants revealed multiple perceptions about education in general. Lefty described what he feels is believed by others in the community about education: a lotta times what we perceive of public school is, quite frankly, what we see on TV. Essentially, it is believed that a kid goes into the room. They do some stuff. The bell rings, and it's over. But, according to the perception of Maria, assignments in public schools are very prescriptive, teachers have to meet certain goals and criteria, and it has to be really spelled out. It cannot be vague in any way. This idea relates to Katherine’s perception that we always need to get back on track in order to achieve the goals of the required curriculum.

**Preconceived perceptions about community engagement.** The point of this research is to investigate ways to include the community in education. In reference to
military veterans that are brought in to say the pledge each Friday, Vaughn stated that if we weren't going to say the pledge everyday anyway then it wouldn't make sense to bring them in. This reveals quite a lot when it comes to expectations of increasing community engagement. After expressing that the door to schools should always be open, Vaughn went on to say that participating is different than just coming into the school, now you have to be doing something that we were planning on teaching our kids anyway.

Interview data that included information about engaging the community disclosed thoughts about the work of BBC, as well. The BBC can act as a filter because, as Vaughn believes, not everyone that would be willing would be appropriate. Maria perceives the community engagement process as a good, well-thought-out process, well-grounded, with lots of diverse contacts. The BBC also provides the resource of time, as Lefty is 100% sure that the teacher would not have the time to make the connections on her own. There is also the perception, revealed through Vaughn’s conversation, that the goal is not for students to do a great showcase, rather it is meant for them to learn something relevant from the process.

There were perceptions about local businesses and their role in engaging with schools. Vaughn does not believe that the local business representatives in the area of his school would be experts in persuasion, which is a part of his curriculum. He also has the perception that a local business, such as the grocery store, would not have the budget to hire a marketing person like the hospital does. In terms of the hospital, Vaughn also suggested that a student would not be hired onto the marketing department team without a degree in communications or organizational communications.
**Preconceived perceptions about schools.** There are perceived connotations about schools that were communicated by the teacher participants. The veteran teacher, Vaughn, has been hearing for 30 years that the students are not leaving high school with the skills that they need. He also feels that businesses think that we're serving up high school graduates that are not prepared to function as college students. And at the next level, from the universities, Vaughn believes that businesses don't feel students are prepared to function as employees. Katherine perceives a negative connotation of the career center from the community, in that students who have behavioral issues would come there, or don't have goals, or don't wanna go to college.

Both Lefty and Vaughn reiterated a topic that is discussed frequently. Lefty stated that we're pushing every kid to go to college, and Vaughn concurred when he said that he was preparing them to get that degree from college. Part of the issue with preparing or pushing students to attend college, as described by Lefty, is that students may have all the aptitude in the world, but disadvantages of resources or location can peg them into a certain path traditionally.

**Summary.** The structural essences just described are meant to clue the reader into each participant’s background and provide details from the three different interactive processes that can affect what and how each participant learns: 1) the community and its social influence, 2) the family and its expectations, and 3) individual beliefs and values (Phan, 2010). Each participant was individually described, and then their voices were included in a discussion of perceptions and opinions that may have an impact on their lived experience of completing the problem scenario community engagement process.
This lived experience will be described in the next section which focuses on the textural essences of the phenomenon.

**Textural Essences**

Textural essences describe how the phenomenon was experienced from the participants’ viewpoint using thoughts, feelings, examples, ideas, etc. (Moustakas, 1994). Interview two focused specifically on the texture and the context of the overall community engagement process. Analysis for this data set included categorizing attributes that were antecedents to various outcomes discovered in the data (Saldaña, 2013). The attributes are organized into categories based on the three steps of the community engagement process and include actions taken and activities completed by adults and students. Documents collected during the reflection session of the process are included in this research study for triangulation purposes. Textural essences communicated in the documents are discussed separately in order to compare and contrast attributes collected from both types of data.

**Step one: Professional development session.** A one day professional development session is the initial phase of the community engagement process. The agenda for that particular day included the following: 1) Review senior survey data from 2014; 2) Discuss ill-structured versus well-structured problems; 3) Work with business partners to develop a problem scenario and complete the problem-solving template; 4) Review and discuss the problem-solving process used for classroom implementation (six step process); 5) Unit planning and scheduling. The senior survey results highlight the career aspirations of students from the whole county, and each participant shared their
career pathways stories with the group. Because of the discussions that took place, participants experienced an opening of their mind to the community engagement process in general, they heard perspectives that they might not have heard before, and there was a recognition of the disconnect between student perceptions and the real world. Overall, the data analysis revealed that participants were influenced by the various discussions that were held during the day.

Following are descriptions of specific experiences as voiced verbatim during the interviews by each of the five participants. The examples from the data focus on the development of the problem scenario with the partner and are meant to help the reader develop a sense how the participants experienced the first step of the process.

**Katherine.** We were a little bit hesitant ’cause I guess we didn’t really know exactly where we wanted to go, what kind of problem we wanted. We know we wanted to have this ill-structured [open-ended problem], but there was such a broad things that we could do. It was just really getting to narrow down what we wanted to do. He told me his strengths of what he liked to do in his practice, and I worked with the curriculum to try and find something that would work for both of us. It ended up that he wanted to work with a shoulder. Thinking about what we do in class and when we do it in class, I actually had to switch my whole curriculum around, which was not a problem at all. I wanted to do it anyway. With him wanting to do a shoulder, we switched in how to evaluate a shoulder.

**Vaughn.** She had in mind the project, I think, that they had just completed. She had that in mind as, possibly, a presentation. She was seeing it as something
relatively small in scope. She was seeing it as a one day, I’ll come in. I was thinking more in terms of I wanted them to actually do the research. I said, “Okay. I would like a bigger project where they actually have to find out, identify what you need to know. Then know it. Come to know it and actually make, then, some presentations about these are the kinds of things we would do in order to encourage people to use the (hospital) campus.” My first day, I was in a—first of all, I think I listened to what (partner’s name) ideas were. Then, I was like, “Okay. How much?” It was like a blank check. “How much are you ready to write on this check?” I hope I was sensitive to the—it was how much—she’s a volunteer.

*Lefty.* After that initial period, we took some time to actually meet the educational professional that we were matched up with. Then we basically just spent some time talking about, "Okay, in my curriculum, these are the concepts that I'm covering. We're planning for you, professional person, to come to our class at this time. At that time, we'll be this far and the material, we'll be covering these kind of concepts or topics." Then basically that was where I was just kind of working with that to say, "Okay, if you're covering XYZ topic, I have these professional tasks or challenges that we face that related to those concepts. I think I could come up with something that students could wrap their mind around." That was when we basically started talking about, "What is a little exercise—" I know the idea was a "problem scenario", but it wasn't really a problem. We just kinda talked about, "Here are some things I can do that can fit into those concepts."
Kay. The whole process we went through? I don't know. We wasted some paper starting and stopping [laughter] some ideas and throwin' 'em out and re-writing it and coming up with different twists that we could put on the scenario to make it multi-problem scenario rather than something simple and straightforward, something that was multifaceted. It took us a little while to work through that, but we thought we came up with something with a lot of different complications, if you will, a lot of different problems within the problem. There wasn't any particular curriculum that you needed it to attach to. No. We weren't trying to—I teach science, but for this particular group of students, we weren't really trying to come up with something science.

Maria. It was an overwhelming day in a bit for me. I wasn’t able to get away as quickly as I wanted to from work, so I was a little bit late getting there but was able to get right in and pick up quickly. I was at a loss as to exactly what the—not the purpose but what my role was going to be and how that was actually going to be operationalized in the classroom. I’m not sure that the teacher, my partner, quite agreed with what I was going to do, but I think she just was resigned to say, “Okay, fine, just do it,” which was okay. I don’t know. I’m not sure if it fit the—I guess the goals of the whole program. At the time I didn’t. I think now in retrospect that’s a different story. It was a little confusing at first. There were documents passed out that we were to fill in. We weren’t sure what to do with those. It was a little confusing, but it all sorted itself out as people worked with each other. The leaders of the group then walked around and talked individually
which was, I think, probably the best way to go about doing that. Once we got on track, it was okay.

**Step two: Scenario implementation.** The second step of the community engagement process is the actual implementation of the problem scenario in the classroom of the participating teacher with the support of the business partner. This part of the process occurred for all research participants during the fall semester of 2014. Implementation looked different for each partner set. Data analysis unveiled differences in the way the implementation was scheduled, the way in which the work was facilitated, what each partner contributed to the process, and the interactions that took place between students, teachers, and the business partners. Despite these differences, there were many similarities in the outcomes for the students that were involved. Student outcomes are discussed more fully in chapter five.

In order to develop a picture of implementation for each participant, the major details of step two are listed as they occurred in a generic format and are followed up by an excerpt from the data.

**Katherine.** After exchanging numbers, Katherine and her partner communicated about a schedule for the fall. Her partner picked up the textbook that was being used by the class in order to prepare for the lesson. Katherine worked to prepare her seniors by learning shoulder anatomy. Twice the partner visited the class, the first time to introduce himself and to discuss the problem scenario, and the second time to help facilitate the student groups while working toward a solution.
Interview excerpt. The first time that he came in was an overview of his career and what—and how he came to where he was. Then he reviewed, again, the shoulder anatomy with the students. Then he actually did a mock interview on someone’s shoulder, and had the students come up and feel, and, we call it, palpate, and just see what he does, and do all the special tests that he did. It was very interactive, and I let him lead a lot of it so he would feel more comfortable with the students, and they could get to know him.

Then the actual implementation of the problem came. I was a little nervous ‘cause I really didn’t know how it would go or if I was gonna do it right, because I’m very concerned. I’m always thinking that there is a right or wrong answer, but sometimes there’s not. I thought the students did fantastic. They really took to (partner’s name). They, of course, had some questions, but I think there was a lot of epiphanies from them that even though they would never, ever think of just not even treating the person, that could have been a solution to the problem. Having that, say, “Well, that’s no way. We would never do that.” I’m like, “Well, that is a solution,” so really watching them go through the whole process, and doing the steps, and brainstorming with each other.

Kay and Maria. Implementation for Kay’s students occurred over an extended period of time. This class was the youngest represented in the study. There were difficulties scheduling time for Maria to visit the classroom, with a couple of cancellations occurring. Maria participated in the classroom implementation for one day, while the student groups worked on the problem scenario for about two weeks. Both Kay
and Maria spent time preparing for the implementation. Kay spent three to four class periods just talking about the scenario before actually having students put anything on paper and helped her students develop questions to answer in order to solve the problem. Maria prepared for implementation by creating lesson worksheets and pre- and post-assessments, and gathering relevant materials from the hospital to bring to the students. After Maria’s visit, students continued to work on developing solutions, and eventually presented group solutions to the class.

*Interview excerpt: Kay.* It was hard for me having come from a background in a hospital setting not to give them too much information. I had to really step back and kind of, okay, don’t give them any more information and then—they’ve gotta think that completely through. For me personally it was, okay, I had to just take a step back and that wasn’t always comfortable. It took a couple of weeks, probably. They worked on it for quite some time. They wanted to work on it longer because once they got into it, they wanted to re-visit it. Evidently, they would go away and be thinking about it outside of class and wanna come back and say, “Well, can we work on it again?” I didn't know that there were rules, so I let them. If a particular group came up with something else they wanted to do, they wanted to change theirs or something, then I let the groups each present what they came up with, which was interesting.

*Interview excerpt: Maria.* I had no idea where the school was, none, no idea whatsoever. I was just told, “Well, it’s at this elementary school.” That meant nothing to me. I had no idea, and I was late getting to the class because of it. I’m
driving around and driving around, and I’m trying to call and nobody could connect me with anybody. I was really frustrated. By the time I got there, half the class time was over. We were able to go a little longer than planned because they were to stay with her anyway. We just let it go at that. That really didn’t start off well. I was frustrated. By the time I got calmed down a little bit in my own head anyway—and I even left early. That’s the thing. I even left early.

Once things got settled down and I was able to actually start implementing it, it went very, very well although we just ran out of time. I did not have the time to go through it all like I had planned. I was really disappointed in that. The teacher and I spoke after class, and I said what I really would have liked her to do as she was going to continue working on that anyway. We came up with an assignment sort of for them to do that would incorporate some of what we were gonna discuss and do anyway. That turned out really well.

**Vaughn.** Vaughn chose to implement the problem scenario with a senior class that was also earning college credit for English composition. Because he knew about the scenario over the summer, he decided to spend part of the fall semester preparing the students for the work they would do during implementation. Vaughn taught in-depth units on research, including conducting focus groups, developing surveys, and collecting and analyzing data. His business partner collected relevant information and data from the hospital and prepared a rubric with assessments to bring to the students. The partner visited the class twice, the first time to introduce the scenario and discuss the information relevant to the problem. Student groups spent a couple of weeks preparing a plan, as if
they were “marketing firms”. Students were encouraged to communicate with the partner during the time between visits if they needed clarification about any of the data she presented. After some scheduling issues, the partner returned a few weeks later. Student presentations took place during the second visit, and the partner’s role this time was to critique the solutions developed by each student group and discuss whether she would choose the plan developed by each “marketing firm”.

*Interview excerpt.* Then she shows up. She says, “Okay. I have this evaluative instrument. Are you interested?” It’s the first I’d seen it. I had a much less developed, much less effective evaluative instrument. I’m like, “Yeah. This is really good. We’ll do this.” For the kids, yeah. We ended up using that instrument, which she was ready to present on the first day.

For her to say, “Yes. When you have questions, email me.” She was accessible to us for the whole period. It ended up being, like, a month. It stretched past the two weeks. That was another problem. I had to get other things in there. I had to interrupt the project to get other things in when snow, and assemblies, and other things got in the way. She was going to be gone for a conference or something. She had to leave. Her meeting with us was right backed up against a conference. When we missed that meeting, it’s like, “Okay. I’m gone for—” The whole time she allowed herself available. Her understanding of where the students were was a teacherly understanding as opposed to business professional’s understanding.
Again, a lot of it, when I just watched, a lot of it was, “All right. I’m not going to tell them to look at these websites. I’m not going to tell them to email (partner’s name).” I think I actually broke down second week and said, “Where could you get this information? I don’t know. Maybe (partner’s name) who said, sure you can email her.” No one sent an email the first week. My own reflection has been informal. I think it’s—part of it is, yeah, I was expecting to see this.

**Lefty.** Lefty implemented the developed scenario in a middle school math class as part of a geometry unit. There was sparse communication with the teacher that fall, so Lefty got the impression that the teacher didn’t really know what he was going to do when he visited the class. His plan was to use a geographic information system (GIS) to broaden the concept of the scenario that was developed for the students. Because of this, the partnering teacher didn’t have much of a role in the process. She did prepare the students for Lefty’s visit by briefly discussing his job and teaching the geometric concepts needed for the scenario work. Lefty prepared by developing a data set on the GIS maps relevant to the scenario. Lefty visited the class one time and the students worked through the scenario during that one class period.

*Interview excerpt.* It lasted about an hour. I think I was in there for about an hour, and we kept it rollin' the whole time. There wasn't really any dead time. I think the kids came away with it with a new perspective on, "Wow, that was pretty neat. I didn't even know that was a thing, or a job, at that, and people here actually do that." It was kinda neat to see them realize that stuff. I had fun. I think the teacher enjoyed watching her students interact with that in a new way. They
were well behaved, they were prepared, they knew the material, they knew the mathematic concepts we were talking about. They were sharp on that. It was pretty neat. It was interesting, and I really enjoyed it. I even got a few high fives on the way out in the hallway. It was pretty neat. It was good.

**Step three: Reflection session.** The community engagement process officially ends with the reflection session that partners attend. For the teachers involved in the process, this is the official second class of the graduate credit course. Their business partners are invited to attend if they are able. After starting the evening with introductions, there was a brief discussion about the connections of the work the teachers were doing and the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System rubric. The rubric is used during the evaluation process for all teachers in Ohio. Then the group was divided into three groups that would travel through three different stations. The following descriptions of the stations appear on the agenda that was used for the evening.

1. **Evaluation of the overall Problem Scenario process**
   a. This will be similar to a focus group questioning process and will be guided by a set of questions. The sub-committee member will be taking notes.

2. **Videotaping and Review sheet completion**
   a. Groups will be next door for this station. Those that are not being videotaped will use the time to complete the Problem Scenario review sheets that ask about classroom implementation and the actual Problem Scenario form that was completed.
3. Networking and snacking
   
a. Please use this time to talk with the other participants of the evening and refresh yourselves.

Not all partner sets were in attendance. Of the five research participants, three were in attendance at the final session. Vaughn was not able to attend, however, he completed the problem scenario review sheets and had his students reflect on the process in order to make up for missing the second class. Lefty was not able to attend. His reflections on the process were only collected during the research interviews.

Following are descriptions from the data of the reflection session from each participant that was in attendance.

*Katherine.* It was a little, I guess, awkward at first, but I think it flowed better as we all bounced ideas off of each other and shared our feedback. I think one of our—my members hadn’t implemented his yet. That made it difficult for him to answer the question, but I remember telling the subcommittee member how great it was to watch my students grow and to see them think outside the box and really grow, as critical thinkers, to come to the solutions, whether they thought that would ever possibly be a solution.

*Kay.* I brought the folders, and then we sat down and looked at it. All the different groups that I had—can't even remember how many groups there were. Six, maybe, groups. Something like that. Given the identical scenario, we had six completely different twists on how to work on the problem. That was pretty exciting. When we looked at the way they wanted to go about solving the
problem, [Maria] was really excited, too. The other thought that [Maria] and I talked about after we looked at what they'd done in their folders was maybe we should have let them come up with the angle that they individually wanted to work on and then group themselves with somebody with a like idea.

*Maria.* They really did a good job with their assignments, and it was fun to share. There just wasn’t that interaction between the two of us, just wasn’t. I know there was the videotaping which I had no idea that was even gonna happen so just winged it. I did okay I suppose. I don’t know. I think it could have been a little more interactive maybe. I noticed that there were some partners that were much more animated and much more, I guess—I can’t think of the word I want—seemed to have worked quite awhile together. I got the impression—I don’t know it to be true—but I believe that there were some that had met frequently, as frequently as their jobs allowed, to really put together something. I was jealous.

**Documents.** The documented data are a result of the focus group discussions that took place during step three of the process. BBC sub-committee members facilitated the discussion around a set of questions, and recorded notes for each question. The researcher did not participate in the focus group process, which is why the documents have been included in the data set. As mentioned, only three of the research participants were in attendance at the reflection session. Therefore, information disclosed in the documents includes anonymous thoughts and experiences of some of the other teachers and business representatives that completed the community engagement process. The documents were
analyzed using the same process as the data from interview two, which included listing attributes that led to various outcomes affirmed in the data.

Focus group questions:

1. How did the students respond to the problem scenario that you implemented?
2. Do you feel the problem scenario was useful?
3. Would you like to request specific kinds of scenarios? What other kinds of scenarios would be useful?
4. Logistically, what is the best way to get the business representatives into the classroom? Was this a difficult process?
5. Can you think of other ways that connections can be made outside of the problem scenario work?
6. This process emphasizes relationship building to form the partnership. Would you be comfortable with contacting your partner for other school-related/business-related reasons? Are there any barriers to continue interacting with your partner?
7. As mentioned, the problem scenarios will be housed on the Building Bridges to Careers website. Is there a particular form that you believe would work best for other teachers to be able to access them?
8. Are there any other parts of the process that you would like to reflect upon?

*Documented textural essences.* In general, the documents exposed similar actions and activities as the interview data. Adult interactions included implementing the scenario with a drafting class, discussing the experiences of the business partner, meeting the partners, and collaboratively creating the problem scenario in the first step of the
process. The barriers created by differing schedules was a topic that was reported in the documents, however, it was admitted that one of the business partner’s flexible hours and support of the employer made the scheduling easier, “(business’s name) has flexible hours so it is easy. Also, their company is on board; it is part of their marketing budget.” On this same topic, someone noted that “vested interest on the business side to communicate/influence classrooms is a huge benefit.”

The question asking about further contact with the partner beyond the outlined process imparted a different barrier to further connecting than what was revealed in the interview data, “knowledge of how to ask and what is available is a barrier” and “businesses don’t know how or what resources can be allocated.” Teachers indicated that they would feel comfortable with contacting the business partner in the future. This opinion differs from what Vaughn discussed, in that he felt that the partners were the specific contacts of BBC and he wouldn’t be comfortable with asking them to come back to his classroom.

While curricular discussions did occur with the research study participants, the documented data reported more detailed information on this topic. Classroom implementation of the problem scenario provided enrichment of the curriculum for students in one teacher’s class. Another teacher worked with engineering textbooks that were twelve years old, “[teacher’s name] curricula is vague and not very rigorous. The textbook is 12 years old. The scenario extended what they had been doing and makes the students more marketable in interviews (colleges, jobs).”
One last topic that was discussed further in the documented data is the actual problem scenario template. This template is the worksheet that was completed by the partner set during the professional development session and could be used by the students during the classroom implementation. A six-step problem-solving process was included on the template in order to guide teachers through the work with their students. One focus group participant said the following: “evaluation criteria question is unclear – wasn’t sure what to do with it; consider rewording.” The focus group data also stated that parts of the form were re-designed for the engineering students by their teacher. Katherine also communicated that the six steps of the process on the form did not work well for the scenario implemented with her students.

Summary. Each participant experienced the community engagement process differently. Overall, the emotions expressed most commonly in the data corpus fell into four groupings: a) fear, anxiety, and confusion; b) disappointment, frustration, and envy; c) excitement, shock, open wonder, and awe; and d) joy, fun, and pride.

The activities and actions taken by participants are categorized by four headings: 1) interactions; 2) challenges; 3) process; and 4) change indicators. Discussions were the main type of interaction that occurred between adults, between adults and students, and between students. Scheduling was the challenge discussed most frequently. Actions taken by adults during the process included such interactions as scheduling and sharing availability, sharing expectations, and working with the curriculum. Each partner contributed to the process by preparing materials and/or preparing the students, getting to know the students that were included, sharing information about their job/career,
reviewing student work during the implementation and the reflection session, and making connections between concepts and curriculum. Change indicators were uncovered through the interview process and analysis of the documents. These indicators include actions and experiences such as: negotiating with the partner, focusing on the development of the scenario, partners analyzing student use of illustrations, participants watching other partners interact, and teachers consciously acting as an observer and not as a leader during the implementation phase.

**Research Question**

While the previous section was designed to address the textural essences of the phenomenon, it also addressed a portion of the research question. The full question asks: When included in a community engagement process established for the purpose of student career awareness, what did teachers and local business representatives learn and experience? The specific experiences of the participants were outlined by the textural essences derived from analysis of the data corpus. The following section explains what the participants learned through completion of the community engagement process. Because this section is focusing on data that addresses the research question, the ideas and thoughts of the research participants are intertwined as opposed to being listed separately.

**What did participants learn?** The participants in the community engagement process learned a variety of things due to their participation. What the participants learned about the context and content of the process seemed to broaden their views and
change their opinions. It also appears that they learned because of changes in their behavior and because of what they learned about each other.

**Learning about opportunities.** To begin with, participants had to become aware of the opportunity to participate. Lefty did not know that this type of thing was really happening, but he had hoped that this type of program was available. Because of the community engagement process, Katherine’s business partner became aware of the training program available at the career center that could train future employees.

**Learning about each other.** The first phase of the community engagement process provided time for the partners to work with each other. During this phase the participants met for the first time and learned about each other in terms of what they do, what kind of person they are, and what they have to offer. Learning about each other probably helped Maria feel that the community engagement process seemed to run smoother and be better put together toward the end. Lefty was glad to discover that the way the problem scenario was developed with his partner was in the same ballpark as what other folks had done in the past. Through good conversation that occurred during all three phases it became clear to Lefty that his teacher partner had spent a lot of time with the kids, was personally invested in and cared for each kid. He even discovered the amount of aptitude that the students had for applied learning while working with the students. Kay learned a lot about her students individually during the process because she was working with the students outside of her typical science and social studies classes.

**Behaviors leading to learning.** The participants exhibited behaviors that seemed to lead to discoveries and to learning. Two of the teachers, Kay and Vaughn, purposely
stepped back during implementation and attempted not to give the students too much information. Participants also relayed that they had to be more sensitive, trust themselves and the students in order to learn how to do the work. Specifically, Katherine stated, “Probably the one that stands out the most is to trust my students, trust my own abilities, and to have an open mind in that things might not go the way I planned in my head.” Student learning seemed to occur because they were collaborating and communicating more. This was apparent in the way students collaborated outside of class, as Kay reported. Her students also had to discover how they were going to solve the problem if not everybody in the group wanted to do it the same way.

**Learning about contextual factors.** Increased knowledge of contextual factors is important for understanding the setting within which one is working. Participants learned that the scenarios that were developed needed to be ill-structured in order to provide a more authentic experience for the students. For the business partners, experience with school is in the distant past. Maria found it surprising that each hour, or each 15 minutes of every day is laid out for kids during school, however, she was glad to see how involved the school wants to be, and made the point that the business community wants the same. Learning about the challenges of real teaching made Lefty glad that he didn’t have to have that challenge every day.

**Learning new content knowledge.** Participants seemed to increase their content knowledge in a variety of ways. The teachers learned that some textbook skills have real world application; however this process did take the students outside of the typical reading, writing, and arithmetic found in textbooks. Because of the solving of the
problem scenario, students and teachers came to realize that they need to answer their own questions that arise, there are problems within the problem, and that there are many solutions to the same problem. Vaughn spent time preparing by learning about focus groups, and Lefty’s partner learned how a GIS mapping system can help students learn math content. Katherine’s partner borrowed a student text book in order to prepare for entering the classroom. Vaughn now wants to know what it is that students need to know at the next level and in other content areas in order to better prepare them. Overall, the teachers got the sense that they were addressing valuable workplace skills through implementation of the problem scenario process.

**Learning changes opinions.** Some of the participants changed their opinions due to what they learned. Vaughn realized that the students may not be learning the skills they were being taught. There was a realization that students deserve more confidence from their teacher, and that students have an appetite to do more than just what was in the book. As Lefty’s teacher partner was giving him a run-down on the progress through the curriculum and the students in the four minutes before he began his class presentation, he was beginning to understand that teaching is underestimated and he developed an appreciation for what these folks do.

**Learning leads to opening minds.** Participants in the process seem to have broadened their views of a few topics. In reflecting back, Vaughn wondered, "why didn't I always do it for 30 years?" Specifically, participants felt that their minds had been opened, it was a big eye-opener, and that they were enlightened due to their participation. Maria and Katherine were surprised that this work could go down to the elementary level.
Vaughn's opinion about the usefulness of skills he taught was validated, and Kay and Katherine pushed themselves through the work even though it wasn't always comfortable. Among all participants, there was an element of surprise at being impressed by the student outcomes mainly because they were different than anticipated. Katherine even took it as far as applying the problem-solving process to problems that arose in her personal life. A new respect was communicated for what teachers do and the business participants are glad that education sees the value in this work.

**Summary.** The aforementioned learning was able to take place because the participants were curious, they learned to agree through defining and discussing the work, and they accepted that the process might not go the way they planned. For one participant, it worked because it was easy to talk to the partner, and for another it was a match between the curriculum and the skills brought to the table by their partner. Clearly, combining the unique backgrounds of each participant impacted the learning that took place throughout this particular phenomenon (Dudley, 2013; Imants et al., 2013; Phan, 2012; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978).

**The Essence of the Phenomenon**

The essence of a phenomenon is meant to encompass the experience of all participants (Moustakas, 1994). In order to come to the overall essence, the essence of the experience for each individual is taken into consideration. Katherine was excited by the opportunity to improve her instructional techniques and by the way in which her students were able to think outside of the box. Kay seemed shocked by the reactions of her students to the process and she allowed them to take off on their own in a way that she
had not done before. Vaughn was thrilled by the knowledge and professionalism of his partner and struggled with allowing his students to fail in an authentic situation. Lefty was glad to get the opportunity to work with the schools and really considered this process a fun thing to do. Even though she experienced frustration throughout the process, Maria was quite impressed with the students she worked with in Kay’s classroom.

In conclusion, the overall essence of this phenomenon for these particular participants is as follows: Even though each participant experienced the phenomenon differently, they learned about each other and the students through multiple types of interactions. They experienced a variety of emotions that resulted in a variety of reactions. Understanding was increased because of the activities in which they participated throughout the community engagement process.
Chapter 5: Findings

Summary and Discussion

This study examined a community engagement process designed to directly connect teachers with local business representatives for the purpose of increasing career awareness for students in K-12 public school districts. By focusing on the participating adults, this study generated qualitative data that outlines what occurred during each step of the community engagement process. Detailing the specific interactions and experiences of the adults highlights the results of driving two spheres of influence together. Recall that Epstein (2011) developed a model of the three spheres of influence around student learning: family, community, and school. Previous studies highlight the results of making direct connections between the school and family spheres (Epstein et al., 2011; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013), while this study illuminates the connections made between the school and community spheres. Other studies focused on interactions between teachers that may have an impact on student learning (D’Ardenne, et al., 2013; Spillane et al., 2013), while the interactions at the heart of this study are between teachers and local business representatives.

Previous studies revealed that leadership has an impact on the implementation of educational processes by teachers, such as mandated reforms (Imants et al., 2013), programs designed to involve families (Epstein et al., 2011), and policy meant to increase the use of community resources (Gordon, 2012). Also, interactions between teachers can impact their own learning. Social ties between teachers can increase the social capacity of teachers and, therefore, their schools (Spillane et al., 2012). D’Ardenne et al. (2013)
found that creating social networks for teachers across schools can improve instruction. Student engagement in the learning process can be increased through the use of community resources, such as community adults (Laursen et al., 2007).

**Discussion of findings.** Underlying patterns found in the data corpus fell into five main categories: experiencing something new, learning new information, organizational differences, lack of leadership participation, and impact on students.

**Experiencing something new.** Of the five participants, three were teachers. Each of the teachers revealed that some part of the process required them to step outside of their comfort zone, whether it was in having to meet and talk with new people, or in having to step back and allow students to make up their own minds. Two of the teachers participated in the process again the next summer with a new business partner, and the third began to participate in the BBC committee meetings. These actions are evidence of increased social capacity of the teachers, in that they willingly continued to create connections with community adults. Because of this evidence, it is clear that the community engagement process created by BBC is an example of a constructed social organization (Bordieu & Coleman, 1991) that led to increased structural social capital (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009), or social relations based on structures.

Both business partners expressed that they had not participated in a process like this before. While Maria experienced frustration due to scheduling issues and arriving late, Lefty pointed out that he presents in group settings often and so he did not experience anxiety or confusion. It is clear that individual reactions to the same experience can be impacted by the context of the situation (Rosenthal & Zimmerman,
What the business partners experienced in common was surprise, awe, and excitement due to the reactions of the students. Both prepared lessons in advance of the classroom implementation, and both expressed a new understanding of what school culture is like today. Maria and Lefty were willing to recruit other professionals to participate in this process, and Lefty participated in the process again during the 2015 iteration. Bainer et al. reported the same desire for professionals that participated in elementary partnerships in their 1996 research study.

What is clear is that the follow-up connections made by the participants would not have happened without the community engagement process being in place. Completing the process achieved the goal of inducing action (Burke 2014) that changed the behavior of the participants. Each person that continues to participate in the process, in BBC meetings, or even encourages others to participate, are creating movement toward the shared vision (Senge, 2012) created by members of the BBC for this particular county.

**New Found Knowledge.** Bainer et al.(1996) also reported on specific skills that participating professionals gained through partnering with schools. While this research study did not reveal specific skills that were learned, it affirms that participants learned information that increased their understanding of each other’s organizations. The BBC community group acts as a boundary-spanning leadership coalition (Hogg et al., 2012), whose purpose is to build intergroup relational identity. Specific statements made by participants exposed their new found knowledge of each other’s organizations due to completing the full process, even though four of the five participants had some previous experience with crossing the sector boundaries between business and education.
Chrzanowski et al. (2010) reported similar results with a single person employed as a community connector for a school district, as did Goldring and Sims (2005) with the single person referred to as a bridger leader charged with facilitating a group of business and educational leaders. This evidence indicates that the role of breaking down barriers between organizations needs to be an assigned task in order to increase the possibility of successful school-business partnerships.

**Organizational differences.** Building upon the discussion of crossing sector boundaries, there were distinct differences between educational organizations and business organizations unearthed in the data. Based on the participants’ responses the organizational cultures of business and education are different when compared in this context. The business organizations seem to value community engagement, while the schools have a different focus at the moment. Vaughn stated that teacher meetings, in the form of Teacher Based Teams (TBT), are only used to focus on formative instructional practices. For this reason, he did not share the community engagement process with others in his school. Kay did report the problem scenario implementation during one of her TBT meetings, and it was simply included in the TBT minutes as her way of enriching that particular group of students. In direct contrast, both Maria and Lefty declared that this work helped them achieve goals set forth by their organizations. In fact, community engagement is an expectation of administrators in Maria’s organization.

Based on statements made by the teachers, schools seem to be zeroing in on instructional practices from within, while the participating businesses seem open to engaging externally. Burke's (2014) model of organizational change clearly has an
external feedback loop that ties directly into the leadership boxes. Statements made by the two business sector participants indicate that their organizations are willing to accept external feedback. The schools of the teacher participants do not seem to be in the position to act upon external feedback from the surrounding community. If taken independently, however, each participating teacher seems willing to accept external feedback. Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013) studied the impact of school culture on parental perspectives about their role in their child’s education. Findings indicate that the parents’ beliefs could be predicted by the school’s climate and number of invitations to become involved. The authors’ findings are connected with the findings of this research study in that the organizational culture of the participating schools may work against the strides made by the social interactions of the individual teachers with local business professionals. Again, the sociocultural environment has an impact on the social interactions that shape what is learned and expected by those within it (Dudley, 2013; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978). Lefty (community member) made it clear that he wouldn’t be comfortable approaching a principal without the community engagement process in place, and Vaughn (teacher) made it clear that if community adults are going to participate in class in any way they have to support the curricular standards that are already being taught. Barriers to increasing community engagement exist, although it seems that the barriers are perceived as opposed to real. Revealing these barriers is the beginning step to organizational learning for all three levels that impact students: the classroom, the school, and the community (Senge, 2012). The barriers perceived by teachers and community members that have been revealed can be overcome through
sociocultural interactions, which are a part of the reason that the problem scenario process was created by BBC. Not only are students impacted by the process, but the adults that are included now have a set of steps to follow to increase the overlap between the school and community spheres of influence (Epstein, 2011). The more overlap between the spheres, the better chance that community engagement can become an ingrained part of the school culture.

**Leadership participation.** Much of the literature reviewed in preparation for this research study focused on the role and impact of educational leaders on community engagement. Clearly, a bias of the researcher is revealed in this approach. I am an educational leader who expects teachers in my district to utilize community resources to help students achieve success. The teacher participants in this study are not employed by my school district. Not only did the data unveil the fact that the superintendents and principals were not directly aware of the community engagement process occurring in their building, neither of the business partners’ superiors were either. Conversations about the process did take place with leaders, other employees and other teachers, but they were conversational in nature and did not lead to the chain reactions expected by the researcher that seemed apparent in Burke’s (2014) organizational change model. Unexpectedly, the community engagement process impacted BBC as an organization more so than the organizations represented by the research participants.

Boundary spanning was discussed in the literature review as a way of broaching the intersection of school and community (Bennett & Thompson, 2011; Chrzanowski et al., 2010; Goldring & Sims, 2005; Gordon, 2012; Hogg et al., 2012). The community
engagement process clearly led to increased student engagement, as all five participants made statements to this effect. Therefore, the process can be perceived as beneficial to the school and the students. Even so, through the teachers’ lens it became clear that engaging community members in the educational process was not a high priority for school leaders. Without prompting, each teacher made reference to one or more of the current educational reform initiatives that school time and resources are being used to implement and improve upon. Schein (2010) discusses two sets of problems that affect organizational culture. One issue is surviving, growing, and adapting to what is occurring around the organization. The second issue is internal assimilation that shapes daily work habits and the ability to learn and adapt. Based on information gleaned from the participants of this study, principals are working to adapt to the current educational expectations of their environment. Principals and district administrators have also created a culture that includes time (in the form of teacher-based-team meetings) for learning about effective instructional practices. Spanning the boundaries between school and the community for educational purposes does not appear to be on the list of topics to learn about at this juncture. In the particular county in which this research took place, the superintendents and principals need only to take advantage of the support offered by BBC in order to increase the use of community resources in their districts. Principals and superintendents can avoid adding to their own responsibilities by encouraging their teachers to utilize projects and events provided by BBC. Therefore, members of the BBC need to communicate specifically with educational leaders on a regular basis to increase community engagement by school staff.
Gordon’s (2012) study was conducted with two schools that had district-level community engagement policies and administrative boundary spanners. Findings communicated by this author indicate that policies and practices created for the district do not translate fully to the school buildings. This information can be applied to the findings of this research study in two different ways: 1) teacher choice of professional development does not reflect the current policy and practices of the district in that the professional development was not focused on formative instructional practices, and 2) the data indicate school districts of the participants may not have policy that addresses community engagement specifically. As a reminder, participating teachers self-selected into the community engagement process by responding to an email/flyer that described the professional development opportunity. The business participants were asked to participate by BBC committee members.

The data collected reveals that leadership within each organization did not precipitate participation in the community engagement process. Despite this fact, the individuals that participated were impacted by the process. The Burke-Litwin model of organizational change (Burke, 2014) includes three boxes that specifically address individuals within an organization. These include motivation, task and skill requirements, and needs and values. Each of the three boxes point directly to individual performance and outcomes and the theming of the data revealed that each individual box was addressed during the process for the participating individuals. The three-way interactions that occurred between teachers, business partners, and students invoked emotions that increased motivation. Having the problem scenario process as a tool to use with students
provided a means of addressing problem solving in the classroom that is real and effective. This tool increased the teachers’ ability to reach students, and therefore addressed the task and skill requirements box. Both the teachers and their partners made statements about the value of implementing the process. On an individual level, the community engagement process was able to affect change for the organizations involved.

**Student engagement.** Findings reported by Laursen et al. (2007) show that the adult participants concurred about increased student engagement a result of the participation of college students in science class activities. This research study affirms those findings. Classroom implementation looked different and was experienced differently by each participant. However, all five participants made multiple statements that provide evidence of increased student engagement. Vaughn pointed out that students felt they were doing something more realistic because of the involvement of an expert from the field of marketing. Students had to tap into their critical thinking skills in Katherine’s class in order to develop multiple solutions to the same issue. The elementary students in Kay’s class requested to work on the problem scenario daily as soon as they entered the classroom. They were even discussing the solutions at recess and at home. Lefty was really surprised at the student’s appetite for applied learning during the one class period that he was in the room. Maria described how the class interactions included conversation between her and the students and between students as they were discovering more facets to the problem scenario through discussion. All in all, as pointed out by the literature reviewed, engaging community members for educational purposes can increase
student engagement (Bathgate & Silva, 2010; Duffin, 2004; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Welch & Billig, 2004; Laursen, et al., 2007).

Part of the reason for engaging community members to work with students is to address career readiness and exploration. Mourshed, et al. (2012) suggest this is necessary due to the changing nature of employment. Data collected did not reveal specific patterns during analysis for this particular topic, although participants did address this concept in minor ways. Lefty stated that the students with whom he worked did not know that his type of job existed. Maria explained the inner workings of the emergency department to the elementary students and made connections between the various positions within this department. By completing the community engagement process, participating teachers were exposed to several careers outside of their own. The results of the community engagement process address the concern touched upon by Sung et al. (2013), Tolentino et al. (2014), and Walbert (2010), which is the fact that educational institutions need to keep up with the evolving changes of the employment landscape.

**Limitations of the Findings**

A qualitative phenomenological approach was used for this study in order to develop a “complex, detailed understanding of the issue” (Creswell, 2013, p.48). The issue in this case being the phenomenological experience of participating in a community engagement process. “Phenomenology does not generalize from an empirical sample to a certain population” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 249). Each participant had different background experiences that impacted the coordination of scheduling and implementation of the problem scenario process within the classroom. Participants in a
replicated study would also bring background experiences to the table that may result in different responses to the process and to interview questions. Also, this study focuses on a single project of BBC and gives a limited portrayal of the overall impact of the community organization on educational and business institutions in the county. In all, there are seven BBC projects that work to connect community adults to educational institutions.

The findings are also limited because they were collected from the first ever implementation of the three-step process that continues to be implemented each summer. Data collected from the second iteration the following summer would be different due to the fact that three of the five research study participants chose to do it again. And finally, the series of three interviews used for data collection occurred a full year after the teachers and business partners started the community engagement process. This time lapse increases that chance that participants may not recall all details of the process as they actually happened.

**Implications for Practice**

This study supports the conclusions of other studies that community engagement in the classroom can increase student engagement (Bathgate & Silva, 2010; Duffin, 2004; Laursen, et al. 2007; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Welch & Billig, 2004). Epstein’s (2011) three spheres model includes community as one of the spheres of influence, but it does not outline specific ways to increase the overlap of the school and community spheres. Several authors describe projects that have been completed that achieve a community-school connection, however the experiences of the adults are not typically the primary
focus of the publications (Casey, et al., 2006; Sanders, 2006; Smith & Sobel, 2010). The three-step community engagement process described in the data is a feasible way to plan interactions between teachers and local business representatives specifically for the purpose of impacting student engagement. Because the process has distinct phases and each phase was clearly described by each participant, replication could occur at the instigation of any interested party. The data collected could be presented to help reluctant adults attain a vision of what they are being asked to do, which would aid in the recruitment process. This does not mean outcomes would be identical, however.

Including this community engagement process in the practices of schools would increase individual teacher knowledge of local businesses and organizations. The reverse is true, as well. Schools are not isolated entities. They are interconnected with their communities and Senge (2012) clearly states that change and learning need to take place at the classroom, school, and community levels. This change and learning is necessary to reveal the perspectives and assumptions of all stakeholders. The community engagement process did achieve this goal through the multiple interactions that had to take place in order for the process to be completed. One of Senge’s (1990) organizational learning disabilities is that the “enemy is out there” (p. 19). It can be concluded that the five participants in this research study do not feel that way now, if they did before. All five participants agreed that collaboration is important and it leads to success.

As a result of data collected through this interview process, changes were made for the summer 2015 iteration of the problem scenario project. They are as follows: a) the new template provided did not include a preset number of steps that students had to
complete during implementation, b) two different types of problem-solving processes were introduced to the teachers during the professional development day so that they could choose which best fit their needs, c) business participants were told more details about the age, subject, and school district of their teacher partner, d) business partners were regularly communicated with during the fall semester to ensure that they did not have any further questions about the process, and e) superintendents were given a list of all teachers in their districts that were participating in the various BBC projects.

**Implications for Future Research**

Sociocultural learning takes into consideration the background experiences of those who are participating in a learning experience (Roesnthal & Zimmerman, 1978). The differences in the classroom implementation phase of the community engagement process can be attributed to the interactions between the partners who were planning it. Despite the differences, the outcomes of the interactions did reveal patterns, i.e. similar emotions were felt; perspectives and opinions were understood, changed, or expanded; and students were more fully engaged in the learning process. A follow-up study could include multiple partner sets that have completed the community engagement process with a quantitative focus on the outcomes.

Even though this study hinged on the specific interactions of the adults, student interactions were communicated regularly, but through the lens of the participating adults. Future iterations of this research study could collect qualitative data from participating students in order to determine if the findings of increased student engagement through the student lens match the opinions of the adults involved.
Data collected for this research study could be a springboard for several categories of future research based on the headings included in the literature review. For example, a future study could focus on teachers who participated from the school district of the researcher to see if the data about leadership would produce different results. Boundary spanning practices are needed to continue the pursuit of community engagement. Further research could study educational leaders from districts that do well with engaging their community members and taking advantage of other community assets. Looking at the data through a professional development lens would offer insight into the ways in which educational leaders could build relationships between teachers and business or community members. For the most part, student career readiness was not represented in the data corpus. Future studies could include questions about the level of career readiness of students and career readiness assessments in order to bring career development to the surface.

This dissertation focuses on adult participants of a community engagement process and outlines the steps involved in that process. Including community adults in the educational process for students is beneficial and creates a reciprocal learning situation. This type of interaction leads to outcomes for all involved, and serves to open channels of communication between schools and their surrounding communities. Within the current educational context, it is difficult for teachers and building principals to have enough time to build community relationships for the benefit of their students. BBC continues to advocate for the cultivation of community assets that can be developed as resources in the educational and economic development of the county.
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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Research Question: When included in a community engagement process established for the purpose of student career awareness what did teachers and local business representatives learn and experience?

Interview #1: Participant background
Questions:
1. Please state your name, current occupation, title, and employer.
2. Please choose a pseudonym for yourself that will be used in place of your actual name in the final write up of this research.
3. Please describe your schooling experience from K-12.
4. Describe the path (career path) that you followed to get to your current employment situation.
5. What expectations do you have of schools/districts in regards to educating the children in your community? Any specific expectations of teachers or the teaching profession? Do you feel educational leadership has an impact on your expectations?
6. Do you feel that the community should be a resource for schools to use? Explain.
7. How would you describe the role of local businesses in a community? What about local community leaders?
8. Do you feel a desire to “give back” to your community is some way? If so, to what/whom do you contribute this desire? Do you have any past experiences in which you were asked/required to give back to your community is some way?
9. What is your definition of community engagement for educational purposes?
10. On a personal level, how important is it to include the perspective of others in your decision making? Are you influenced by the perspectives and opinions of others?
11. Are there any other events that occurred in your background that you feel are relevant to your current expectations of education or the role of community members in education?

Interview #2: Implementation of the Community Engagement Process
Questions:
1. What do you think is the purpose of the problem scenario process in which you participated, which included three steps 1) creation of the scenario with your partner, 2) the implementation of the problem in the classroom, and 3) reflecting on the process to make improvements?
2. Please describe what occurred during the initial day of participation in which you worked with your partner in July 2014 to create the problem scenario.
3. Did you develop a relationship with your partner? Please describe.
4. Please describe what occurred during the problem scenario implementation phase in the classroom.

5. Which partner took the lead in scheduling the classroom implementation step? How did the scheduling occur?

6. Was the school (i.e. teacher’s schedule, other teachers, principal) supportive of the scheduling needed for implementation?

7. Was the business (i.e. employer of the business partner) supportive of the scheduling needed for implementation?

8. Did you take part in reflecting on the process either by participating in the follow up class in December, completing the PST Review paperwork, or by describing your work on video?

9. If so, please describe what occurred during the reflection phase.

10. Do you feel that there were any benefits for the students that were included in this process?

11. Do you feel that there will be benefits for the future employers of these students?

12. Are there any other parts of the process that you would like to describe/explain?

Interview #3: Reflections and Understandings of the Community Engagement Process Questions: (Before beginning the interview, the “process” will be defined and reviewed to insure that the participant and interviewer are referring to the same thing)

1. Please list positive aspects of the overall process.

2. Please list aspects of the overall process that you would change or felt were negative.

3. Do you feel that more training/support needs to be provided before or during the process?

4. How do you perceive this process: as a way to access resources, fun to do, more work to do without the time to do it, adding to your responsibilities, taking away pressure from your responsibilities, etc?

5. What is your understanding of community engagement now that you have participated in this process? Do you feel that this process works to increase community engagement with schools? Sustain community engagement with schools? Explain.

6. Did you need to seek advice from others in your workplace about how to implement any parts of this process?

7. Did you share this process or aspects of this process with others in your workplace? If so, how was it perceived? Would you encourage others to participate?

8. Were you influenced by your assigned partner during the process? Did you have difficulty working with your assigned partner during the process?
9. Did you have any other interactions with people (students, teachers, principals, other community members, co-workers, parents) throughout the process that influenced you in anyway?

10. What barriers occurred during the process that you had to overcome? Do you feel that you were given the freedom to address these barriers in a way that worked for you?

11. Was leadership necessary during any parts of the process? Was it present when needed or missing when needed?

12. Where there any benefits of the process to your organization/school/business?

13. Do you feel that you benefitted personally by participating in the process?

14. Overall, what did you learn by participating?

15. Now that the process has been completed, do you identify more with the workplace/career/organization of your partner? Do you feel that you know more about the workplace/career/organization of your partner?

16. Are there any other reflections that you would like to share?
Appendix B: Graphic Visual

Framework of Community Engagement as an Initiative in Education
Appendix C: IRB Approval Document

The following research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies):

Project Title: Increasing Shared Understandings Between Educators and Community Members Through Intentional Collaborative Interactions

Primary Investigator: Tasha Wary

Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Dwan Robinson

Department: EDAD

Office of Research Compliance Staff
Rebecca Cole, AAI, GIP
Shelly Rex, BS
Robin Stack, GIP

Approval Date: 6/26/15
Expiration Date: 6/25/16

This approval is valid until the expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond the expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your approved application. Any additions or modifications to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.

IRB approval does not supersede other regulatory requirements, such as HIPAA, FERPA, PPRA, etc.

Adverse events/anticipated problems must be reported to the IRB promptly.
Appendix D: Epstein’s 2011 Model

Theoretical Model
OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE OF FAMILY, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY ON CHILDREN’S LEARNING
External Structure

- **Force A**: Time/Age/Grade Level
- **Force B**: Experience, Philosophy, Practices of Family
- **Force C**: Experience, Philosophy, Practices of School
- **Force D**: Experience, Philosophy, Practices of Community

Diagram showing the overlapping spheres of influence between family, school, and community.