BUILDING THE BRIDGE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PREVIOUSLY ENROLLED IN A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

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I would like to first thank God for the many blessings that have allowed me to reach this point in my life. I would like to dedicate this work to my great grandparents Jessie Williams and Mattie (Malue) Rankin (RIP); grandparents, Elton and Ollie Williams, Bernard (RIP), and Lula Hall; to my parents, Barry and Angela Hall, who instilled the importance of hard work, finishing what you start, and pushing me to be the first in our family to get an education. The example they set for me is the reason I have accomplished so many things in my life. To my sister Brittney Hall and my brother Brandon Hall. To my partner Autumn for always encouraging me to be great, because I am great! To my children Barry (Lil Bj) Hall, Brayden Hall, and Kendrick (Mr. Kendrinocks). I push myself to reach for the stars so you can see what it looks like and do the same for yourself. Use me as an example. If I can do it, you can do it, and whatever it is you decide you want to do, make sure you are ready to work hard for it, and most importantly, you love it! I have many aunts, uncles, cousins, mentors, students, close friends, current and past colleagues to list, and you all have made an impact on me to be able to reach this point. To everyone who has believed in me, encouraged me, given me a little advice, this work is dedicated to you. We did it! This is also dedicated to my hometown of Muskegon, MI.

I am still just a boy from the skee!
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ABSTRACT

BUILDING THE BRIDGE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PREVIOUSLY ENROLLED IN A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM

by Barry L. Hall II

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of first-generation college African American and Latinx students who took part in a summer bridge program and to explore what impact the program had on their college success. The study focused on the problem posed by the lack of intentional Summer Bridge programs designed to support underprepared, first-generation, at-risk students of color. This study examines seven underprepared, first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students who participated in a summer bridge program built upon the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. It aims to make sense of the students’ experiences and the perceived impact that participating in the program had on their experience in college. Participants were identified as underprepared, first-generation, at-risk, and African American and Latinx. Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as a theoretical framework, this study focused on how participants describe their summer bridge program engagement, the factors that influence their engagement, and the significance of culture in the format of the summer bridge program.

Two in-depth interviews were used to examine the perspectives of the past summer bridge program participants on their lived experience. The study revealed the emergence of four main themes that impacted the student’s preparedness for college and overall college success: (1) developing collegiate confidence; (2) bridge programs as the foundation for support and success; (3) identifying sources of motivation and support; and (4) promoting the historical culture and language of students. The findings revealed that first-generation college African American and
Latinx students are better prepared for college when they are placed in an environment with others who have a similar background, provide cultural programming that shows support, have structure, can build community, and has high expectations.

*Keywords: College readiness/preparedness, culturally responsive pedagogy, underrepresented, at-risk, summer bridge programs, African American, Latinx*
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the development of initiatives aimed at providing equal access to higher education and increased diversity on college campuses have increased (Jackson & Kurlaender, 2014). Although such efforts are necessary, access to a college, education does not necessarily translate into attainment of a degree. First-generation students from impoverished high schools with limited resources may be academically disadvantaged compared to students from affluent high schools with many resources (Jackson & Kurlaender, 2014). Underprepared students have faced many obstacles to success once in college (Jackson & Kurlaender, 2014). Strayhorn (2019) argued that studies continue to show that a large number of high school graduates lack the basic skills necessary for success in college; they are academically un- or underprepared.

O’Day and Smith (2016) stated that educational achievement and attainment are essential to mobility and future success. Despite the fact that reform attempts after reform attempt, educational achievement and attainment continue to reflect student background: parent education, access to preschool, childhood nutrition, and health, individual and neighborhood poverty, and segregation (O’Day & Smith, 2016). The disparities within the educational system have been found to be the product of institutional structures and cultures that both disenfranchise certain groups of students and depress quality overall (O’Day & Smith, 2016). Systemic causes require systemic solutions, and higher education institutions can help address systemic issues with targeted high-leverage interventions focused on transition points and needs, and stronger connections between schools and other institutions and systems affecting the development and well-being of youth, according to O’Day and Smith.
Chapter 1 includes the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, how scientific knowledge will be advanced, the rationale for the methodology, nature of the research design, definition of terms, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and then ends with a summary.

Background

In efforts to address attrition and retention concerns particularly as they relate to underprepared, underrepresented, and first-generation students, colleges and universities have created and implemented transition programs for first-year students such as summer bridge programs (Oliver, 2016). Originating from the TRIO programs of the 1960s-1970s, bridge programs are a type of college transition intervention to support student success through the educational pipeline (Duffey, 2015). Bridge programs target a specific student population and provide them with additional academic support as well as information about navigating college as an institution (Duffey, 2015). Summer Bridge programs assist students with transition challenges, enhance academic preparation, and help students achieve equal footing with other students (Oliver, 2016). Although the focus of the programs may vary depending on missions and goals, Bridge programs typically involve the academic and social aspects of college (Oliver, 2016). They give students a head start for the fall semester and to pair students’ educational experiences with institutional experiences (Oliver, 2016).

Achievement Gap

A pervasive problem exists in education regarding the gap in literacy achievement between White students and African American and Latinx students (Patel, Barreraa, Stramblerb, Muñoz, & Macciomeia, 2016). Currently, performance disparities between African American
and Latinx students living in poverty and White students are evident in low standardized assessment scores and insignificant academic gains by African Americans and Latinx, demonstrating the literacy achievement gap (Wilcox, Lawson, & Angelis, 2015).

Data from the Children’s Defense Fund report, *The State of America’s Children*, indicated approximately 40% of Black, 37% of Native American, and 34% of Latinx children live in poverty (Bohrnstedt, G., Kitmitto, S., Ogut, B., Sherman, D., & Chan, D., 2015). These children were more likely to face academic difficulties and consequently drop out of school (Bohrnstedt et al., 2015). Consequently, low-income African American and Latinx students are at risk for academic failure. Furthermore, students living in poverty are less likely to catch up to their more affluent peers regarding reading skills as they progress from elementary to high school (Bohrnstedt et al., 2015).

The gap widens regarding the study of concepts in specific disciplines because school systems expect teachers to embed comprehension instruction into content-area studies. However, the reading level of the content-area text is beyond the comprehension level of the students living in poverty (Patel et al., 2016). Moreover, low-income students often lack access to technology or books and watch television more than their wealthier peers, leading to the compromised cognitive development of low-income children (Patel et al., 2016). In addition, children living in impoverished conditions build up little background knowledge and have lesser vocabulary skills (Patel et al., 2016).

Barriers to Higher Education

Graduating high school students across the nation are faced with deciding whether to continue their education or enter the workforce. Many seek higher education in order to improve career opportunities and gain economic prosperity and social mobility (Blackwell & Pinder,
The Bureau of Labor and Statistics claimed that the average annual income for individuals who have a baccalaureate degree is $43,472 in 2019; The unemployment rate among these graduates is 3.9%, which reflects the U.S. unemployment rate of 3.6% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). While the statistics are comparable, the opportunity for all students to go to college and obtain a college degree is something that many students don’t get the opportunity to do.

College provides a pathway for students to explore themselves and their interests, to expand their social and cultural experiences, and to build a more promising career. While higher education is rich in diversity and rewards, it can be particularly arduous for first-generation college students (Falcon, 2015). Historically, postsecondary education opportunities have been limited for specific ethnic and racial populations and for those of lower socioeconomic status (SES) (Pitre & Pitre, 2009). Factors that have helped first-generation college students include school integration, government assistance programs, and a population shift that has increased minority presence in schools (Pitre & Pitre, 2009). During their time in college, however, first-generation college students confront distinctive challenges, including lack of college readiness, financial stability, familial support, and self-esteem (Falcon, 2015).

Many obstacles affect the first-generation college student’s enrollment and graduation rate. A National Center for Education Statistics study produced in 2013 found that among students whose parents had completed high school, 54% enrolled in college immediately after graduation, while only 36% of students whose parents had less than a high school diploma immediately entered college (Balemian & Feng, 2013).

Barriers for first-generation college students include lack of college readiness, familial support, and financial stability. Ethnic underrepresentation, low academic self-esteem, and
difficulty adjusting to college can manifest while enrolled, contributing to a lower rate of college completion than that for students who have at least one parent with a four-year degree (Stephens, Hamedani, & Destin, 2014).

College readiness is defined as the academic and practical knowledge needed to be successful in higher education (Pitre & Pitre, 2009). High percentages of first-generation college students are from low-income families and attend low-performing PreK-12 schools (Hudley al., 2009). Many low-performing schools do not have enough highly qualified teachers and are often underfunded; this, in turn, affects the quality of education many first-generation college students receive (Falcon, 2015). Research indicates that first-generation SAT and ACT test-takers tend to have less core academic preparation and score lower than later-generation test-takers (Balemian & Feng, 2013); Moreover, SAT/ACT scores, along with high school GPA, serve as predictors of college persistence and academic success in college.

There is a lack of familiarity with the importance of high school curriculum and how it relates to college preparation and readiness among first-generation college students' parents (Gamez-Vargas & Oliva, 2013). First-generation college students' parents are less likely to demand that their child do well in school or take advanced placement courses (Falcon, 2015). A combination of these factors affects first-generation college student’s college readiness, according to Falcon. Many first-generation college students do not know how the college system works or how to apply to college, receive financial aid, or choose a major (Falcon, 2015). Further, this population is less likely to know the difference between various higher education institutions and may select one that does not suit specific educational needs and goals (Arnold, Lu, & Armstrong, 2012).
Unfamiliar with the rigor and expectations of the college curriculum, parents of first-generation college students may be unable, and at times unwilling, to help their child prepare for college (Falcon, 2015). The first-generation college students must, therefore, rely on high school personnel and peers for guidance and information (Hudley et al., 2009). The authors postulated that this might be problematic since first-generation college students spend less time talking with high school personnel about their college aspirations than do students with college-educated parents. Hudley et al. further noted that it is rare for high school staff to discourage college aspirations or limit access among African American, Latinx, and low-income students, but when they do, first-generation college students are forced to rely on themselves for academic success.

Access to Higher Education

The history of higher education portrays a system for the elite, excluding individuals based on gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and/or social class (Krogstad, 2016). The 20th Century marked a pivotal time for economic and social change, with higher education becoming more accessible to the middle-class, women, and minorities (Krogstad, 2016). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported a total enrollment of 17.7 million undergraduate students in 2016–2017. According to the NCES (2018), there was a 48% increase in first-time freshman enrollment in degree-seeking institutions from 1995 to 2016. Midway through this projection period, data from fall 2019 showed an enrollment decrease in the first-time freshman by 1.3% compared to fall 2018 (NSC Research Center, 2019). It is projected there will be an overall 10.5% increase in first-time freshman enrollment between 2000 and 2028.

Post-secondary education has also become more accessible. NCES (2018) projected a 25% enrollment increase among Black students and a 46% enrollment increase among Hispanic students, but a 1% enrollment decrease of American Indian/Alaska Native students between
2009 and 2025. Midway through this projection period, Dedman (2019) reported enrollment at 56.5% for Black students, 70.6% for Hispanic students, and 18.8% for American Indian/Alaska Native students for fall 2018. Both Black and Hispanic students saw an increase in enrollment from the previous year, while American Indian/Alaska Native students saw a slight decrease in enrollment (Dedman, 2019). Students in families with low-socioeconomic status are taking advantage of opportunities to seek post-secondary education. The Digest of Education Statistics (2019) reported that 54% of low-income students enrolled in college in 2018, which was a 4% increase from 2015. These changes in the history of higher education have provided a positive outlook for colleges and universities.

Summer Bridge Programs

Events such as the Civil Rights movement lead to an increase in support programs like summer bridge programs (Krogstad, 2016). The target population of these programs may vary; however, many are for African American and Latinx, first-generation, and/or low-income students (Krogstad, 2016). Krogstad described how these programs help to ensure the transition to college is as smooth and seamless as possible. The components of the summer bridge program often focus on building community, academic support, college readiness, academic workshops, and peer mentors/advisors, according to Krogstad.

There are currently many forms of summer bridge programs within colleges and universities around the country, as described in Appendix A. The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) invites first-year incoming students to participate in their six-week residential summer bridge program, the College Summer Institute. The program fees cover tuition for courses taken for credit toward graduation, housing and meals, and other student fees (UCLA, 2020).
The University of California Berkley’s summer bridge program has been hosting first-year students since 1973. Currently, between 350–400 first-year students are on campus for six weeks, enrolling in courses that count for college credit. Participation fees cover tuition, room and board, textbooks and supplies, and campus costs (UCB, 2020).

In contrast, the Ohio State University’s Young Scholars– College Success Program is free for participants, but courses are not credit-bearing; since 1988, academic and personal enrichment workshops during the three-week program to approximately 19 participants (OSU, 2020).

The University of California Santa Cruz’s free, one-week residential Bridge program selects approximately 35 participants to take non-credit courses to aid participants with the skills to be successful in the fall term (UCSC, 2018).

Problem Statement

Higher educational institutions are becoming more diverse, and it is important for universities to properly provide access, support, and remediation for historically underserved student populations. This would help create access to higher education for first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students to create more college graduates entering into an educated, diverse democracy. Although institutions are becoming more diverse, research on low enrollment and retention rates for these populations demonstrates that disparities persist relating to how to properly transition, support, and retain first-generation, low-income African Americans and Latinx. For example, 53% of low-income students enroll directly into college after high school in comparison to 87% of students from the highest income quartile (Strayhorn, 2019). In terms of graduation rates, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that 46% of 12th graders who enrolled in postsecondary education had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher
within eight years, but only 24% of first-generation students had obtained the same (NCES, 2018). When the intersectionality of these groups is reviewed, “rates can be appallingly lower for low-income African American and Latino’s who may face double disadvantages, intersecting oppressions, and multiple barriers to their college entry” (Strayhorn, 2019, p. 143). Since research has shown that academic and social preparation are critical factors that predict college enrollment and success (Strayhorn, 2019) and pre-college programs for historically underserved students can support college transition and persistence, it is important to understand the effects of a summer bridge program on the preparation for post-secondary opportunities and post-secondary success.

Purpose

Although summer bridge programs are short, they do introduce underprepared first-year students to college (Krogstad, 2016). Retention experts developed summer bridge programs to address some of the challenges experienced during the first years of college (Krogstad, 2016). The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of first-generation college African American and Latinx students who took part in a summer bridge program and to explore what impact the program had on their college success. The study examines how current college students who participated in the summer bridge program perceive the program's impact on their college preparation and college experience. Strayhorn (2019) argued that research on summer bridge programs lacks depth. He further indicated that providing insight into the world of participants of a summer bridge program who have gone on to post-secondary success may be helpful to higher education administrators who coordinate summer bridge programs and academics interested in developing a summer bridge program.
Research Questions

This qualitative study sought to answer the following two research questions:

1. How do participants in one summer bridge program describe their experiences in the program?
2. How do summer bridge program participants feel those experiences shaped their preparation for college and their academic success in college.

Theoretical Framework Overview

Critical Race Theory (CRT) denotes a transformative, conceptual, methodological, and theoretical construct that assists researchers in examining and problematizing race in education (Howard & Navarro, 2016). As the U.S. increases in racial and ethnic diversity, it simultaneously contends with the historical impact of systemic racial disparities. As such, CRT serves as a valid lens by which factors that affect racial complexity can be evaluated, identified, addressed, and effectively measured (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Critical race theory (CRT) as a form of scholarship comes from a tradition of resistance to the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2016). In contrast, CRT reviewed race, racism, and power about a broader systemic structural phenomenon (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Due to the discriminatory foundation of the United States, people of color have been eliminated or limited from accessing resources. Specifically, when avenues that promote equal citizenship for people of color are blocked (Taylor et al., 2016). Alexander (2012) described these barriers as disenfranchisement and discrimination. She explained that inclusion in every sphere of life, which included schools, churches, housing, jobs, restrooms, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, orphanages, prisons, funeral
homes, morgues, and cemeteries did not occur (Alexander, 2012). Racism, through the CRT lens, is a state of being and not a threat of resentment (Alexander, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) theory developer, Ladson-Billings (1995), explored the premise that all students can learn if they were in educational environments that promoted an understanding of diversity so that all students can reach their potential. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy includes exploring teaching and program strategies to engage students through culture, life experiences, and backgrounds (Gay, 2000). Educators that use these approaches help students to identify their cultural strengths that support academic achievement (Gay, 2000).

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study, these definitions are presented:

Academic achievement: Academic achievement refers to the level of proficiency a student has attained, based on educational outcomes, grades, desired skills, and competencies (York, Gibson, & Rankin, 2015).

Academic achievement gap: Academic achievement gap is when one group of students are academically outperforming another group of students with comparable abilities (Moon and Singh, 2015).

Academic advancement: Academic advancement is a student's academic accomplishment as determined by growth targets rather than proficiency targets (Lachlan-Hache, & Castro, 2015). A student may be given a pre-assessment test to determine their baseline score, and then growth is measured from this point (Lachlan-Hache & Castro, 2015).
African American or Black: refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (Williams-Farrier, 2016). Some of these terms may be used interchangeably during the research study.

At-risk: Students identified as at risk generally involve those who have limitations in learning due to one or more of the following: socioeconomic factors, low reading proficiency levels, physical, mental, and emotional disabilities, and language proficiency barriers (Bernhardt, 2004). For the purposes of this study, at-risk students are defined as those at-risk of college access and college persistence.

College Readiness/Preparedness: College readiness is defined as the academic and practical knowledge needed to be successful in higher education (Pitre & Pitre, 2009).

Cultural learning style: Cultural learning style refers to the way a person's culture influences their style of learning; whether it be how the person is motivated, influenced by their surroundings, how they relate with one another, or even how they are stimulated by sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and touch (Gay, 2010).

Culturally responsive pedagogy: Culturally responsive pedagogy is a learner-centered and culture-centered approach to preparing students for educational opportunities (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Culturally responsive pedagogy is when a program uses a student's cultural background, knowledge, experiences, and beliefs, to bridge the child's home culture with school culture in order to make learning more relevant and practical (Lambeth and Smith, 2016).

Latinx: is a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).
Historically underrepresented students: refers to racial and ethnic populations that are disproportionately represented in higher education for a ten-year or longer trend at a given school (U.S. Department of Education, 2016)

Students of color: A non-White U.S. student who identifies with a minority group. For the context of this research, this includes those who self-identified as “Latinx,” “Black, or African American” (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Some of these terms may be used interchangeably during the research study.

Summer Bridge programs: Originating from the TRIO programs of the 1960s-1970s, bridge programs are a type of college transition intervention to support student success through the educational pipeline (Duffey, 2015), which target a specific student population and provide them with additional academic support as well as information about navigating college as an institution (Duffey, 2015).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter one included the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, how scientific knowledge will be advanced, the rationale for the methodology, and the nature of the research design. Chapter two includes a more in-depth look at the background of the problem. The theoretical foundation as it relates to the problem is explored in depth through major themes of critical race theory, culturally responsive pedagogy, achievement gap, summer bridge programs, and pre-college preparatory programs. These themes naturally flow from the problem and are used to help gain additional insight into the phenomenon and problem.

Chapter three describes the methodology, data collection procedures, design, and steps taken in order to complete the study. Chapter Four, the lived experiences of seven students who were
enrolled in the culturally responsive pedagogy based summer bridge program, are presented and analyzed. Chapter Five includes a discussion of the major findings as related to the literature and interview responses from students who were a part of the CRP based summer bridge program. Also included in this chapter is a discussion on how this study connects with the continuing body of knowledge and implications derived from this study, both for practice and for higher education preparation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and a brief summary.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of first-generation college African American and Latinx students who took part in a summer bridge program and to explore what impact the program had on their college success. This literature review explores the achievement gap experienced by African American and Latinx students, the history of summer bridge programs, and similar college readiness programs that are used for transition from high school to college. Gaps in the literature surrounding the summer bridge program are presented to highlight the omissions when speaking on working with first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students’ access to college. The theoretical framework that is foundational to this study is presented to show the theoretical connection to the study. The literature review will conclude with an overview of the conceptual framework for this study and an overall summary of the chapter.

Achievement Gap and Students of Color

African American and Latinx students have seen many struggles within the educational system in the U.S. Achievement gaps for subjects in reading and math have not seen a significant change between African American and Latinx and White students in 1992 and also in 2018 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). In 1992, the achievement gap for the subject of reading grew from 24 points in 1992 to 31 points in 2018 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). African American and Latinx have significantly fallen behind White students in the subject areas of math and reading (National Education Association, 2017). African American and
Latinx are underachieving in academic levels, entered into special education at a higher rate, and have higher suspension and expulsion rates than White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

African American and Latinx students are being placed in special education programs at a higher rate than White students and placed in gifted programs at a lower rate than their White counterparts (Mayes & Moore, 2016). Even with the documentation of these disparities, government policies have not been able to address the problem and improve academic conditions for these groups of students (Howard & Navarro, 2016). Johnson (2016) believed the issue is the educational system itself. Because the current model of education in the United States comes from European cultural values, ideology, and western civilization, education traditions are Eurocentric and have been an issue for African American and Latinx students (Johnson, 2016).

In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States was confronted with the controversial Brown v. Board of Education case that challenged segregation in public education. Brown v. Board of Education was a landmark Supreme Court case because it called into question the morality and legality of racial segregation in public schools, a long-standing tradition in the Jim Crow South, and threatened to have monumental and everlasting implications for Blacks and Whites in America (Howard & Navarro, 2016). The Brown v. Board of Education case is often noted for initiating racial integration and launching the civil rights movement (Howard & Navarro, 2016). The ruling in the Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 brought national attention to racial and ethnic inequality in education. Since the ruling, African American and Latinx students have consistently scored behind White students (Howard & Navarro, 2016).
Causes of Achievement Gaps

The achievement gaps that traditionally exist between African American and Latinx and White students continue to be an issue of concern despite education reformations to enhance the academic capacity of students, primarily culturally diverse students (Lashley & Stickl, 2016). Westerman (2015) learned that achievement gaps generated uneasiness in which highly developed intellectual capacities were essential to compete in the economy on a broad basis successfully. Spitzer and Aronson (2015) discovered earlier that the degree of competition on a broad basis required individuals to aspire to obtain college and university degrees.

Educational issues made by the private sector play a significant role in the cause of the achievement gap (Ravitch, 2014). Sundquist (2017) disclosed four reasons that the private sector continued to make decisions affecting education as opposed to those made by the public. These reasons included a propagated practice of substandard teaching, small selections of school choices, and schools having few incentives despite reform efforts as factors that sustained input from the 35 private sectors (Ravitch, 2014). Lastly, the fourth reason was the acceptance of education legislation having a market-based foundation that created accelerated rates of repeated segregation and broader achievement gaps between students based on race and socioeconomic status (Guerra & Wubbena, 2017; Sundquist, 2017).

The education reformation also had causes related to the implementation of high stakes assessments, gaps in discipline between different student cultures, and policies that support severe measures for minor violations in which culturally diverse students experienced severe penalties leading to incarceration (Ryan, 2016). Remedies proposed to attempt to address the issue included efforts to manage public education as a corporation and do consistent education criteria and practices to meet minimum standardized assessment requirements (Ryan, 2016).
However, parents reacted to standardized assessment practices by not allowing their children to take part because such assessments caused their children to develop feelings of resentment, low-self-esteem, and undue stress (Ryan, 2016).

Culturally Responsive Programs and the Achievement Gap

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court case of Brown vs. The Topeka Board of Education addressed the educational disparities that contributed to the achievement gap between African-American and White students (Fudge, 2017). Brown vs. The Topeka Board of Education court case outlawed the practice of school segregation and mandated the integration of all public schools (Burks, Beziat, Danley, Davis, Lowery, & Lucas, 2015).

Other cases occurred that addressed the educational disparities between culturally diverse students and White students, such as the 1946 case of Mendez vs. Westminster (Brevetti, 2017). In the case of Mendez vs. Westminster, the federal government ruled against California school segregation that prevented Mexican children from attending White schools because English was their second language. The case of Mendez vs. Westminster set the stage for the case of Brown vs. The Topeka Board of Education and included the same lawyer, Thurgood Marshall, who later became the first African-American to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court (United States Courts, n.d.).

To remedy significant differences in the academic achievements between African American and Latinx and White students, the federal government created educational reformation programs such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB) later replaced with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2016 (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015), and Race to the Top (RttT) education reformation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2017a; U.S. Department of
Despite the employment of these types of programs, education statistics continued to indicate considerable differences between African American and Latinx and White students because such programs failed to address cultural diversity (Wiggan & Watson, 2016). Research indicated that the existence of supporting programs was not the sole reason for achievement gaps in as much as teacher interaction, teaching strategies, and the curriculum were to blame (Barbarin & Aikins, 2015). Even though many key stakeholders recognized the existence of an achievement gap, they were not able to create a common consensus aimed at narrowing the gap, according to Barbarin and Aikins.

Some educators believed that teaching methods created to address cultural diversity were unsuccessful and increased the achievement gap as opposed to reducing the gap (Lees, Heineke, Ryan, & Roy., 2016). Addressing the area of self-concept requires efforts from sociologists to utilize sociological, psychological, and educational factors to develop a comprehensive strategy that would narrow the achievement gap between African American and Latinx and White students (Jeynes, 2015).

Achievement Gap in Education

The academic achievement gap between African American and Latinx and White students remains a persistent issue in the United States education system. Gardner, Rizzi, and Council (2014) insisted that the disparity of academic achievement between minority and majority students has plagued the country for decades. They explained that institutional racism, separate, and unequal school systems resulted in educational disparities between students during the Brown decision (Gardner, Rizzi, & Council, 2014). “Schools for minority children (e.g., African American) were grossly underfunded and poorly resourced when compared to schools
for children from the dominant culture” (Gardner, Rizzi, & Council, 2014, p. 82). In order to improve the academic achievement of minority students, leaders aimed to integrate schools to provide all children with equal access to educational experiences (Gardner et al., 2014). However, 14 years after the Brown decision, researchers noticed that minority children, especially males, were disproportionately represented in special education programs (Gardner et al., 2014). For example, the placement rates of African American students, particularly males, in special education programs exceeded their percentage in school enrollment (Gardner et al., 2014). Researchers have implemented initiatives to decrease the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education and eliminate the academic achievement gap between minority and majority students (Gardner et al., 2014). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is an example of federal legislation that was created to improve the quality of education for all students (Gardner et al., 2014).

Davis-Kean and Jager (2014) indicated that the racial achievement gap in education might be growing between learners. There are many causes of the widening achievement gap: school suspension policies, peer impact, fatherless households, and the student-teacher relationship (Suh, Malchow, & Suh, 2014). Sousa and Armor (2016) argued that the Title I programs have been unsuccessful in their efforts to close the achievement gap between minority and traditional learners. Minority students usually earn lower scores on standardized assessments and have higher drop-out rates than traditional learners (Vega, Moore, & Miranda, 2015). Gardner et al. (2014) stated that African American, Latinx, and Native American students consistently underperform on academic measures. The educational disparities for minority males are even higher (Gardner et al., 2014). According to the 2010 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 51.3% of 12th grade African American males possessed below necessary
reading skills when compared to 36.1% of African American females, 24.3% of White males, and 13.1% of White females (Gardner et al., 2014). Disproportionate representation and the achievement gap continue to plague the education system (Suh et al., 2014).

There are serious inequities, even among students in higher education. Libassi (2019) found that, compared with White students, Black and Hispanic graduates are far more likely to have attended for-profit colleges and less likely to have attended four-year public or nonprofit institutions. Libassi adds that Black and Hispanic graduates also generally have attended institutions that have less money to spend on offering quality education, and are significantly underrepresented in important fields such as engineering and education, mathematics and statistics, and the physical sciences.

The gap in higher education between White students and Black and Hispanic students is noticeable just by walking around a college campus. Libassi (2019) stated that if Black and Hispanic graduates earned each degree type at the same rate as their White peers, more than one million more would have earned a bachelor’s degree in just those three years. These gaps also show up in the fields in which students receive their bachelor’s degree. Libassi found that if Black and Hispanic bachelor’s degree recipients were as likely to major in engineering as White students, this country would have produced 20,000 more engineers from 2014 through 2018. What’s more important is that the United States would have 30,000 more teachers of color if African American and Latinx students were represented equally among education graduates (Libassi, 2019).

When gender disparities are taken into consideration, inequalities are even starker. Libassi stated that White men earn bachelor’s degrees in engineering at roughly six times the rate of Hispanic women and more than 11 times the rate of Black women. The achievement gap
impact occurs in both K-12 education and higher education.

Students who drop out of high school are more likely to struggle personally and professionally as members of society (Gardner et al., 2014). For example, many incarcerated individuals failed to complete high school (Gardner et al., 2014). Gardner, Rizzi, and Council (2014) explained that poor academic performance might result in dropping out of school, particular education placement, limited postsecondary opportunities, and low paying jobs.

Tomlinson and Jarvis (2014) studied the disproportionate representation of minority students in education and the achievement gap between minority and traditional students because inequity in the education system not only impacts individual students, their families, and the surrounding community, but society as a whole. Tomlinson and Jarvis insisted that the educational achievement gap denies the common good by preventing individuals from participating in American society, fulfilling their potential, or work to meet their material needs. Researchers explained that the employment rate rises with degree attainment (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014). For example, the average income of individuals with bachelor’s degrees is 78% higher than those with high school diplomas and 143% higher than individuals without high school diplomas (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). As the number of minority students continues to increase, educators must explore issues that threaten their access to high-quality education or risk negatively impacting society (Ford & King, 2014). Harris and Plocker (2014) found that the level of diversity in U.S. society is increasing; however, educational attainment remains unequal. Tomlinson and Jarvis argued that the educational achievement gap works against the common good of society because it systematically prevents classes of people from achieving their potential and flourishing as part of the larger society.

In order to reduce and ultimately close the achievement gap, educators must address the
disproportionate number of minority students in unique and gifted education programs (Cowan Pitre, 2014). In addition to achievement gaps between minority and traditional learners, researchers have identified “excellence gaps” or achievement gaps at advanced achievement levels (Hardesty, McWilliams, & Plucker, 2014, p. 71). Less than one-quarter of Black and Hispanic eighth-graders scored at least “proficient” in reading, compared with 45 percent of Whites and 55 percent of Asian-Americans, according to the 2018 National Assessment of Educational Progress. Seventy-six percent of Black students and 79 percent of Hispanic students graduated high school in 2017-18, compared with 88 percent of White students (The Nation’s Report Card, 2019).

Summer Bridge Programs

Since the 21st century, education has been a constant theme, especially higher education. Society views higher education as a key to personal upward mobility and economic success (Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett, 2016). Kadlec and Gupta (2014) found that students in focus groups stated that a “college degree, particularly a four-year degree, is critical for getting a better job and for bolstering one’s position in a fragile economy” (p. 6). Researchers and government reports indicate the need for a postsecondary certificate or degree to fill future jobs (Jensen & Jetten, 2016).

In recent years, the public focus on higher education has shifted from a focus primarily on access towards a focus on accountability in regards to attainment (Douglas & Attewell, 2014; Johnson-Weeks & Superville, 2014). In general, “state education finance systems were developed as an attempt to provide opportunity through equity” and “statewide accountability policies were implemented to ensure that all students were provided opportunities through the examination of student performance outcomes” (Della Sala & Knoeppe, 2015, p. 82). Within
this shift from mere access, public policy has stimulated institutional focus on student success through performance outcomes, specifically ensuring institutions retain their students through graduation (O’Keeffee, 2013).

Given the increase in the demand for higher education, there has been an increased focus on college readiness (Johnson-Weeks & Superville, 2014). A focus on college readiness requires a focus on college completion. While college acceptance is a significant accomplishment, matriculating and graduating is an even more significant achievement (Sablan, 2014). To ensure that access and attainment are occurring, higher education institutions have established programs and initiatives. Some programs have been voluntary, while others are mandatory as some states have implemented programs focused on student success, retention, and graduation through formal legislation or statewide policy (Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross, 2014).

Outside the public interest from students, families, and society, success measurements, such as retention and graduation rates, will continue to be relevant within political offices and higher education institutions as education funding have shifted to college retention and college completion (Hillman et al., 2014). As the United States experienced an economic downturn in the early 21st Century, funding for higher education often hinged on, and will likely continue to hinge on, success rates of colleges and universities with retention and graduation rates as the measures of performance rather than merely access rates (Hillman et al., 2014).

The completion agenda is the focus of state policy leaders, governors, legislators, and boards of higher education, seeking to dramatically improve higher education’s productivity (Hillman et al., 2014). In 2009, a national nonprofit organization, Complete College America (CCA), created and maintained the standard of the completion agenda, which the US Department of Education adopted in 2011 (Walters, 2012). The agenda targets each state as the driver of
institutional change through state-level political pressure and funding (Walters, 2012). As of 2015, more than half of the states have adopted performance funding as members of CCA’s “Alliance of States” (Jones, 2015).

Bridge programs are one such program selected higher education institutions have implemented to help those institutions meet completion rates to fulfill societal, political, and funding priorities (Hillman et al., 2014). Higher education institutions used TRIO programs as a guide to developing bridge programs to meet policy concerns as a means to improve student success, increase college readiness, and college completion (Sablan, 2014).

The Historical Roots of Bridge Programs—TRIO Programs

Bridge programs are quite young, having started from the roots of the TRIO programs of the 1960s-1970s, particularly the Upward Bound program (Sablan, 2014). The TRIO programs, Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services, are a set of federally funded educational initiatives that started to address educational inequity (Duffey, 2015). These programs were created to serve first-generation students from low-income backgrounds and address the specific challenges these students potentially face in post-secondary programs, such as social, institutional, and cultural barriers (Duffey, 2015). The efforts of the TRIO programs are intentional and personal outreach in financial guidance and mentoring, resource referral, academic and social development experiences, and coaching through educational and cultural processes and systems (Duffey, 2015). The services stimulate “students’ self-efficacy and provide students with the cultural capital needed to be successful” in college (Duffey, 2015, p. 8). Likewise, bridge programs target a specific population of students and provide intentional support services, information, and guidance for navigating post-secondary opportunities.
From the layout of TRIO programs, colleges and universities developed bridge programs to help students be successful, college-ready, and be better prepare for barriers that occur. Bridge programs also help colleges and universities increase the retention of students and completion rates as a part of student success (Duffey, 2015). Duffey stated bridge programs have a variety of legislated purposes; however, at their core, bridge programs are a type of college transition intervention “designed to support students so that they can transition successfully to higher education and degree attainment” (p. 3). Bridge programs, provided at the degree-granting institution or a partner institution, aim to support “student success (transition or ‘leaks’) in moving through the educational pipeline” to create “a smoother and more coherent education path” (Duffey, 2015, p. 5). From a higher education institutional perspective, this pipeline serves to address remediation, recruitment, and retention.

Using a similar process as TRIO, bridge programs often serve students who may need academic remediation or additional preparation (Wathington et al., 2016). Although statistics vary, Wathington et al. found that approximately 20-60% of incoming college students require some academic remediation, costing roughly $1 billion. The cost of remediation is necessary to help students prepare for post-secondary success and is undoubtedly necessary.

Colleges and universities have created bridge programs internally, such as summer bridge programs, and with other colleges and universities, such as public-private institution partnerships or regional partnerships (Bir & Myrick, 2015). While college readiness and remediation may be at the core of bridge programs, this core might be an underpinning of two further purposes of bridge programs: recruitment and retention.

Central Components of Bridge Programs
Higher education institutions create bridge programs as a college transition intervention with a focus on the following areas: academic, social, and co-curricular involvement (Duffey, 2015). With the many versions of bridge programs, several similar components fulfill the three focus areas within program services and development (Duffey, 2015). Duffey on the subject of bridge programs highlighted three central components of bridge programs that focus on services: caring and supportive staff and program structure, exposure to campus resources, and academic success. Researchers describe four central components of bridge program development and implementation: institutional support, funding, assessment, and communication.

Given that the main priority for most bridge programs is to aid in the transition to college for targeted populations at the particular institution (Duffey, 2015), many bridge programs are set up as an intentional learning community. A learning community is a grouping of students in similar courses to provide beyond the classroom experiences, activities, and opportunities to engage with faculty and peers to increase retention (Duffey, 2015). Bridge programs, structured as learning communities, include the intention to boost retention with academic and social engagement beyond the classroom by including supportive faculty and staff in and out of the classroom (Duffey, 2015). Suzuki et al. (2012) found that “common components include exposure to campus resources; use of tutoring and mentoring services; completion of college-level coursework; review of academic success skills; and community formation with peers, faculty, and staff in the program” (p. 87). Overall, despite institutional differences, bridge programs incorporate the central components of academic, social, and co-curricular involvement, which are critical for students’ development, retention, and satisfaction (Duffey, 2015). Duffey found that the majority of bridge participants reported accessing campus services, being engaged academically and socially, completing courses successfully, maintaining acceptable GPAs, and
retaining through their junior year. This finding aligns with the evidence in the works of Astin (1984), Tinto (1975, 1993), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1977, 1980) whereby students involved in the campus community are more likely to develop academic skills, increase personal development, and persist at the institution.

Within the higher education institutional perspective of bridge programs, the underlying purpose remains consistent. Higher education institutions, using bridge programs, are purposefully working towards creatively attracting, retaining, and graduating students, who may be lacking the necessary academic and social skills, as well as resilience, to be successful in college.

College Readiness Programs

Many college preparatory programs have been established to support students from subgroups traditionally underrepresented in higher education. They are all based on a similar principle: to “engage students in their high school educations and improve their chances of enrolling in and graduating from college” (Domina, 2009, p. 127). GEAR UP, Upward Bound, Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment programs are just some examples of college preparatory programs for African American and Latinx students, first-generation college-going students, and students from lower socio-economic families. These programs focus on helping students develop functioning skills and study skills, an understanding of the college application and scholarship application processes, and the ability to advocate for themselves (Wooldridge, 2017).

GEAR UP, Upward Bound, Advanced Placement (AP) and dual enrollment program participation rates have increased over the years (College Board, 2017). These pre-college opportunities provide students with experiences needed to prepare them for the rigors of college
coursework. Students participating in the preparatory program gain the skills for postsecondary success. While many studies have examined the effects of preparatory programs on college retention and persistence, few dig into the specific program components which students view essential for college success.

GEAR UP

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), authorized by Title IV of the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, is a federally-funded college preparatory program that focuses on “preparing and increasing the number of low-income and minority students in postsecondary education” (Central Michigan University, 2019).

The purpose of GEAR UP consists of three primary principals. First, the program assesses the academic and social needs of students by identifying the means that prevent them from pursuing post-secondary education. After recognizing the needs of the students, the program identifies and employs strategies to address those needs. Finally, GEAR UP programs pride themselves on long-term early intervention. (Central Michigan University, 2019).

To meet the three program principals, GEAR UP instructors work with whole cohorts of students, not just select students, beginning as early as middle school, to promote academic success and cultural competency. GEAR UP instructors serve as mentors, tutors, and counselors for students for a minimum of five years and help them transition from high school to colleges and trade schools (Parikh, 2013). The instructors focus on helping students to improve their grades and test scores and intervene to address behavior issues and absenteeism (Parikh, 2013). The instructors also focus on developing “university, school, and community partnerships that collectively work toward the singular goal of increasing equity and access on the part of low-
income and minority students into institutions of higher learning” (Ward, Strambler, & Linke, 2013, p.314).

GEAR UPs program varies from each host site. There is no specific curriculum, schedule, or format for the programs (Ward et al., 2013). However, each site is required to focus on two primary outcomes: (1) to provide early intervention academic support to minority students, and (2) to provide exposure to and support for postsecondary education financial aid requirements (Ward et al., 2013). Based on these criteria, a program can apply for and win a 6-year GEAR UP grant (Ward et al., 2013).

Upward Bound

Upward Bound is one of the oldest federally-funded college-preparatory intervention programs in the United States. It was started in 1964 when the Office of Economic Opportunity was established and developed its first three Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds (McElroy & Armesto, 1998). These programs have come to be known as the TRIO programs.

Upward Bound was the first TRIO program. Its goal then was, and is now, to increase the rate of participants who complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from post-secondary institutions (Voala, 2019). Voala noted that TRIO targets students from low-income families, particularly those who will be first-generation college-going students (Voala, 2019). Students who fall into these categories tend to lack the home and community resources that enable them to succeed in traditional educational settings and have been shown to have low academic achievement and to drop out of the educational pipeline at high rates and early stages (Voala, 2019).
Upward Bound forms partnerships between colleges and urban and rural high schools in order to expose their students to the rigors of college throughout their high school career (Mendoza, 2014). Like other college-preparatory programs, Upward Bound provides students services in academic counseling, career exploration, support through the college application process, and assistance with financial aid requirements (Mendoza, 2014). The program usually takes place during the school year, after school hours and on weekends, and during the summer (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

One unique aspect of the Upward Bound program, unmatched by any other college preparatory program, is its six-week summer immersion program typically held on the campus of a college or university (Mendoza, 2014). During the summer immersion program, students live on campus and study literature, composition, mathematics, and science (Mendoza, 2014). The summer component “allows students to earn credits toward their high school diploma and college degree” (Mendoza, 2014, p. 13). The primary goal of Upward Bound is to expose students to the college experience while still in high school so that they will not have to take remedial classes when they get to their chosen college campus after graduating from high school.

Recruitment for the program takes place year-round and may include outreach to students in local middle and high schools and solicitation of recommendations from teachers and administrators. Students may also nominate themselves to participate (Pitre & Pitre, 2009).

Advanced Placement Program History

The Cold War and the Korean Wars alerted many Americans to the need for an improved system of education (Rothschild, 1999). Scientists and engineers were needed to help fight during the war; Rothschild mentioned that researchers wanted ways to develop talented
individuals. Due to the talent gap in science and engineering, educators examined ways to accelerate the college process for advanced learners (Rothschild, 1999).

Two studies performed steered to the inception of the Advanced Placement Program (The College Board, 2017). After completion of the first study, which was conducted by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, the researchers recommended that schools try to align their core curriculum with those of postsecondary institutions to avoid students taking similar coursework at the college level (The College Board, 2017). The Committee on Advanced Standing performed the second study and developed rigorous secondary course descriptions, standards, and assessments for which colleges could award credit (The College Board, 2017). Seven schools participated in piloting these advanced courses (Rothschild, 1999). The College Board was chosen to oversee this process in 1955 and named the program, College Board Advanced Placement Program (The College Board, 2017).

After the program became more established, the College Board made concerted efforts to expand program offerings to low-income and minority students (The College Board, 2017). Program expansion created a dilemma between ensuring equal program access for all students and providing an opportunity for the distinction of high-achieving students (Schneider, 2009). Programs were also created to assist students in educating the academic skills necessary for success in advanced coursework.

The Advanced Placement Program currently includes 37 courses in math and computer science, English, science, history and social science, world language, and art (College Board, 2017). AP courses consist of rigorous curriculum similar to first-year introductory college courses (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). AP classes are designed to cultivate the critical thinking skills needed for success in postsecondary courses and are standards-based courses designed by
committees of higher education professors (Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Venezia and Jaeger added that AP teachers also contribute to the course development and implementation of the program.

Dual Enrollment

The definition of dual enrollment is broad because of different program objectives and structures (Burns & Lewis, 2000). Dual-enrollment programs are programs in which high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors have access to enroll in college courses (Marken, Gray, & Lewis, 2013). Students enroll in both high school and college courses at the same time, which explains the student's status of being dually enrolled; This type of enrollment is referred to as dual enrollment, joint enrollment, concurrent enrollment, or dual credit (Wyatt, Patterson, & Di Giacomo, 2015). Unlike other pre-college opportunities, such as Advanced Placement Programs or Upward Bound, dual enrollment students enroll in the actual college course with a college syllabus earning college credit. Achievement in dual-enrollment courses is measured by the student's final grade in the course, not by a standardized assessment score (Zinth, 2016a).

Students receive credit for both high school and college courses. Students receive a college transcript from the partnering college to show progress in the dual enrolled program (Wyatt et al., 2015).

Dual-enrollment programs were initially established to help meet the needs of secondary and postsecondary schools as they sought ways to help students transition from high school to college (Berger, Turk-Bicakci, Garet, Song, Knudson, Haxton, & Keating, 2013). The primary goal of dual-enrollment programs is to ensure that high school students earn a postsecondary credential (Berger et al., 2013). Dual-enrollment programs have changed over the past few decades as government policies have been added to oversee program structure and implementation (Zinth, 2016b). Much of the recent work with dual enrollment has focused on
better preparing students for the academic, social, and financial challenges that occur after high school graduation (Hofmann, 2012).

Some dual-enrollment programs are designed to address the needs of struggling learners or students underprepared for college coursework by providing contextualized learning support. In these dual-enrollment programs, students may take a course to develop the necessary skills in reading, writing, or math ((Khazem & Khazem, 2014). Dual-enrollment programs, which function as interventions, help students gain the academic and social skills needed for postsecondary success and avoid the need for developmental education.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) denotes a transformative, conceptual, methodological, and theoretical construct that assists researchers in examining and problematizing race in education (Howard & Navarro, 2016). As the U.S. increases in racial and ethnic diversity, it simultaneously contends with the historical impact of systemic racial disparities. As such, CRT serves as a valid lens by which factors that affect racial complexity can be evaluated, identified, addressed, and effectively measured (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Critical race theory (CRT) as a form of scholarship comes from a tradition of resistance to the unequal and unjust distribution of power and resources (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2016). In contrast, CRT reviewed race, racism, and power about a broader systemic structural phenomenon (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Due to the discriminatory foundation of the United States, people of color have been eliminated or limited from accessing resources. Specifically, when avenues that promote equal citizenship for people of color are blocked
(Taylor et al., 2016). Alexander (2012) described these barriers as disenfranchisement and discrimination. She explained that inclusion in every sphere of life, which included schools, churches, housing, jobs, restrooms, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, orphanages, prisons, funeral homes, morgues, and cemeteries did not occur (Alexander, 2012). Racism, through the CRT lens, is a state of being and not a threat of resentment (Alexander, 2012).

CRT is a theory used to identify the perpetuation of racism, ways in which racism occurs in society, the psychological and emotional experiences of persons who experience racism, and contributing factors that enable the manifestation of racism (Valdes, Culp, & Harris, 2002). The origins of CRT are in legal reviews in which the purpose is to confront the obscured and ingrained manners of privilege and power that continue to flourish within the legal system (Hernández, 2016). CRT became a practice used to confront racial inequality during and after the Civil Rights era in response to the slow progress made towards racial equality (Demoiny, 2017; Hernández, 2016). It also became a practice in education resulting from the efforts of educational scholars Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who used the theory to highlight race when investigating school practices and education guidelines (Demoiny, 2017).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discovered three fundamental assumptions of CRT. The first assumption was that CRT emphasized the existence of racism as a permanent fixture woven into the fabric of the nation. The second assumption was that the rights to property outweighed the rights of humanity in society. Lastly, the third assumption was that the connection between property and race resulted in creating a methodical instrument that helped to comprehend school and social disproportions. DeMatthews (2016) suggested CRT as an innovative perspective to learn how Whites overshadowed other cultures and how much racism remained a hidden secret and obscured within schools in the United States. Thus, CRT can serve as a platform in which
most persons voice their opposition to racism (Hodges, 2015). Some individuals believe that racism no longer existed since the election of the first African-American president, former President Barack H. Obama. However, the practice of racism transformed from overt acts that existed during the civil rights era and earlier to covert acts centered on White privilege (Hossain, 2015).

In educational research, CRT recognizes a useful lens, by which analysts can investigate issues that expand the continuous struggle to achieve civil rights and equity in education. Well, known issues such as access, opportunities, pedagogy, representation, and school climate are associated with low student access and school performance (Ledesma & Calderon, 2014). Parker (2015) acknowledged the contribution of CRT in increasing qualitative research literature, which is shaping policy and providing a platform by which the achievement gap of African-American students is examined and understood. CRT not only theorizes race; it perceives an analytic tool on issues of race and equity. The role of CRT in education is associated with five tenets: (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism; (2) the challenge to the dominant, hegemonic, White supremacy ideology; (3) commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and, (5) an interdisciplinary perspective (Solorzano, 1998). CRT, as a theoretical framework, guides the analysis of the collected data of students’ voices on their involvement in a summer bridge program, stakeholders involved with the summer program, and its effect on the academic success of African American and Latinx students.

Critical Race Theory in Education

CRT provided academic clarity for many families and African American and Latinx students. As such, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) viewed it as race, inequity, justice, and democracy. As a result, the researchers further researched and applied CRT to experiences for
African American and Latinx students in school systems. This was the beginning of the foundation for critical race theory in education (CRTE). This establishment of a foundation for the theory is a review of data relating to the correlation between race and academic outcomes. Ladson- Billings (2016) described schools as a dominant cultural space which necessitates the development of bicultural skills for Black and Brown students. This reality supports the need for including race in theories of education, resulting in the introduction of critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings, 2016).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) opened the door to fellow researchers like Howard (2010), who recognized CRTE as the vehicle that highlights the role of race in educational research, scholarship, and practice. He further asserted that the existence of this theory prevents educators from explaining the racial achievement gap as a coincidence or failure by African American and Latinx students (Howard, 2010).

Howard (2010) deduced that critical race theorists formed their assessment of racism in education in four primary ways:

- by theorizing about race along with the intersectionality of racism, classism, sexism and other forms of oppression in the school curriculum;
- by challenging dominant ideologies that call for objectivity and neutrality in educational research;
- by offering counter storytelling as a liberating and credible methodological tool in examining racial oppression;
- moreover, by incorporating transdisciplinary knowledge from women’s studies and ethnic studies to better understand various manifestations of discrimination (p. 99).
Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) suggested that the intersection of social and school inequities is the grounding principle of CRTE. The researchers also offered that this level of comprehension gives rise to a fuller understanding of injustice in school settings (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As a result, Ladson-Billings (1995) utilized the application of CRTE to examine curriculum, instruction, assessment, desegregation, and school funding.

Utilizing CRTE to assess all aspects of the educational system is a significant factor in equity research. As an example, Milner (2015) supported a process that leads to the examination of how academic outcomes of Black children occur as opposed to placing the focus on the outcomes and test scores. Gorski (2013), like Milner, also supported utilizing a CRTE lens by emphasizing that children who live in poverty, particularly African American students, are denied access to school resources and opportunities that other students take for granted. Consequently, both authors recognized the significance of processing how African American children experience education from a macro lens. Gorski (2013) further explained that the evidence of the disproportionate assignment to inadequately funded schools directly correlates to achievement outcomes.

As CRT and CRTE offer a wide-scale perspective of the universal impact that race has on institutional structures within the United States, particularly the public education system, the reviewed literature is classified into the following categories: race and history, race and socioeconomics, race and culture, race and educational practices, and racialized conversations. Each category directly links the intersectionality of race and education and its combined effect on social, political, financial, and cultural contexts for the African American community. Accordingly, it establishes a more transparent review of empirical studies through the macro lens
of the aforementioned conceptual frameworks. This paradigm shift encourages the review of outcomes from systemic racial phenomena as opposed to individual occurrences.

Connection to Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive practice begins with: (1) enhancing staff members' cultural knowledge; (2) enhance staffs' cultural self-awareness; (3) practice the validation of others' cultures; (4) application of cultural relevance to academic content and social skills; (5) establishing cultural validity; (5) practice of cultural equity (Parsons, 2017). These six practices help to facilitate a culturally responsive staff that is empathetic and culturally sensitive on three levels: institutional, instructional, and personal (Parsons, 2017). CRP steps align with Aronson and Laughter's (2016) six-dimensions of CRT by addressing similar issues in regards to African American and Latinx students. Both CRP and CRT are theories that take into consideration the student's background, experiences, and personal attributes when addressing educational concerns.

Garcia and Chun (2016) focused on teacher expectation and CRT in affecting academic achievement for Latinx students and found that when teachers use diverse teaching methods, Latinx students are more engaged in their learning and have positive beliefs about their academic performance. The study further showed that teachers do not observe clear ways to incorporate cultural values and practices into instruction (Garcia & Chun, 2016). A possible explanation for this lies in the curriculum and instruction teachers are presenting that students view through the lens of societal stereotypes (Garcia & Chun, 2016). Many schools lack adequate support for diverse students who have unique learning styles and social norms (Schulz, Hurt, & Lindo, 2014). It is essential for teacher-student relationships to support student learning in a supportive school climate throughout the school (Schultz, Hurt, & Lindo, 2014).
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

During the 1960s, researchers started a movement in education with intentions to be intentional to the educational needs of diverse learners (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Notable researchers include Kathy Au, James Banks, W.E.B. DuBois, Geneva Gay, Carl Grant, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Christine Sleeter, and Carter G. Woodson. The work of these researchers and others made culturally responsive pedagogy a methodological, conceptual, and theoretical framework. From the 1960s to now, the achievement gap had a different lens in the country. Working with diverse learners has created many different concepts. Concepts such as culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, culturally responsive, and culturally compatible are a few examples of concepts used to working with diverse learners (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Two primary strands stood out; the first, focusing on teacher practice, was referred to as culturally responsive pedagogy by Geneva Gay (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). The second focusing on teacher posture and paradigm was referred to as culturally responsive pedagogy by Gloria Ladson-Billings (Aronson & Laughter, 2016).

Culturally responsive pedagogy created by Ladson-Billings (1995), sought to induce a pedagogical change in education. Building upon Critical Race Theory, the goal was to redirect the deficit reflection of African American students, and shift the mindset of educators to asking, “what was right about these students and what happened in classrooms of teachers who seemed to experience pedagogical success with them” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 70). The primary focus of CRP centers on three domains: (1) academic success, (2) cultural competence, and (3) sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Lee (2017) defined these ternary terms in the following way: academic success refers to the “intellectual growth that students experience as a result of classroom instruction and learning
experiences” (Lee, 2017, p. 5). Cultural Competence is the “ability to help students celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture” (Lee, 2017, p.5). Lastly, Sociopolitical Consciousness is, “the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom, using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems” (Lee, 2017, p.5).

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) is a student-centered approach to teaching, where teachers use unique cultural strengths and cultural references of their students to promote student achievement (Gay, 2013). The cultural references are the practices, beliefs, and ideas that relate specifically to the culture. There are three dimensions of CRP, institutional (reflecting the administration and its policies and values), personal (the emotional processes of teachers), and instructional (materials, strategies, and activities that form the basis of instruction (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007). It consists of strategizing where the best teachers will be assigned, students in advanced courses, and how are resources allocated (Richards et al., 2007). By eliminating the barriers to learning and achievement, through CRP, culturally diverse students experience success, allowing them to reach their potential (Ford, 2010).

Gay (2010) explained culturally responsive pedagogy as teaching "to and through [students] cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their previous accomplishments (p. 26). Gay further explained that CRP "filters curriculum content and teaching strategies through their cultural frames of reference to make the content more personally meaningful and easier to master" (Gay, 2010, p. 26). For example, CRP recognizes and utilizes students' culture and language when teaching (Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2007). The classroom, curriculum, and practices of the teacher all are factors in the process. (Milner, 2015).
In alignment with the thoughts of Giroux and Simon, Ladson-Billings (1994) explained critical pedagogy as an attempt to influence the classroom culture by determining which cultural identities are produced and as an attempt to influence the quality of political and practical experiences. Ladson-Billings' explanation of critical pedagogy served as a basis upon which CRP is based and expounded. Ladson-Billings and other researchers' work built on the work of other researchers who called for a higher analysis of race, culture, teaching, and learning for diverse populations (Howard & Navarro, 2016).

Challenges with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Challenges with CRP are in its definition, implementation, and assessment (Young, 2010). Researchers have focused mainly on culture; some have developed their theoretical framework; some have focused on teaching literacy with an emphasis on culturally conscious themes; and others have viewed CRP in entirely different ways with no reference to the sociopolitical consciousness (Young, 2010). Though the definition and the use of CRP have been inconsistent, Young (2010) suggested that the more significant problem with CRP is the understanding of how to implement it. Young's (2010) study revealed:

(a) CRP clashes with traditional ways in which education is carried out;

(b) CRP appears to be too overwhelming for teachers;

(c) until teachers confront their own cultural biases effective implementation of CRP cannot happen;

(d) there is a need to address the racism in school policies and practices;

(e) there is a need to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers with the knowledge of how to put theories into practice; and
(f) there is a need to address teacher bias for the traditional curriculum, which prevents them from incorporating CRP. (p. 257)

Young (2010) noted that only teachers willing to engage students were non-White teachers. Lew and Nelson (2016) stated that new teachers are not familiar with CRP, and student diversity creates challenges for them. Howard and Navarro (2016) asserted that although many teachers have good intentions, they are not aware of their students' racial experiences, cultural knowledge, tendencies, and cultural habits. Howard and Navarro (2016) made known that the achievement gap will continue to exist until educators address historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral inequities in the U.S.

Critiques of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Education reform experts have touted CRP as a fundamental aspect of bridging the achievement gap (Paris & Alim, 2014). However, though CRP focuses on incorporating students’ experiences and cultural backgrounds into the instructional domain of urban classrooms, opponents of this framework view it as negatively influencing students’ views of themselves and others in a diverse society (Paris & Alim, 2014). These researchers believe that to acknowledge the inequities that different groups of people experience in our society, CRP can unintentionally maintain these social inequities. They contend that focusing on racism in schools causes students in impoverished communities to distrust the institutions that were created to help them, thereby creating more barriers for teachers in the classroom (Paris & Alim, 2014). This distrust in educational instructions can also cause underserved populations to remain impoverished because acknowledging racism can reinforce negative perceptions of oneself and others. Schmeichel (2012) expounded upon this phenomenon by stating that reforms addressing
inequity must be “examined and disturbed in order to question whether or not we are re-inscribing the same unjust discourses that have gotten us here in the first place” (p. 228).

Sleeter (2012) also critiqued CRP as having too little research connecting its use with student achievement and as being constrained by its inability to create empirical work. Young (2010) asserted that these constraints include “challenges of designing time-consuming, real-life lessons that reflect a commitment to culturally responsive pedagogy in the face of high-stakes testing” (p. 257). In her qualitative critical case study of eight staff members in a struggling urban elementary school in the northeastern United States, Young identified “three critical challenges to the theorizing, research, and practice of [culturally responsive pedagogy ]” (p. 257). Those challenges consisted of raising the racial consciousness of educators by giving them the tools to identify their own cultural biases, addressing the roots of system racism in education, and providing pre-service teachers with the tools to effectively implement CRP in the classroom.

Opponents and promoters of CRP agree that more research needs to occur to show correlations between CRP strategies and student achievement (Paris & Alim, 2014; Young, 2010). Since CRP is a social construct, it is challenging to identify measures that quantify for empirical research. Researchers Paris & Alim (2014) suggested that creating quantifiable metrics such as rubrics and teaching frameworks that measure CRP strategies would aid in expanding the literature and aid in correlating student achievement with CRP strategies.

Conceptual Framework

The importance for educators to consider whether or not they are meeting the needs of diverse learners is more important than ever. With the growing diversity of students in today’s schools, reform focus on how students’ needs are being meet needs to be a priority. Culturally responsive pedagogy is a way to try for equity for students of different cultural backgrounds.
Therefore, culturally responsive pedagogy will be used as a framework for this study, and it will be informed by critical race theory.

Critical race theory (CRT) is an area in which educators have a direct impact on the success of historically oppressed students. Many educators deem themselves critical race theorists who use CRT’s ideas to identify issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing (Milner, 2017). CRT seeks to change the way in which race impacts education policies and practices. Discussions of CRT practices in the classroom are essential in shaping the worldviews of students and educators (Ladson-Billings, 1996).

This study will focus on a framework of principles of Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) as developed by Ladson-Billings’ (1996). This framework of CRP teaching principles uses five themes: identity and achievement, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, and student-teacher relationships (Ladson-Billings, 1996). CRP is used in this study in response to meeting the needs of African American and Latinx students from low-income backgrounds by providing multicultural education, challenging the dominant ideology, offering a multiplicity of lenses through which to view bias, and adjusting teaching to respond to educational needs and learning styles of diverse learners.
Figure 1. Conceptual framework outlining the movement from underprepared, through summer bridge programs, to college readiness and achievement.

Development of the conceptual framework for this study commenced with consideration of two education concepts Gloria Ladson-Billings' culturally responsive pedagogy and summer bridge programs. These two education concepts relate to student success as a process that takes underrepresented and underprepared high school juniors, place into a culturally responsive
program designed to prepare for college, and concludes with college readiness and college success. Academic and social college preparation interventions such as transition programs and summer bridge programs may aid in creating college access and student success.

Gaps in the Literature

Programs to help underprepared students gain access to college have been around since the 1800s because of the increase of “common men,” women, and Blacks in higher education (Ruecker, Shepherd, Estrem, & Brunk-Chavez, 2017). More research exploring the effectiveness of a program through the eyes of a program graduate is essential. Strayhorn (2019) found that summer bridge programs positively and significantly influenced students’ academic abilities. According to Strayhorn (2019), most studies have only viewed the effectiveness of a single program and have not assessed student progress beyond the Bridge program. Sablan (2014) found research on the attitudes of students toward a summer bridge program and their satisfaction with the program. Previous studies have not examined the effectiveness of the program in terms of launching a college experience that leads to degree completion (Sablan, 2014). There is also a lack of data assessing the experiences of student participants of summer bridge programs that are not already enrolled in college. Most research focuses on the summer bridge program of graduating seniors participating in a summer bridge program before the start of the first year of college. Research has not been conducted on a summer bridge program that is offered to high school juniors and is based on culturally responsive pedagogy. Providing examples through case analyses of students who participated in a summer bridge program that was based on CRP, enrolled in the university, and now have a successful college career may begin to fill in the gaps of research on transition programs.
Strayhorn (2019) argued that research on summer bridge programs lacks depth. He further indicated that providing insight into the world of participants of a summer bridge program who have gone on to post-secondary success may be helpful to higher education administrators who coordinate summer bridge programs and academics interested in developing a summer bridge program.

Summary

Higher education institutions have developed programs in response to increased accountability and numbers of students entering college, lacking the skills necessary to succeed and persist to graduation. Summer bridge programs have been established in order to increase the success of student outcomes, as well as persistence to graduation. Summer bridge programs vary in their program components and targeted populations, depending on the institution’s initiatives. It is important that populations that focus on first-generation; African American and Latinx students use intentional programming to be most effective. Introducing a culturally responsive program that incorporates culturally responsive pedagogy can ensure that all students receive intentional and purposeful programs.

Chapter II reviews the literature regarding critical race theory, culturally responsive pedagogy, achievement gap, and summer bridge programs. This section also described the achievement gap, a historical overview of summer bridge programs, an overview of college readiness programs, the theoretical foundations for this study, and a conceptual framework for the study. Chapter 2 provides context on how summer bridge programs can increase students' interest, engagement, perception, and confidence as it
pertains to college awareness and preparation through an examination and review of the literature.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of first-generation college African American and Latinx students who took part in a summer bridge program and to explore what impact the program had on their college success. Culturally responsive pedagogy has been found to have positive influences when it comes to student engagement, interest, perception, and confidence as it relates to their academic performance (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Chapter 3 includes an explanation of the study's problem, methodology, design, population and sample selection, and sources of data collection and data analysis procedures, and an understanding of the research questions. Data and management will be discussed. Chapter III includes limitations and delimitations.

Research Questions

This qualitative phenomenological study was guided by these two research questions:

1. How do participants in one summer bridge program describe their experiences in the program?

2. How do summer bridge program participants feel those experiences shaped their preparation for college and their academic success in college.

Research Design

For this study, a qualitative research approach was used. An interpretive qualitative phenomenological research approach fits this study the best because it helped to develop understanding in how participants perceive their experiences in the summer bridge program and if the summer bridge program helps the participants be prepared for post-secondary opportunities.
and create college success. The philosophical assumption or world view proposed in the study was social constructivism. Creswell (2014) allowed that the basic generation of the meaning of social constructivism was always social as people engaged with their world and made sense of it based on their cultural, historical, and social perspectives. In addition, social constructivist believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). These beliefs and assumptions were congruent with a phenomenological worldview, a paradigmatic orientation undergirding this study. For instance, I believed that to work effectively with first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students in a summer bridge program, understanding how they perceived their world and experiences was critical. In as much, this researcher maintained the role of an active learner by narrating the lived experiences from the participant's view.

Qualitative research can be used to describe data that are difficult to translate from a quantitative standpoint (Lichtman, 2012). Qualitative research is necessary because the research question focused on the bridge experience, and the voice of the student participants could be unique and more challenging to capture in a questionnaire (Lichtman, 2012). According to Creswell (2018), a qualitative study is conducted for the researcher to develop themes from open-ended data collection. A questionnaire would have been complicated for researchers to allow for participants’ individual expression of experiences. A qualitative approach also allows for a stronger emphasis on a single phenomenon and permits follow-up questions where needed. A primary reason for conducting qualitative research is that it can focus on an experience and capture the “essence of the experience for individuals incorporating ‘what’ they have experienced and ‘how’ they have experienced it” (Creswell, 2018, p. 79).
In order to more fully understand the participant's experiences and the unique nature of the summer program, a detailed qualitative interpretive phenomenological methodology was used. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative researchers have underscored the importance of not only understanding the beliefs and theories that inform an individual’s research, but also that the individual should also actively write about the beliefs in reports and studies. This qualitative study is structured around the voices of the participants, voices that carry the story through dialogue. According to Creswell (2018), a phenomenological study elicits and interprets how several individuals made meaning of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. In this study, participants’ lived experiences were examined and analyzed. I will focus on describing the essence of how the summer bridge program participants derived their individual meanings as they experienced the common phenomenon of the summer bridge program at the university.

For this study, the phenomenological design was more appropriate than an ethnographic design. Ethnographies always focus on the culture of the group or entity (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The study did not require any stakeholders to share the same cultural background as the participants. The goal was to gain a more in-depth insight and understanding of the human experiences of attending a summer bridge program. An ethnographic study looks inward, uncovering the implied knowledge of culture participants while the aim of this study was to look outward, describing the nature of the phenomena through a detailed investigation of the participants and context (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

This study was structured around the framework of Husserl (1931) and also of those who have expanded on his framework, including Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2018). All of these perspectives focused on common grounds, which was the study of the lived experiences of persons and the development of descriptions of the essences of those experiences (Moustakas,
Creswell (2018) observed that a phenomenological research study should focus on several individuals and their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. VanManen (1990) described a phenomenon as an “object” of human experience. The experiences of the participants in this study included the same summer bridge program at a university in the Midwest.

Husserl (1970) claimed that the researcher would first “bracket” him or herself out of the study for analytic purposes. VanManen (1990) argued that bracketing personal experiences might have been trying for the researcher to do because several interpretations of the results or data always incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brought to the topic. I used bracketing as a method of demonstrating validity after performing the phenomenological study.

Bracketing

Creswell (2018) suggested that researchers needed to decide how and in what way their personal experiences and understandings of the phenomenon would be introduced into the study. As such, I have disclosed my personal connection to the summer bridge program and past relationship with the university. According to Carpenter (2007), bracketing was a methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that required deliberately putting aside one’s own belief about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knew about the subject prior to and throughout the phenomenological investigation. Carpenter (2007) suggested that convincing efforts should be made by researchers to put aside their repertoires of knowledge, beliefs, values, and experiences in order to accurately describe the participants’ lived experiences. The goal of this study was to understand the participants’ lived experiences. I only focused solely on ways that participants of the study perceived the summer bridge program and put aside my own belief about the phenomenon study and prior knowledge of the summer bridge program.
Creswell (2018) argued that phenomenology should discuss the essence of the lived experience for the participants. The study included “what” was experienced and “how” it was experienced. Individual interviews were supported by my ability to capture the essence of how individuals interpreted and processed experiences of their summer bridge program experience. Phenomenology is a valuable tool to motivate inner reflection on the part of participants and the researcher (Moustakas, 1994).

Population and Sample

The target population for this study included previous participants of the summer bridge program. The participants targeted completed the summer bridge program between the years 2014 – 2018 and qualified for the summer bridge program by being considered as underrepresented students. Each of the participants completed the summer bridge program in one of the three different locations the university offers the program. The sample included seven current or recent graduate students from the university who attended and completed the summer bridge program.

According to Creswell (2018), in a phenomenological study, the participants can be located at a single site, but this is not a requirement. The key factor is that the individuals must have all experienced and be able to articulate the same phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2018). First, the strategy for the purposeful sampling of the past participants of the CRP based summer bridge program will intentionally sample a group of individuals that can best inform the researcher about the research problem being examined (Creswell, 2018). Second, Creswell (2018) would recommend against conducting research on participants and programs outside of the researcher’s current employer, “given the fact that research conducted in your own backyard (within your own institution, agency, with friends or colleagues) is questionable and risky” (p. 54).
The reason for this is that “researchers can jeopardize their jobs if they report unfavorable data or if participants disclose private information that might negatively influence the organization or workplace” (Creswell, 2018, p. 151). Third, a narrower range of sampling strategies is recommended for phenomenological studies since all participants need to have the shared experience with the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2018). For this reason, criterion sampling works well, which focuses on a sample that, in some way, can meet specific criteria and will be helpful to have quality assurance (Creswell, 2018). Criteria for this group of participants was as follows: student of color; at-risk; low-income; first-generation college students; completed CRP based summer bridge program between 2014 - 2018; are currently enrolled at the university, or a recent graduate from the university. The shared phenomenon that they all experienced was the completion of the CRP based summer bridge program at a midsize four-year midwestern university. This criterion was important for the following reasons. The inclusion criteria for the participants in this study required that all participants be either currently enrolled in or graduated from the university and completed the summer bridge program at one of the three locations that the university offers the program and be first-generation, first in the family, and a student of color.

The criteria for exclusion in this study excluded students who participated in the summer bridge program and did not complete the program. This excludes students who completed the summer bridge program but did not enroll in the university.

Finally, the preference was to interview participants who completed the CRP based summer bridge program and are currently enrolled at the university or recent graduate and reside in the area of the university, as it would be easier to conduct more in-depth research in person.
The desired sample size was 7-10 participants. Smith et al. (2009) recommend between three and seven participants, and state that it’s better to have a population size that is too small versus too large given the in-depth analysis required for IPA research studies. Creswell (2018) provides a minimum of 3-4 individuals and a maximum of 10-15 individuals. Given the criterion established and the themes from the shared phenomenon that the researcher hopes to reveal, it will be too challenging to find overarching themes with just a handful of participants. Once the full pool of eligible subjects was identified, the original plan was to use a simple random sampling method. Instead, participants were selected on a first-come-first-serve basis, given the small pool of eligible participants.

Authorization via email was obtained from the bridge program’s director prior to any contact being made with the potential study participants. I sent out an email invitation (see Appendix C) to participate to a total of 40 currently enrolled university students and a total of ten alumni who completed the CRP summer bridge program during the specific time period of 2014-2018.

All participants who were interested in participating in the study replied to an email invitation to participate in this study. Participants who replied to the invitation were put onto a document and forward over to the CRP based summer bridge program director. The program director conducted a cross-check on the students to ensure they meet the criteria to be apart of the study. After cross-check was completed, the program director emailed me a list of 15 names that qualified to be apart of the study. I reached out to all 15 participants to schedule the first round of interviews at the university. Out of the 15 participants, nine participants confirmed. I worked with the university to reserve a private space on campus to conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants. Out of the nine participants who confirmed only seven
participants arrived for their scheduled interview. One participant was a no show, and another participant had a conflict arise.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol included preparation for interviewing, topics in interview questions, the wording of questions, sequencing of questions, conducting the interview, and procedures to follow immediately after interviewing. Waters (2017) offered the following suggestions for the researcher: Be as non-directive as possible in your instructions. Ask participants to describe their experience without directing or suggesting their description in any way. Encourage participants to give a full description of their experience, including their thoughts, feelings, images, sensations, memories, stream of consciousness, along with a description of the situation in which the experience occurred. The focus is on a deep understanding of the meaning of the description. The researcher may need to ask for clarification of the details on the participant’s responses. If so, the researcher’s follow up questions should again ask for further description of the detail, without suggesting what they are looking for.

Creswell (2018) posited that is essential for the researcher to have excellent skills and competency in interviewing to circumvent possible bias during data gathering; skills that focus on building participant-researcher rapport, empathy, active listening, observation, paraphrasing, clarification, identifying contradictions, and avoiding inconsistency, summarizing reflection of feelings, and self-revelation. Additionally, the researcher must have a command of skills in body language, vocalizations, identification and recognition of types of silences, and sensitivity to cultural diversity. For instance, it can be an uncomfortable position for participants, particularly when the interview exposes taken-for-granted assumptions or challenges the comfortable status quo (Creswell, 2014). Finally, the researcher must have a good knowledge of the types of
relevant questions (e.g., anecdotal, intentional, bipolar, non-specific focus, reflective, of instantiation).

Questions asked during the interviews were open-ended to allow for in-depth responses. The data was gathered through in-depth interviews. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Interview protocol (Appendix E). The interviewer guided each question according to a standardized open-ended format. Some responses led to additional questions, which allowed the interviewer to modify the question and enabled the participant to elaborate further on their answers. This method added to the richness of the descriptions contained in the analysis. A set protocol for all interviews was followed to address the research questions.

Prior to each participant 60 – 90-minute interview, each was given an informed consent document (see Appendix D) to read, ask any questions, and sign. The informed consent outlined the purpose of the study, benefits, risks, dates of the research, and a place and date for signatories. The research questions 1-7 were designed to obtain descriptive responses to participants’ perspectives prior to starting the CRP based summer bridge program. question 8 was designed to get the descriptive responses to participants' perspectives on the impact of the CRP based summer bridge program. Questions 9-11 were designed to get descriptive responses to participants' perspectives on the perception of the summer bridge program. Question 12 was designed to get descriptive responses about the overall experience of the CRP based summer bridge program. Strict confidentiality, professionalism, and the statute of doing no harm were explained and adhered to.

Do No Harm

This researcher was careful to do no harm and to avoid any deceptions by keeping the interview questions responses confidential, using encryption on the personal computer, and
locked storage of data. The proper destruction of data after completion of the study will be done. As such, paper records will be shredded and recycled. Records stored on the computer hard drive will be erased using commercial software applications designed to remove all data from the storage device. For data stored on USB drives or recorded data on tapes, the storage devices will be physically destroyed. This researcher kept records stating what records were destroyed, and when and how it was done.

Data Collection

The data collection process for this study included semi-structured interviews that took 60-90 minutes for each interview. In accordance with qualitative research, I collected multiple interview sources (Creswell, 2018). According to Creswell (2018), data for a phenomenological study should be collected from the individuals who had experienced the phenomenon. The data for the study were gathered through in-depth semi-structured individual interviews. Creswell (2018) observed that interviews conducted for a qualitative study should be structured around open-ended interview questions. This study focused on the lived experiences of seven participants (See Appendices E and F). The participants sought for this study consisted of seven students who met the criteria for inclusion.

Data from individual interviews were collected through a series of pre-determined open-ended semi-structured interview questions with the use of probing and follow-up questions. Each participant was a part of two interviews, each 60-90 minutes in duration. In the second interview, that was scheduled approximately three weeks after the first; I sought out clarifications, nuances, and member checking for an accurate representation of the participants' responses.

The data collected from the individual semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded using a stand-alone recording device to an encrypted MP3 file. Immediately after each interview,
the file was submitted to a third-party transcription service approved for the confidentiality of data usage. The goals of the interviews were to identify any data patterns and the development of themes. Transcriptions of interview sessions and researcher notes were placed in a file labeled for each session. The file for each session was kept locked in a secure filing cabinet in a locked secured office, where only the research had access. All transcriptions of interview sessions and researcher notes will be shredded at the conclusion of this study.

It is crucial to think of the data in terms of luxurious quality and full quantity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Details of the context, examples of raw data, and direct quotes are necessary for data to be productive and thick (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The more luxurious and thicker the data, the easier it is to apply findings to other settings and groups, hence transferability (Houghton et al., 2013). Not only are these rich and thick data necessary for transferability, but also to permit the possibility of alternative interpretations to be considered by others (Houghton et al., 2013).

Data Analysis

For this study, the data analysis was designed to help answer the research questions for the study; a combination of semi-structured interviews and researcher notes from the interview were used to provide contextual data. A thematic analysis approach was used for interviews and followed McCracken's five-step process of analysis (Piercy, 2015). These steps included (1) reading the transcript of interview notes carefully and making notations in the margins; (2) from the interviews, develop preliminary descriptive and interpretive categories (preliminary codes) based on the evidence presented in the transcripts; (3) identify connections from preliminary codes and develop pattern codes; (4) determining underlying themes by examining clusters of comments made by respondents and notes made by researcher; (5) examine themes from all
The next step included utilizing the MAXQDA software system. Interviews were uploaded into MAXQDA individually to develop initial codes, and later to develop themes from the interview data. Data uploaded into MAXQDA were read at least three times to become familiar with the data. An In Vivo coding was done. Words and phrases used by the participant were used as codes (Saldana, 2015). These words and phrases, which are enclosed with quotation marks, honored the participants' voices and included terms from their culture (Saldana, 2015). Words and phrases from interviews related to the research questions with a code word or words using various highlighted colors helped organize the data. Preliminary codes were first developed from the data obtained from each of the interviews. Connections from the preliminary codes were used to develop pattern codes.

According to Creswell (2018), coding represents the heart of qualitative data analysis. During this period, I built detailed descriptions, developed common and divergent themes across participants, and provided an interpretation in light of the participants’ own views or views of perspectives in the literature (See Appendix G) (Creswell, 2018). Creswell stated, “coding involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different databases being used in a study, and then assigning a label to the code” (p. 184).

From the coding, I analyzed common themes that were discussed by the participants. As part of this process, I triangulated the data by using member checking, coding for similar themes, and immersing myself in the reading and rereading of the transcripts to be sure I obtain the true essence of the participants’ thoughts and meaning-making.
Pattern matching was used to code observation field notes. Pattern matching enhances the internal validity as it involves a comparison of predicted patterns or effects with those that have been empirically observed (Baskarada, 2014).

Once the codes were reduced to categories, all directly observable information from the data collection were reduced further into themes. Theming involves identifying what is directly observable in the information (Saldana, 2015). Themes may consist of a description of behavior, extended phrases, or sentences of what is directly observed (Saldana, 2015).

Methodology Limitations

Delimitations

Delimitations limit the scope of the study based on the demographic characteristics of participants (McMillan, 2012). Multiple delimitations exist in this study. This study was only conducted on one comprehensive Midwestern university summer bridge program. All participants involved in the program were not used for data collection in this study. Specific criteria for inclusion were established for participation in this study. Only individuals who fit the designated criteria were interviewed.

Limitations

Limitations of this study describe the specific phenomenon being studied “rather than predicting future behavior” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 50). Several factors contributed to the findings of this study. The summer bridge program was designed to meet the needs of participants in their communities; therefore, the experiences participants described may not be the same if the study is replicated at other institutions. Purposeful and convenient sampling was used in this study. Purposeful sampling is when “the inquirer selects individuals and sites for
study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2018, p. 125). Therefore, the experiences of these specific summer bridge participants who volunteered for the study may not be the experiences of the entire summer bridge program.

One of the limitations (Creswell, 2015) of this study involved how the population was determined. Although participants were students who participated in the summer bridge program, only students who self-identified as a student of color, first-generation, and enrolled at the university were able to participate. Consequently, I needed to examined each of the participants as individuals and was careful not to generalize data based on the experiences of a small number of people who identify a particular way.

Another limitation of this study includes potential researcher bias since I was previously employed by the institution where the research was conducted and had previous ties with the institution's summer bridge program. I made sure to mitigate this limitation by focusing the research only on the beliefs and thoughts of the participants from this study. I also bracketed myself out of the study by providing information on how my previous role with the institution connected to the summer bridge program. Creswell (2018) stated, “To fully describe how participants view the phenomenon, researchers must bracket out as much as possible, their own experiences” (p.81). Additionally, as a phenomenological qualitative study limited to one summer bridge program, it is my intention that findings not be generalized to all summer bridge programs or participants within a summer bridge program.

Ethical Considerations

Following the Belmont Principles, respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, all interviews were designed in a way that aligned to these principles (Salganik, 2016). The
The interview protocol was worded carefully and was not sensitive or difficult to answer. The practice of "do no harm" was observed and practiced while conducting semi-structured interviews. Any participant’s name that participants may have used during the interviews was reacted from the transcripts during the first reading to protect their privacy. Confidentiality was maintained in this study by ensuring that interviews used are submitted anonymously, and actual names were not used in any part of this study. An audio recording was used for individual interviews and also transcribed. I asked each participant to use a pseudonym for identification on the recording and in the results. I also followed all procedures required by both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university that offers the summer bridge program and Central Michigan University IRB procedures required to ensure the ethical treatment of human participants. Although IRB will evaluate the ethical and legal status of the dissertation research (Butin, 2009), I will do my due diligence in protecting the rights of the participants of this study.

Participants had the choice of participating in the study or not. Participants were reminded that no repercussions would occur if they decide not to participate. I gave all potential participants an informed consent form to sign (see Appendix C).

Once interviews started, I continued to remind participants that the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time, and the data collected were destroyed upon the completion of this study. There were no participants who chose to withdraw from the study once they affirmed their consent to participate. All files were saved on an encrypted laptop provided by the university with access limited to myself and my faculty advisor acting as the principal investigator. No other person had access to or was able to gain access to any files related to this study. Participants were given a choice to receive a
copy of their transcript via email and/or a hard copy mailed to them by me. Participants were given the opportunity to make changes to what was recorded during their interview to accurately portray what they said or meant during the follow-up interview as a form of member-checking.

**Trustworthiness**

The sources of data included semi-structured interviews and researcher notes, and document analysis from publicly available information about the summer bridge program attended by the participants by using a methodological triangulation. The ability to collect data from these sources was expected to result in rich descriptive data (Baskarada, 2014). Member checking was also used for validating and checking the credibility of the data while obtaining rich data (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). The methodology of this study was designed to be rigorous. The level of rigor was addressed in the design as it pertained to credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, as suggested by Houghton et al. (2013).

**Potential Research Bias**

The potential bias associated with this study is cultural bias. Sarniak (2015) stated assumptions about motivations and influences that are based on a cultural lens create cultural bias — being that I have a personal experience related to the student participants in this study, it is essential to identify this as a potential bias. To minimize cultural bias, I moved toward cultural relativism by showing unconditional positive regard and being cognizant of my cultural assumptions. Ultimately cultural relativism is never 100% achievable, but acknowledging the culture bias made me aware of this during the course of this study.
Another potential bias included professional bias. I currently work in higher education with a similar program, students, and have professional connections with some stakeholders in this study. Insider bias, relationships with known participants, and negative findings could raise a host of issues (Butin, 2009). To prevent conflict of interest, no known participants were used, nor was the study conducted in a space where I have ties. This helped to prevent any kind of bias from occurring that could influence the study or interfere with the trustworthiness of the findings of the study.

Summary

The research design for this qualitative study is focused on the best methodology needed to explore and reveal the potential benefits of a CRP based summer bridge program for the preparation of first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students for post-secondary options. The IPA methodology was selected due to the focus on lived experiences and alignment with storytelling with the theoretical framework of CRT and CRP. The research design prioritizes identifying participants that fit the specific criterion but, most importantly, have experienced the same shared phenomenon – completion of the CRP based summer bridge program from the Midwestern university. Interviews would be conducted to collect data, and steps aligned with the IPA research methodology would be adhered to.

The lack of academic preparation for post-secondary success for African American and Latinx students is an ongoing challenge for schools and communities across the U.S. Many researchers believe that culturally responsive pedagogy programming and pre-college programming will improve the academic preparation and achievement of this group (Aronson & Laughter 2016). To explore participants' and community members' perceptions regarding the use of a summer bridge program format, chapter 3 contained the methodology and tools that will be
used to collect data. A qualitative interpretive phenomenological design (IPA) was chosen to conduct a study at the university.
CHAPTER IV
REPORT OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of first-generation college African American and Latinx students who took part in a summer bridge program and to explore what impact the program had on their college success. The study focused on the problem posed by the lack of intentional Summer Bridge programs designed to support underprepared, first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students.

Within the taxonomy of first-generation, at-risk, students’ of color perceptions of their experiences in a culturally responsive pedagogy based summer bridge program, four themes emerged: (1) developing collegiate confidence; (2) bridge program as the foundation for support and success; (3) identifying sources of motivation and support; and (4) promoting the historical culture and language of students. Having family support, professors, and staff members who were of color and came from the communities and receiving resources and supports were consistent parts of the student's experiences that are connected with their perceived college success. When the students received the support and resources, their confidence grew, and they felt as they not only can go to college, they can get through college.

This qualitative study employing individual interviews with opened-ended response methodology sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do participants in one summer bridge program describe their experiences in the program?

2. How do summer bridge program participants feel those experiences shaped their preparation for college and their academic success in college.
To answer these questions, data were collected from seven current and recent college students who participated in a culturally responsive pedagogy based summer bridge program at a midsize Midwestern university. Pseudonyms were created to ensure that all participants’ identities were protected. Site background data obtained from publicly available domains were included in this study to add context to the experiences described by the participants. All data collected were transcribed and manually coded for inductive analysis with attention focused on the proposed themes outlined within the research questions utilized for this study.

Site Background Data

The summer bridge program at the university in this study has been in existence since 2014. The idea of the program originated with the directors of an office that focused on building community-university partnerships designed to foster success for all students, particularly Latinx students. To this end, the directors partnered with local non-profits and public school districts in Latinx communities to offer an on-site program, rather than on the university campus, with support from respected and trusted community leaders. The program began in an urban area whose local school district had low college attainment and a high first-generation student population. Participants joined the program to strengthen their academic skills in reading, critical thinking, writing, mathematics, and study skills. Participants took three credit-bearing courses: English, Math, and a course on College Preparation.

The summer bridge program is unique because the program is offered to juniors who will be entering their senior year of high school, and the director established the foundation of the summer bridge program based on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) created by Ladson-Billings (1995) who sought to induce a pedagogical change in education. Building upon Critical Race Theory CRT, the goal was to redirect the deficit reflection of African American students
and shift the mindset of educators (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Culturally responsive pedagogy is a model topic that stresses building relationships and community with African American and Latinx students. The primary focus of CRP centers on three domains: (1) academic success, (2) cultural competence, and (3) sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). After reviewing many other summer bridge programs, no other university is offering a summer bridge program experience using CRP as the foundation and to juniors in high school.

Today, the university summer bridge program is an 8-week program designed for a select group of approximately 40 high-achieving high school juniors from groups considered underrepresented, first-generation African American and Latinx students. The program is now running in three different cities and uses intentional programming based on CRP to make each location specific to the group of students at that location. The goals of the program are to strengthen academic skills through foundational courses, provide personalized advising and instruction, acclimate students to the university level of academic rigor, establish a supportive and diverse environment, shape students’ personal and social adjustment to the campus environment, and expose students to campus resources. Depending on the location, the college-level course load is between 7–9 credits and count for credit toward college graduation. All three credit-bearing courses appear on the student’s official transcript. All three locations offer multiple parent engagement activities to ensure parents are engaged in the program. All three locations work with local community agencies to have community support for providing resources to students in the program. All three locations have different unique weekly cultural-based activities scheduled for students to create a sense of belonging. Each location has an assigned academic advisor in the summer bridge program who serves as their advisor for the duration of the summer bridge program. Advisors provide guidance on courses, career planning,
progress towards preparing for college, and academic socialization. Throughout the summer bridge program, each location will have approximately 3–5 currently enrolled college students from the university who serve as mentors and additional supports during the summer bridge program.

Prior to the first week of the program, participants and family members of the participants go through a series of orientation seminars to understand and learn about the summer bridge program. Participants receive information from the program administrators, staff and peer advisors, and other campus university staff. The first week participants begin classes, and by the second and third week of the program, participants will become a little more acclimated with the campus and the expectations of course work and attend a unique cultural based activity, relevant to their community, weekly developed by the program staff. In the fourth and fifth week of the program, participants experience what their first midterm exam in all courses will be like. By the sixth and seventh week of the summer bridge program, participants will be preparing for the summer bridge program closing ceremony. Participants are provided with the tools and resources for academic success, and specific locations offer stipends for participants. (See Appendix D for a sample of summer bridge program weekly schedule.)

Students who participate in the summer bridge program are selected by the university’s admission team and director of the office that leads the program. These students, once admitted into the program, are also admissible to the university. They may be first-generation students, come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, and/or come from underrepresented or underserved high schools or neighborhoods. Similar to the selection criteria of the Educational Opportunity (EOP), Special Transitional Enrichment (STEP), and TRIO Programs, the summer bridge program takes into account low-income and/or the first-generation status, lower than
average high school GPA, and test scores (Villalobos, 2014). Participants who choose to participate in the summer bridge program are not mandated to do so. The summer bridge program is an optional program available to students who attend a high school in the three different locations and meet the admissions requirement of the university.

Demographic Participant Data

Table I shows an overview of the demographic data of the seven participants in this study gathered during the interviews. The participants were all first-generation college African American and Latinx students who participated in a summer bridge program between their high school completion and their Freshman year at a Midwestern University. The interview questions for the study were pre-determined; however, the interviews began with questions about the participants’ backgrounds and educational experiences prior to attending college to formulate the participant demographic to add context to participant responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym (Gender)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Year in College</th>
<th>Year in the Summer Bridge Program</th>
<th>Mother’s Highest Educational Level</th>
<th>Father’s Highest Educational Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria (Female)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
<td>Some Grade School</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael (Male)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>Grade School</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brianna (Female)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon (Male)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla (Female)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica (Female)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher (Male)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developing Collegiate Confidence

Being confident in one’s ability to successfully transition from high school to college is vital for first-semester success, outcomes, and completion. For many students coming from low-income, first-generation, or minority backgrounds, this transition can be difficult because they lack social and cultural capital that can support successful high school to college transition. The first superordinate theme that emerged in the research study portrays participants’ primary areas of angst and hope as they transitioned from high school to college. Confidence, in this case, referred to how comfortable each participant was with taking on collegiate coursework and expectations after completing one week in the summer bridge program, transitioning into the semester, and completing the first semester of college.

Two areas were found that all participants experienced while developing collegiate confidence. First, participants expressed that the bridge program played a significant role in their college semester success by helping them identify resources, tools, and strategies for being a successful college student. Further, they developed increased confidence by forming new affinity groups with diverse pupils. They also found being around others from similar backgrounds was empowering, and it inspired them to speak up about their backgrounds during class discussions over the course of the program and during college.

Bridge Program as the Foundation for Support and Success

In their accounts, all seven participants stated their participation in the summer bridge program was the foundation for their success and understanding of how to traverse college life. All research participants said applying to college was stressful and they decided to apply to the summer bridge program because they felt the need for a trial run of what college would be like, earning college credit, learning skills to be a successful college student, and getting to know how
it would be to be an actual college student. Victoria explained her initial choice to participate in
the program was to earn college credit and see if college was really for her. After reading the
program description, she reflected on how participating could not only allow her to get a head
start on college but could also help her develop more college readiness skills:

I just wanted to see if college was actually for me. Then, I saw in the description that
there are classes that would help you be ready for college, and I realized in high school I
wasn’t sure if I was going to even go to college. And belonging to a summer bridge
program, I felt like it would help me out a little bit more, and see if there’s anything that
I’m missing, which there was a lot of stuff that I was missing that happened in high
school that I didn’t learn for college.

Victoria was content with her decision to participate and realized the program was the foundation
for building her collegiate confidence and learning about metacognition by building relationships
with faculty, staff, and other students in her academic career:

I’m happy that I went to the program, and I was excited for the summer bridge program
because I wanted to see if there was anything that I missed in high school. It was literally
everything that I missed, almost everything. So, actually belonging to a summer bridge
program with actual professors that want to teach students, like, “Hey, this is high school
but backward. You have to understand. You can’t memorize. You have to learn to write
your own paper, not write what the teacher wants you to write.” So, I’m glad that I went to
the program because of that.

While Victoria discussed how learning from a faculty member in the summer bridge program
experience bolstered her confidence and understanding of the difference between high school
and college expectations. Jessica stated, “It helped me connect because I had a pretty good
understanding of where most things were on campus in advance, which helped me feel confident when I arrived on campus.” Similarly, Brandon discussed the difference between high school and college and what he learned from the summer bridge program that aided his success in college. He was mostly impacted by the study skill, professional communication, and networking, noting, “I actually studied more during the summer program than I actually did in high school. That actually stayed with me and continued while I was in college.”

Over the course of the summer bridge program, Brandon reflected on communicating and networking in order to be successful. He remembered how learning about the campus resources such as tutoring, academic advising, and utilizing faculty office hours will help to support his study efforts resulting in a successful college experience academically. He reported that his confidence grew academically during the summer bridge program and said he was even more confident starting out college:

In high school, I did what I had to do to get by. I made sure I had okay grades. But during the summer bridge program, I actually tried hard and applied myself. I knew that if I did okay, I could save money for college. I just thought college would be so hard, and I need to study so hard. My college course taught me how to be a college student and how to study like a college student. I did so well that I use the same things when I went back to high school and saw my high school grades improve also. I started college off as a freshman, very confident that I belong there, and I can do great.

Brandon applied concepts and lessons learned while in the summer bridge program, and indicated that he built upon them and applied them in high school and college to aid in his
collegiate success.

In addition to developing college readiness and study success skills, the bridge program also helped students establish relationships with faculty, staff, friends, and mentors, gain a sense of belonging, and acclimate to college life, which had an impact on their college experiences. Michael was very pleased with his participation in the program, stating:

I mean, obviously getting to know about college was one advantage that I enjoyed before, but I don’t know if I would have made the friendships that I would have made if I wouldn’t have come to this program. I still talk to every one of them, and whether I’m closer friends with others than the other ones, I still talk to the majority of them, and honestly if we have a class together or usually if we just need help, it’s usually we end up turning to each other and asking for help, I’ve noticed.

The bridge program not only supported Brandon’s academic transition, but he claimed it was the foundation for the development of an affinity group among historically underserved students. As a first-generation low-income student of color, Jessica presented as a student who would historically not even considering going to college. However, the bridge program provided her with an early support system of like minded peers who understood the challenge of not having a knowledgeable support system prior to enrollment. Moreover, Jessica said that, after attending the program, bridge participants were more knowledgeable about college success and they used each other as a network of support when they were challenged in classes or needed someone to talk to that they were comfortable with.

This bond that Jessica experienced in the program is also noted in other accounts. Christopher said he was initially nervous about coming to college because it was a new environment, but going to the summer college bridge program made him “more confident, not as
nervous about how people will see me.” Brianna described her experience with the program, which provides an excellent summary of how many other participants felt about attending the summer bridge program:

I loved it. It was so much fun. I learned so much about time management, stress, and what to do when coming to college. I went on a campus tour of the college, which allowed me to already know the buildings and stuff before coming here, already comfortable coming here, and at first, I was nervous because I didn’t know it was going to be such a small group of people. I thought it was going to be larger, so I was like, “How am I going to connect with people?” But with it being such a small group, it was really nice. They’re really like family now. I feel like college would have been way more stressful for me, trying to figure out what I need to do because I don’t know what I’m doing. My Mom doesn’t know what’s happening either. No one in my family, actually. I’m the first-ever to go to college, so I had no background support. So, the program really was that for me. It was my backbone to succeeding college, for sure.

Overall, participants were excited yet skeptical about attending the summer bridge program, but they applied because they expected to obtain information that would help them transition to college and become a successful college student. They were able to get to meet faculty, staff, peer mentors, and friends. Participating in campus visits and attending social and academic field trips, and working with university faculty and staff supported their college success and engagement. Participants agreed that through the bridge program, they were able to identify campus resources, knew how to communicate effectively with faculty, and made lasting friendships. Student participants also enhanced their diversity awareness and became more empowered as a first-generation, low-income, African American and Latinx students while
attending the bridge program.

Identifying Sources of Motivation and Support

Positive motivation and support systems are paramount for establishing a favorable climate for student success. Helping historically underserved students identify ways to persist through adversity was important to the participants as they recalled their first-semester transition and, eventually, for degree attainment. A theme that emerged in the research study related participants’ summer bridge program experiences with identifying sources of motivation and support. Motivation, in this case, referred to how students remained encouraged and kept moving forward when faced with challenges and obstacles throughout the program and in college. During the summer bridge program, students were encouraged to identify existing support circles and expanded their support circle through networking and a mentor program. When faced with trials, students appreciated when they were coached to think about their values, vision, and goals to keep pushing them forward. They were also encouraged to identify support on and off-campus. A key slogan they recalled even years later in the interview was, “You are not alone.” Brandon indicated “that it helped us to understand that you may come from a historically underserved group; however, we all are going through the same challenges, and there are individuals around who can support us throughout the program and while in college.”

Participants expressed how they were motivated by their own desire to graduate and get a job to provide for themselves and their future families with a better way of life. Michael shared, “I always heard about the impact graduating college can have on your life and the opportunities that you could have just by getting a degree. That pushes me, even more, to do good in the program, so I can be as prepared as I could be to graduate from college.” Participants also turned to family and friends for words of encouragement and support when they needed an extra push of
inspiration.

Campus resources in the form of faculty and staff were also helpful in supporting participants providing them with the tools they needed on campus to steer them in the right direction. Kayle discussed, “Coming from my community, my high school, and going to a place that is so different, not that many people look like me, and is so big and far from home was scary for me for sure. But the program director and other university staff made college feel a lot smaller and provided me with a space that felt like home.”

All participants were intrinsically motivated to complete the summer bridge program in good standing in the hopes to eventually get into college and earn degrees in order to provide their future families with a better life than they had. When Michael faced difficulties, he reflected on his purpose for attending the summer bridge program, “I’m here for a reason, and that I need to stay motivated and do what I came here to do, which was get into college to get my education.” Michael and other participants were extremely driven, and they associated that drive to one day being in a better place than they are now.

Similar to Michael, Kayla also referenced her future goals as her motivation for success. During the bridge program, students wrote short- and long-term goals and were encouraged to reflect on their goals during the program when they began to lose the energy to push forward. Kayla discussed getting into college and not wanting to go back to her home environment was her motivation for success:

I stay motivated ’cause I know I wanted to go to college and graduate, I know I wanna get that job, and be in my career, ’cause that’s all I’ve been talking about, that’s what keeps me motivated than any goal like I wanna get there, as this is where I wanna be. And I go home sometimes just walking around, and I see some homeless people, I was
like, “I don’t wanna be like that,” and when I go back home I’m like, “I don’t wanna live here for the rest of my life at home,” and that’s my motivation, not wanna stay home, don’t wanna be homeless, wanna be at the top. I wanna get there, enjoy my career, have my own house, and my own family one day. If I keep pushing, I will get there.

Kayla spoke passionately about her goal of being “at the top.” This correlates with her desires and is similar to other first-generation participants’ accounts of attaining the highest goal achievement. “I can honestly say I know the meaning of started from the bottom and know I am here. I want to be all that I can be for myself and for my family,” Kayla stated. This can put a lot of pressure on these students, yet their desire to overcome obstacles overpowers all negativity. Kayla shared that if she worked hard, she would not have to go back home and will be able to create the life that she wants for herself.

Brianna also is determined to not be a product of her environment and is motivated by her own desire for success. Brianna shared, “I see how my family struggled and how many people where I come from struggled. I am not trying to be in that situation, and having my future children be in the same situation either.” In other accounts, most participants expressed that they have achieved everything they have on their own. Christopher stated, “I didn’t have much help growing up. My dad was not around, my mom did the best she can, and I had been figuring things out on my own.” They have worked hard, and that pushes them forward to succeed. They are not going to give up, and getting accepted into college is just the beginning of their lifelong journey for success. Christopher boldly proclaimed:

Everything I have, I worked for it myself, applying for college, scholarships, even paying for college now, I did it all through hard work, and that was affected through how I grew up with my low income, and so I feel like if I didn’t grow up like that, maybe I would
still be the same, but that’s a big pressure and motivational point for me to succeed, so I really identify with that.

Like other participants, Victoria also assumes the financial burden of supporting herself in college, which creates more pressure on her daily life. This pronouncement suggested how she feels pressure facing adversity as a low-income student, but that pressure is the motivation that fuels her success.

In addition to their own personal drive for success, participants stated how family and friends’ encouraging words motivated them throughout the summer bridge program and while in college. “If I could show you how amazing it feels to have my parents, siblings, and other family members encouraging me, it's like even though they never went to college, they understand what college can do for me,” stated Kayla. Kayla added, “During the summer program, graduating high school, and now in college, my family tells me how proud they are of me, to keep going, and it really pushes me to be good and do good.”

All participants turned to family and friends for personal matters of support before they turned to faculty, staff, and other forms of campus support. “My family has always been there for me, so when challenges happened in the program, I always brought it up to my family. Something about getting that validation that allowed me to deal with anything,” stated Michael.

They also made very close relationships with other summer bridge program participants and became each other’s support system in times of need during the program. “We all were like brothers and sisters, so if I was struggling with an assignment, needed a ride, needed some money for a snack, or something I could ask anyone in our group,” Victoria shared. Their first college friendships began in the program, and more than half agreed that if it wasn’t for the
program, they would not have formed strong bonds and don’t know what they would have done or how they would have made good friends once starting college. “I didn’t realize that I would find the best friend when I started the program, I met my current college roommate in the program, and we are like sisters,” stated Brianna. Some of these bonds became extremely close, and they consider each other best friends. Jessica clearly articulated her need for friends and family to support her college experience:

I think mainly for me; personally, my friends and my parents and their words of encouragement are what make it easier in general for me. So, with challenges, I like to know that they have my back, even if I do happen to fail. Yes, mainly their support and their love for me, I guess, is what helps me overcome challenges.

During the program, students were told to identify their sources of support at home so that in times of need, they knew immediately who would be there to support them and who would be a distraction. “We had a family meeting with all the students in our summer program and were instructed to find one person we could connect with for help and support if needed, and I chose my mom,” stated Jessica. During the summer bridge program, Jessica acknowledged that her family and friends' support circle was impactful and helped her overcome the challenges that she faced during the program.

Victoria also turned to family and friends' support before faculty and staff. For her, it was essential to be able to talk freely about her thoughts and feelings without pressure from people she felt would judge her. Having open, honest communication with those she knew and trusted was essential for her, too, and other participants as well. When asked how she faced challenges, Victoria said:

So, I mainly turn to my boyfriend and my family for support. I did turn to program
faculty and staff, but only to an extent like I didn’t break down in front of them, but I did
tell them my challenges. So, with family and him, I could really break down in front of
them, and they understood, but it was mostly towards. I really broke down more in front
of my boyfriend, because I feel like I have this status to uphold. My family brags about
me all the time, being the first to go to college and all of that, and I just feel like I can’t
really break down in front of them because I don’t want to be perceived as weak.

Victoria shared her challenges regarding appearing weak in front of her family and how she
cannot open up to them as much as she would like. As a first-generation, low-income student,
this is difficult because she wants to bring her family on the journey of college with her.
However, Victoria expressed: “I believe it is too difficult; the people that I want to pave the way
for may decide that it is too hard and it may be easier to stay in their circumstance back home
versus working hard and going to a four-year college.” The weight of her family rests on her
shoulders, and like other first-generation students, everyone in her family is looking up to her as
their role model and the example that their family can achieve success. In times like these, she
also looks at the vision board that she made during the program:

And I would always look at my vision board because I hang it above my desk to this day,
and I have pictures of my family on there, especially my younger cousins and siblings
and that always motivated me and helped me regroup myself, like, “You’re here for a
reason. You’re being this role model for them, and this is for your future.”

So not only do words of inspiration from her family inspire her, but Victoria shared reflectively
how her family also inspires and motivates her to succeed.

Although participants turned to family and friends for social-emotional support, they also
turned to faculty and staff for academic motivation and support. Brandon shared, “Because I was
in a college program, I had to depend on the team that was there from the university. The faculty
and staff really provided so many resources for us to ensure that we do good during the
program.” While attending a course during the bridge program, participants reported they were
strongly encouraged to attend office hours, maintain connections with faculty mentors, and
utilize campus support staff resources such as advising, tutoring, and maintaining meetings as
needed with the staff during the summer bridge program. Michael discussed the difference
between teachers in high school and professors in college:

Meeting the professors was great. Coming up in high school, all the teachers would be
like, “Your professor is not going to stand for this. They’re not going to be your friend.”
All the professors here, they’re great. And they support you, and they understand
you. They’ll be like, “Oh, hey.” And they’ll talk to me outside of class. So that was
awesome.

A document analysis of CRP based summer bridge program derived from brochures and
flyers aligned with the participants' experiences. The program overview explained how the
bridge program used faculty as mentors so that students could begin to form a relationship with a
faculty member outside of the classroom and to begin having a one-on-one relationship with a
professor during the summer bridge program. This intentional process was incorporated into the
program to break down the faculty-student stereotype that faculty members are unapproachable
and are the gatekeepers of all knowledge, which is generally associated with fears among first-
generation students. Teambuilding activities were designed to have students and faculty work
together in social settings and begin bonding early and often. During the summer bridge
program, faculty and staff from the summer program were encouraged to continue to meet with
the students, and some students and faculty and staff maintained close relationships.
From these interactions, participants were more comfortable approaching their professors when they made it to college, asking to meet during office hours to form connections with them similar to their relationship with their faculty from the program. “The summer bridge program really made working with my faculty very easy,” stated Brandon. “I knew how to get tutoring, communicate with my faculty, and felt comfortable doing this.” The participants were comfortable and confident in their approach. Participants formed strong relationships with faculty and staff, as Brandon explained:

I guess with the faculty; it was just I feel like with the faculty, it was just knowing that they’re not just here to teach classes like they also care about you. That’s what I like about the university environment, is that it’s so small that you’re able to build those relationships with faculty, staff and that they would be there if I needed anyone to talk to. Open and honest communication with faculty and staff, coupled with the midsize campus size, made participants feel as if the campus was a home away from home. Some participants became very close to campus staff during family hardships as well and were provided with accommodations for their academic needs. Jessica reflected on a time when a family member was ill:

When my grandmother got really sick, I couldn’t focus on anything. Our program director from the summer program provided a space for me to talk about how I was feeling and connected me to the school counseling office. She even worked with all my faculty to explain my situation and get me extensions on some of my assignments. I don’t know what I would have done if I would have gotten behind on classes and not had anybody to process things with.

Having this support from the university staff was encouraging and helped participants push
through during stressful times during the semester, knowing that there was someone who cared about them and wanted them to succeed.

Promoting the Historical Culture and Language of Students

The recognition of culture in the program, emphasized universally by participants, was crucial to their engagement during the summer bridge program and contributed to current college success. Victoria exemplified the importance of cultural identity when she stated:

The acknowledgment and recognition of my culture in the program help me to be more engaged. If I see that a professor accepts me not only as a student but as a person as well, it gives me a sense of acceptance and belonging. If a student feels as if he or she belongs somewhere, it increases their desire to be part of the program and builds confidence too.

Victoria found her cultural identity to be an integral part of whom she is as a person, motivating her performance in the summer bridge program setting and in college. In contrast, Michael commented, “I never regarded myself as a part of a culture.” Michael’s own culture was not central to his engagement. Instead, Michael shared:

I come from a place that everyone looks like me, shared the same experience as me, and comes from the space community as me, at the summer bridge program I was shown something that I value more: how my culture makes me a great person and student.

As students reflected on the essential aspects of CRP in association with their description of engagement in the summer bridge program, an overarching theme was the recognition of culture in the program. The students described how it affected their experience. They shared that being acknowledged and included was critical to them. Brianna shared:

Seeing Latina’s as community leaders, educators, and university staff made a huge impact on me being confident about college. In my high school, there are no teachers that
look like me. It was awesome to have conversations in Spanish and learning about my culture and connecting it to college. The university staff director really believed in me, and because she grew up in a neighborhood like mine, looked like me, and even shared some of the same experiences as I did, I believed in myself too. I am so thankful for her; she is the reason I am here about to graduate!

The students’ described how fortunate they felt to attend a program that made an emphasis on focusing on the culture of the students through programs, lessons, trips, and speakers. In the responses to the interview questions, the participants commented on the significance of sharing their culture with others in the classroom and having other students do the same. Victoria reflected:

I really liked how the program brought in speakers from the community and took us on field trips to places in our community that reflect us. I don’t know why, but knowing whom we are provided a level of pride for me and determination. I am more than just Victoria; I am my community, my family, my culture, and I represent all of us. The most impactful part of the program was when we all had to write a paper on the impact the summer program had on us and our family. We had to present our paper in front of each other, and many of our guest speakers and other university staff were there too. I am sure that each of us was in tears while presenting and listing to each other present. It reminded me that we are all in this together.

Brandon shared how vital it was to be acknowledged and recognized, and that it made him feel more comfortable in the program. In expressing how the program experience affected him, Brandon talked about being surrounded by students and professors who consider his cultural differences positively. He stressed how central his inclusion was to his summer bridge
experience and how it impacted his engagement constructively. Brandon experienced the positive impact of acceptance by others in the program and this acceptance, and it on the alignment it had on his self-confidence as a student of color. Brandon shared:

I was fortunate to be in the college program that is vastly diverse in cultures, including the staff and professors. I was able to build a level of confidence in working with students from different schools and backgrounds, which made making new friends easier when I arrived on campus during my freshman year. The summer program also let me know that many students and staff at the university have spaces on campus to network, connect, and support each other. This gives me comfort by knowing that other people from my culture are not just a part of the summer program but also at the university.

Christopher shared another perspective on acknowledgment and recognition about his cultural experiences relative to the impoverished. He felt included and engaged in the program when he had the opportunity to share about poverty and the impact it has had on decision making for his family. He related that when classmates asked questions and learned about experiences unfamiliar to them, there was respect and acknowledgment shown to him by the others. He also realized that other students had a similar experience as him. Christopher believed his economic circumstances provided another viewpoint to enlighten his fellow classmates about the unfamiliar and familiar aspects of poverty. He shared:

When I share in my college success class about the differences in the area I was born in, from where I live now, some of the students could relate to me while others can’t. I know that everyone does not understand what it is like to be poor and to want to move away from the poor way of life. They can learn a lot about how different it is for others in other areas of the city when I speak up and give another perspective.
Christopher spoke further about his cultural pride despite his circumstances and continued to attribute his engagement in the program with the opportunity to present cultural experiences that can bring significant changes to others’ cultural perspectives to broaden their learning. He shared that college was more than just an education; it was about doing something that has never been done to encourage others who come from similar backgrounds to do the same and break the cycle. Christopher demonstrated that acknowledgment and recognition was the willingness to discover the different insights of others, stating:

When others want to listen, that makes me feel better that I can help them to see that I love my culture and where I am from, but that I cannot live without food and other important things in life. My culture is still important, and the traditions that we have, make us good people even without having many things. We have each other, and that is the most important thing to have. I want to go to college when the professor gives me an opportunity to contribute things about my culture and how I might view things differently than other students that are not poor. Some students drive cars and have cool clothes. I have some things, and my mom works three jobs to see that I get what I need. When others know that I am proud of who I am, I think they get more out of college because they understand that college is not just an education, but about the people and the circumstances that influence their decision making in life. I am happy I went through the summer program because I learned about what has happened in the past and figured out what can change in the future by going to college. One thing I will not change is that I am proud to be from where I am from and proud of my culture, and what I bring to the table.

To Kayla, acknowledgment and recognition were exemplified by her inclusion in the program through a climate of acceptance. The engagement that she experienced was introduced
through initial approval of her, which included her culture, primary language, and traditions without judgment from others. Kayla never saw herself being a college student. Kayla seemed to be surprised by her experience in the program. Not feeling as she belonged in the summer bridge program, she accepted the challenge and the risks to engage and become a part of an unfamiliar setting. Kayla shared:

I suppose not ever thinking about college or even life after high school made me feel like I shouldn’t even be in this program. However, the subtle recognition from my classmates and professors made me feel at ease. It makes me feel accepted in an environment that I never imagined being in. Seeing so many people with similar cultural backgrounds, I also helped. I can’t explain it, but for some reason seeing adults and students investigated in education made me think that I guess college is something I can do.

The recognition Kayla received from others in the summer bridge program caused her to reflect upon her culture and the pride she had due to her pursuit of higher education. Kayla shared about wanting to be a doctor and how significant she knew it would be for her to become the first from her family to practice medicine one day. She felt compelled to tell other African American and Latinx students about how they could change their life by participating in the summer bridge program.

Kayla further shared:

As a Mexican, I want to share with other students how they can also have a positive voice in the community by going to college and getting their education. In Mexican culture, people help other people. I want there to be a whole bunch of us doing that together. It is more than the school I am in right now. It is about what I can become and what I can do as a bilingual person to help others understand in Spanish what is physically wrong with
them. Then they can understand what decisions they want to make for their health. I am proud that I will become the first person in my family to graduate from college.

One example supporting the recognition of culture in the summer bridge program was Jessica’s experience of a sense of belonging that was created in the program and carried on to the university. The inclusion of her culture in the program by everyone played a vital role in her self-confidence as a student of color. The need to support the culture of African American and Latinx students in college surpassed mere social recognition. Through the eyes of the participants, the recognition of culture in the summer bridge program encouraged them to become an integral part of the university.

Summary

This chapter presented and summarized the data collected from the document analysis as well as the interview transcripts and described participants’ experiences as a part of a summer bridge program. The participants were asked to describe their experience in the summer bridge program, and the data from the documents and interviews were analyzed and organized into four emergent themes.
In the next chapter, the themes will be discussed in terms of the central research question, the theoretical framework, and literature on the topic. Implications for professional practice will be discussed, and recommendations for future research will be offered.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of first-generation college African American and Latinx students who took part in a summer bridge program and to explore what impact the program had on their college success. The study focused on the problem posed by the lack of intentional Summer Bridge programs designed to support underprepared, first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students. There is also a lack of data assessing the experiences of student participants of summer bridge programs that are not already enrolled in college.

This chapter includes a discussion of the research findings in light of the theoretical lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, existing literature, and interview responses from students who participated in the summer bridge program. The insight from the student participants provided insight on how a culturally responsive pedagogy-based summer bridge program has can influence underprepared, first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students. Also included in this chapter are alignments between these findings and existing research conducted on summer bridge programs. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications for practice, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and a brief summary.

Research Questions

This discussion of implications and future research helped answer the following research questions that were stated at the beginning of this study:

1. How do participants in one summer bridge program describe their experiences in the program?
2. How do summer bridge program participants feel those experiences shaped their preparation for college and their academic success in college.

Summary of Findings

It is important to understand that, according to Choy (2001), “As many as 82% of all students enroll in college right after high school, and 34% of all first-year college students identify as first-generation at four-year institutions and 53% at two-year community colleges.” With high numbers of students graduating from high school and many of those students identifying as first-generation, it is extremely important to understand what programs and resources are needed to help these students be successful. According to Hoyt (1999), “Improving student retention does not have a simple, easy answer, it requires a campus-wide effort” (p. 62). Having programs such as summer bridge programs can serve a beacon of hope for many of these students.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is an important and relevant topic in education. The model for education in the U.S. was derived from Eurocentric cultural values, ideology, and ethos of western civilization (McDougual, 2009). Many programs created to help bridge the gap between high school and college have been problematic for African American and Latinx students (Johnson, 2016). Researchers believe culturally responsive pedagogy-based programming can better support underprepared, first-generation, at-risk, African American and Latinx students (Jones-Goods and Grant, 2016). Culturally responsive pedagogy-based programming has many benefits for students, such as an increase in student interest, engagement, perception, and confidence as it pertains to their academics (Aronson and Laughter, 2016). This may prove to be promising for students, especially underprepared, first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students. The culturally responsive pedagogy-
based summer bridge program is designed to be an intentional program designed to bridge the gap for underprepared, first-generation, at-risk African American and Latinx students.

There were four key findings that help to explain the lived experience of the student participants as they constructed meaning around the phenomenon of being a participant in a culturally responsive pedagogy-based summer bridge program, each closely linked to one or all of those constructs:

1. Support: Receiving support from family and outside of family helps support students in their college transition process. Outside influences encourage students and bolster their confidence, increasing the likelihood that they will be successful in college.

2. Academic Preparation: The summer Bridge Program helped students prepare academically and adjust to college expectations before starting college. This increased students’ confidence and provided strategies for success.

3. Community/family: Building meaningful relationships with not only faculty, staff, community members, but also with other students, was valued by the participants because these relationships anchored them in their new environment and gave them resources that helped them with confidence and to continue their education.

4. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Students felt cultural support when the summer bridge program used students' cultural knowledge and prior experiences to make lessons and programs offering relatable and relevant for all participants. The students appreciated seeing faculty, staff, and community leaders that looked like them, which provided a level of encouragement to continue through the program.

Support

The findings in this research study revealed that each participant felt that it was important
for them to develop a support system at the school in order to help them make the transition. The need for community is universal, as is a sense of belonging, of continuity, of being connected to others and to ideas and values that make our sense of self meaningful and significant (Sergiovanni, 1993). This was a consistent theme across all of the participants. For some participants, the support system was developed with fellow students, community members, family and program, and university staff. London (1992) wrote that first-generation students are often loners and rarely integrate with other students and stated that these students are far less likely than other students to adapt to their new surroundings. Pike and Kuh (2005) concluded that first-generation college students might be less likely to engage in college life because they know less about the importance of engagement and about how to become engaged. The participants in the study discussed how it was important for them to get college experience through the summer bridge program. For each one of them, they said that the resources they received were invaluable to their success in the program and the regular year.

Summer bridge programs are designed to help students navigate college and understand the resources for them before they start (Hicks, 2005). Many of the participants found this to be true; they began to build relationships with other students, as well. Building relationships with their peers allowed them to have a sense of connection and feel acceptance through the program. Having positive peer relationships is an important protective factor for young people as they are navigating life and determining their identities. According to the study participants, having peers who “were like-minded and meshed well with them” played a role in their success both in the summer bridge program and beyond.

What is important about this finding is that it connects to the research related to culturally responsive pedagogy. According to Embrace the Future (2018), the quality of interpersonal
relationships and support from outside supporters are important, claiming that “… a network of pro-social peers can provide an important source of support and resiliency, even in the absence of sound parenting” (p. 7). For the participants, they not only built relationships with the administration and faculty, but they also built relationships with other students. The support that the students received from the program allowed them to feel the sense of connection and belonging. Therefore, students who feel they belong are more receptive to adapting to the new change. As each participant developed a level of support from the program, the support systems allowed them to develop their confidence and helped them to persist.

Academic Preparation

It is important to understand that not all students are equally academically gifted. Yet, academic success is not something that is solely related to natural ability or intelligence. According to Embrace the Future (2018), there are other factors involved that contribute to a student’s success in education. The level of expectations placed on them is of high priority. Masten (2001) stated that students need the motivation to succeed and build positive beliefs about their own competence. Pre-College summer bridge programs ensure at-risk students have a maximum opportunity and that they enter college with knowledge about the college experience and with skills for success (Hicks, 2005). The participants stressed the importance of having high expectations set for them during the summer bridge program. While in the summer bridge program, the students were taught to be college-ready. Despite their backgrounds and perceived barriers, these students recalled that they were expected to perform like typical college students. For them, this bridge program established clear and strong expectations of behavior and supported the development of the skills and attitudes that students needed to succeed. High expectation messages communicated firm guidance, structure, and challenge. The participants in
the study collectively said that the level of work that they received from the program made them reach deeper within themselves to be successful in the program.

This study’s findings support the need to establish high expectations within the design of summer bridge programs. The students in the study all came from families that did not understand the potential value of education and were unable to teach their students properly. None of the participants in the study took college readiness courses in high school. Participants credited the summer bridge Pre-College experience with placing them at an advantage when it came to their adjustment into college-level work.

According to Rutter (1999), institutions that hold high expectations for all their students, and which provide the support and resources necessary for them to achieve them, have high rates of academic success. The participants in this study were also expected to behave in a manner that was expected of college students. For example, the participants stated that they were required to be prepared each day for classes. Also, they were required to attend support sessions during the week to get additional support with course work.

Community/Family

The results from this phenomenological study are consistent with the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy and adjustment to college via summer bridge programs. Students come to college, needing transitions into their new environment, as well as academic help (Green, 2006). The participants in the research study were all first-generation college students, and first-generation students’ adjustment to college is often more difficult (Hicks 2005) because many lack the true understanding of college. They lack parental models of college success. Second-generation college students, according to Pike and Kuh (2005), outperform the persistence rate of first-generation college students by 15%; and a disproportionately low number
of first-generation college students succeed in college. Culturally responsive pedagogy research documents clearly that the characteristics of the family, school, and community environments build and foster African American and Latinx students (Gay, 2013).

This study suggests that participants needed help from their community and from outsiders to help them with their adjustment to college. For example, participants in this study received help from the college, community leaders, and high school staff to aid them in reaching college. Most stated that they would not be in college if it were not for the help of teachers, college staff, mentors, or community programs. This is mainly so because the students and their parents in the study were not fully prepared or knowledgeable about how to utilize college systems. Without prior knowledge about the process, many of the students felt a sense of fear regarding higher education and the lack of esteem to even apply. One participant explained how he did not consider college because he didn’t know anything about college prior to the summer bridge program. Because no one in his family went to college, it was not a priority. Yet, the help key stakeholders with the summer bridge program allowed him to apply for the summer bridge program and get into college.

According to Choy (2001), 93% of students who live in a household where at least one of the parents holds a degree will enroll in a college or, university; yet for families where no parents attended college, only 59% of college-age persons will enroll.

The findings in this study support these statistics. All the participants in the study are from families with more than one child; however, they were the first to attend college, even if they were not the oldest child. Even if the family could not help the student with how to get to college, all the families in the study pushed and encouraged each participant to go to college.
Each attributed their enrollment in college to having outside influences and family support in their decision-making process, supporting Choy’s assertions.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy is supported when the historical and language culture of the student is supported. In the literature, the role of CRP was to support student achievement by providing the diverse students the recognition of their culture (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Student respondents shared being acknowledged and included in the program context as critical elements of learning. Their backgrounds, values, and heritage were included in the lessons when they were given the opportunities to share both problematic and positive aspects of their lives, such as experiencing poverty, as well as the support received from family. Through the acknowledgment of their culture, pride was evoked to generate the desire to not only participate in the classroom but become an integral part of the learning experience.

For example, Ladson-Billings (2014) conducted a study that examined the college preparation process for students of color, specifically Latinx, African American/Black, Asian, and multi-ethnic students. Understanding that African American and Latinx students face systematic barriers that negatively impact their educational pathway, Ladson-Billings sought to explore the structural challenges African American and Latinx students encounter and the cultural assets African American and Latinx students utilize to resist challenges in acquiring college preparatory resources (Ladson-Billings, 2014). At the conclusion of their study, five culturally responsive college readiness approaches were identified. Three were offered from the students’ perspective, and Ladson-Billings (2014), introduced two additional approaches. The five college-ready cultural approaches outlined in Ladson-Billings (2014), work is as follow:

Student recommendations
1.) Establish relationships built on trust and authentic caring
2.) Integrate college-level work and resources into all courses
3.) Encourage students to earn college credit while in high school

Researcher’s recommendations
1.) Providing increased cultural supports and programming for African American and Latinx students and their families
2.) Ensuring all personnel recognize and validate that African American and Latinx students possess assets and potential

Knight and Marciano (2013) in their book titled “College Ready: Preparing Black and Latinx Youth for Higher Education-A culturally responsive approach” echoes the similar techniques provided by Ladson-Billings (2014), and pinpoints practices that speak to the college preparation of traditionally underrepresented populations. The tenets of their culturally responsive approach to college readiness include but are not limited to establishing:

1.) A college going-culture
2.) Culturally responsive counseling, programming, and advising
3.) Culturally responsive peer groups, role models, and university staff

The aforementioned practices are beneficial because they are identified as key structural and practical mechanisms that play an integral role in the college readiness, preparedness, acceptance, and degree completion of traditionally underrepresented students. As such, a culturally responsive readiness approach is a beneficial and a supplemental addition to Gloria Ladson-Billings (2014) culturally responsive pedagogy framework because it presents and pinpoints alternative programs students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds make use of as a means to prepare, expose, and assist with college access.
Culturally responsive pedagogy is supported when programs use students' cultural knowledge and prior experiences to make lessons and programs offering relatable and relevant for students. Students regularly see themselves in the lessons and in the faces of the instructors, community leaders, and staff. The Summer Bridge program embedded concepts and ideas from the curriculum and put them into a context that the students are able to understand aligning with the claim of Ramirez et al., (2016) that this can be done when the program understands the culture, language, and lived experiences of their students.

These concepts and ideas can also be related to what is happening in the students' communities in a way that empowers the students. Program administrators, community members, instructors, and other vital members know their students well enough to be able to incorporate the interests of the students into the programming. Ladson-Billings' (2014) college readiness recommendations are subsequently presented, followed by a brief statement addressing the way in which the CRP based summer bridge program fulfills the five culturally responsive approaches to college preparedness.

- Establish relationships built on trust and authentic caring
  - Participants mentioned the support they received from summer bridge program staff (university staff and faculty). University staff served as close “friends” that played a role in shaping CRP based summer bridge program experience.

- Integrate college-level work and resources into all courses
  - Participants were part of an educational curriculum completing college coursework and earning college credit. Additionally, participants identified required College Preparation Seminars as a designated resource that helped in their endeavors to develop time management and study skills utilized to manage their college assignments.
• Encourage students to earn college credit while in high school
  o The CRP based summer bridge program is structured in such a way that allows participants to take college classes while in high school and earn college credit.
• Provide increased college supports for African American and Latinx students and their families
  o One participant mentioned having financial difficulties as a result of her legal status and educational background of her family. However, she indicated that because of CRP based summer bridge program, she received the necessary supports that guided her in the right direction to college financial resources that suited her needs.
• Ensure all personnel recognize and validate that African American and Latinx students possess assets and potential
  o The simple fact that participants agreed and stated that university faculty and staff were supportive indicates that personnel recognized and validated participants potential to succeed within a college setting. Throughout the duration of the interviews, respondents only spoke of supportive environments where summer bridge program staff made themselves available at any time to provide additional academic support. This hints at the idea that staff believes students have the potential to succeed and will go out of their way to provide the necessary resources to positively impact their educational progress.

Implications for Theory

The findings align closely with this study’s theoretical foundation of culturally responsive pedagogy. The culturally responsive pedagogy theory derived from the teachings and theory of Gloria Ladson-Billing and Geneva Gay suggests that the discontinuities that exist
between the home culture and school culture and community cultures are an essential factor in students not doing well academically in school (Ladson-Billing, 2016). If schools, teachers, and programs will focus on drawing on the cultural and language strengths of students, the result will be students doing better in school (Ladson-Billing, 2016). This is done when a program recognizes and uses a student's cultural background and knowledge, cultural experiences, beliefs, and the way information is taught within the child's culture in order to make learning more relevant for the student when teaching district and state curriculum (Ladson-Billing, 2016).

Gay (2010) noted that culturally responsive pedagogy is founded on (a) students are empowered socially and academically, because teachers and instructors have high expectations of them; (b) schools and programs engage the cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives of their students; (c) schools and programs create a bridge between home and school by validating the culture of their students; (d) schools and programs understand, address, and breakdown social, emotional, and political constraints in order to educate the whole child; (e) schools and programs use the strengths of their students to design curriculum, assessments, and instruction; and (f) school leaders, instructors, and teachers expose the injustices of oppressive educational practices and ideologies.

This study has demonstrated the need for programs to be more culturally responsive when working with students. The student participants, where the study was conducted, exhibited all the characteristics outlined by both Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billing (2016). The themes of the study align with significant components of both Gay's (2010) and Ladson-Billing (2016) theory.

Implications for Practice

The study was designed to hear the voices of students and their experiences in the summer bridge program. As a result, there may be important best practices that can be taken
from their experiences that could be adapted for use with other students in other programs aimed at student success. For example, first-generation students, like those in this study, often did not have individuals who had experience navigating the college admissions process or knew where to go to have specific questions addressed, so these may be essential skills for bridge programs to teach. Also, college readiness skills were emphasized by the participants. Seminars introducing college readiness and preparation techniques appear to be a beneficial aspect of summer bridge programs.

The themes from the study have practical implications for professional practice in higher education. This is important when schools want to understand what they can do to help the success of first-generation students, as well as to increase enrollment and retention.

In order for a college or university to provide the best possible opportunity for success, they must be willing to provide a support system that can help students build confidence and provide tools and resources that encourage student success. By looking at these students, institutions will be able to have a clearer understanding of how this population, known as “at-risk” can bounce back and be successful despite challenges and risk. In order to develop a program that supports the first-generation student population, this research found the following to be important: designing programs that use culturally responsive pedagogy practices, building a sense of community, providing tools and supports, allowing for a structured environment, and having expectations that guide success.

Outreach

The findings in this research study suggest that students must be in an environment that will make them feel connected and accepted. Having students integrate prior to starting college can include talks/discussions/panels with various staff members with whom the students may
need to interact during their first year. This will support the students by giving them a chance to believe in themselves, and it will also allow the student to become connected to the college or university. The student who is connected is integrated because they are prepared and willing to learn. Providing students with peer mentors who can answer questions for them about the school and community is another approach. Future programs should provide a place where building relationships and the interactions with other students are reinforced on a daily basis.

Support

The study revealed that having a supportive environment allowed the students to begin to trust themselves and their academic potential. By providing students with opportunities to develop and identify as college students early are essential. Students who build confidence early will be more likely to succeed (Hicks, 2005). Summer bridge programs should offer academic readiness workshops for students to strengthen their academic skills. Classes offered at the college level and with a relationship to the level of work performed during the academic year are recommended. Also, allowing the students the chance to visit a college campus is essential, so a campus resource tour builds the knowledge so that students know where to go if assistance is needed.

The significant implication from culturally responsive pedagogy research for practice is that if we hope to create socially-competent people who have a sense of their own identity and efficacy, who are able to make decisions, set goals, and believe in their future, then meeting their basic human needs for connecting to their culture, caring, connectedness, respect, challenge, power, and meaning must be the primary focus of any prevention, education, and youth development effort (Embrace the Future, 2018).
Limitations of this Study

The study included seven first-generation college African American or Latinx students who participated in a university summer bridge program while in high school. The participants in the study all completed their first year of study satisfactorily and were progressing through the university as full-time matriculating students at the time of the study. It is essential to understand that the study is only reflective of the participants who participated, and it is essential to know that other students who met the same criteria, might have different outlooks or experiences.

This study was intentionally delimited to a small sample size at a medium-size public mid-western university, to provide for think, rich descriptions of students’ lived experience of this phenomenon. While the inclusion criteria for participation, being first-generation college students, and being college African American and Latinx students who had participated in specific summer bridge programs may have limited the study, its purposive nature enriched the specific findings. The findings in this study only address this population of students who attended such a program at a midwestern university. As such, these findings are not intended to be generalizable to other similar programs or attendees.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study adds reliable information to the research literature and practical field about how to support first-generation African American and Latinx students as they advance to higher education. Nevertheless, the research on this topic is far from complete. The need to continuously address this population is extremely important in order to address the achievement gap. Ideas for further research include a quantitative research study of the program and see how this population of students differs in achievement from other populations of students who attended summer bridge programs. Another study could compare this same population of
students against those at predominantly White institutions, or other groups of students. The perceptions of faculty and staff who take part in the program could also be studied to see if students and faculty perceptions align within the program goals or inclusion of CRP.

A final suggestion would be a program evaluation or a case study to examine all levels of the summer bridge program and how the entire program aligns its goals, missions, and values. While these suggestions are essential in the study of first-generation college African American and Latinx students, hearing their lived experience, and understanding the meaning of how they were able to overcome the barriers they faced has great value. Institutions planning to provide students with optimum opportunities for success must be willing to implement programs, such as Pre-College summer bridge programs that assist first-generation students in their transition and make their success more likely (Hicks, 2005).

Summary

Getting accepted into college is difficult, and it is even more challenging for historically underserved students who may not have access to pre-college support resources such as college prep admission counselors in their high school, support on filling out FAFSA, finances to go on college tours, and other cultural and social capital that makes the college-going process less complicated. The underserved students in this study faced many socio-economic hardships that were addressed in the study. Much of the socio-economic hardship is tied to a systemic issue that affects many first-generation, low-income, African American, and Latinx students. The purpose of the study was not to address the systemic problems that are faced by many of the participants in this population but to focus on the individual lived experiences from participants that come from a systematic environment.

The participants in the study shared their lived experiences of how each became the first
person in their family to attend college and how being a part of a summer bridge program before college aided in the development and in their success. The findings revealed that first-generation college African American and Latinx students are better prepared for college when they are placed in an environment with others who have a similar background, provide cultural programming that shows support, have structure, can build community, and has high expectations. While this is important for many of the nation’s college students, first-generation African American and Latinx students especially need these supports because they are often facing challenges unique to them, such as lack of knowledge about college and fears about their own readiness or lack of academic preparation. This study highlights the persistence and drive of first-generation college African American and Latinx students and how willing they are to be successful in higher education. However, the key to academic success for first-generation African American and Latinx students as they transition from high school to post-secondary colleges and universities may be dependent upon the interventions and programs that are put into place by those higher education institutions to help them be successful.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Program Began</th>
<th>Length of Program</th>
<th>Program Components</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Program Cost</th>
<th>College Credit Received?</th>
<th>Developmental/Remedial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan University</td>
<td>Ypsilanti, MI</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3 - Weeks</td>
<td>English, Mathematics, Reading, and Writing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$300 (non-refundable deposit)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ohio State University</td>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3 - Weeks</td>
<td>Mathematics, English, Psychology Enrichment, College Success Workshops</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne State University</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8 - Weeks</td>
<td>Courses designed to improve academic skills and strengthen student responsibility</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California Berkeley</td>
<td>Berkeley, CA</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>6 - Weeks</td>
<td>Academic Writing, Critical Reading, Quantitative Thinking, and Personal Wellness</td>
<td>350-400</td>
<td>$5,500-$6,500</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California Los Angeles</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>6 - Weeks</td>
<td>Two General Education Required Courses, University Courses</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>$5,979-$7,083</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of California Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Santa Cruz, CA</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1 - Week</td>
<td>Writing Preparation, Mathematics Review, Academic Success Workshops</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>7 - Weeks</td>
<td>College Writing, Mathematics, and Reading Seminar</td>
<td>220-250</td>
<td>$6,684 (in-state) and $14,419 (out-of-state)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Tennessee Knoxville</td>
<td>Knoxville, TN</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5 - Weeks</td>
<td>First-Year Seminar, Academic Success Workshops</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


APPENDIX B
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time/Day</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Breakfast 7:30 - 8:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>English/ Writing</td>
<td>College Studies Prep</td>
<td>English/ Writing</td>
<td>College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Studies</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>11:30 AM</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>Study Session/Mentor Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Former Summer Bridge Program Participant:

My name is Barry Hall, and I am a doctoral candidate at Central Michigan University. My dissertation study is focused on the Summer Bridge Program, which you attended. I am seeking participants in the summer bridge program who have completed the program and currently working on their degrees at the university. As your educational success is a significant accomplishment, and you are a graduate of the summer bridge program, I am inviting you to share your experiences in the summer bridge program and your undergraduate career so far. Participants in this research study will be asked to engage in a 90-minute face-to-face interview with the researcher about their experiences in the summer bridge program and their undergraduate career so far. Please respond to this email directly if you would like to participate in this study. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me at halli3bl@cmich.edu. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Best,

Barry Hall
Introductory statement.

I am inviting you to take part in a research study that explores how, if at all, the summer bridge program prepared you for post-secondary opportunities and create college success.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate experiences within the summer bridge program that may have contributed to the preparedness for college and academic success in college.

What will I do in this study?

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a current college student at the university and have participated in the summer bridge program as a junior in high school. As a
participant in this study, you will meet with me for a 60 – 90 minutes timeframe to interview about your experiences with the summer bridge program.

If you decided to participate in this research project, I would go over this consent form, ask your permission to audio-record the interview, and then go through a series of interview questions about your thoughts and experiences from your time with the summer bridge program.

If you give permission for the interview to be audio-recorded, please sign here: __________________________ Date____________________

Alternative: If you do not wish the interview to be audio recorded, please sign here: __________________________

Date____________________

How long will it take me to do this?

This study will require approximately 60-90 minutes of your time over a period of one day. This time will be used to interview participants on personal experiences with the summer bridge program. You are able to set additional time to ask questions about the research study and to follow up on any post related questions on the study.

Are there any risks to me for participating in the study?

This study has minimal potential for risk to you. In disclosing your experiences and thoughts during interviews about your experience with the summer bridge program, you are helping to research the effects of summer bridge programming. The risks to you as a research participant are negligible and no more than the risk you assumed when you participated in the summer bridge program.

What are the potential benefits of participating in the study?

Little academic research exists about summer bridge programs serving juniors in high school. As such, this is a springboard study exploring the impact this type of summer bridge program has had on its participants. The goal of this study is to help produce new knowledge about helping prepare students for post-secondary opportunities and creating college success. The potential benefits of participating in this study might come from knowing you have contributed to the academic and cultural understanding of college achievement. Your participation will further research on summer bridge programs, specifically in understanding the impact that these programs have and ways to maximize the benefits of these types of programs by supporting
students.

Who, besides the research team, will know what I will do or say in this study (Confidentiality)?

The staff of Central Michigan University and government agencies, which ensure the protection of human subjects in research, may examine your records. All data in this study will be kept confidential. Audio recordings, as well as electronic files, will be stored in a password-protected computer file accessible only by the researcher. These recordings and files will be kept indefinitely. Physical documents will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in principle investigator’s office space. Written materials and audio recordings will be assigned a code that will replace your name. Your name will not be used in any published materials.

What will happen to my data after the study?

All identifiable private information will be destroyed after the research activities have been completed.

The research team?
You may contact me, Barry Hall, a doctoral student, or Barbara Klocko, my dissertation chair. Contact information can be found below:

Barry Hall                                      Barbara Klocko, Ph.D
201 Front Ave. SW                        EHS Building 337
Grand Valley State Univ.             Central Michigan Univ.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504               Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859
Halli3bl@cmich.edu                    Barbara.klocko@cmich.edu
616-250-2289                                989-774-1035

How can I contact someone outside the research team for information about this study?

To talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about your rights as a research participant; obtain information; report a research-related injury; ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study, or you wish to offer input about this study, please contact (anonymously if you wish):

Central Michigan University Institutional Review Board
600 East Preston Street, Foust Hall 104
Mount Pleasant, MI 48859
Phone: (989) 774-6401
Email: IRB@cmich.edu

What happens if I refuse to participate or want to stop being in the study?

You are free to refuse to participate in this research project or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which
you are otherwise entitled. Your decision not to participate will not affect your relationship with the institution(s) involved in this research project.

Can someone else end my participation in this research?

Yes. Under certain circumstances, the researchers might decide to end your participation in this research study earlier than planned.

Statement of Consent

My signature below indicates that I am 18 years of age or older, and all my questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the project as described above.

Name of Participant: _________________________________________________
Signature: _________________________________________________
Date: _________________________________________________

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Person Obtaining Consent

I have discussed with this participant or LAR the procedure(s) described above and the risks involved in this research. I believe he/she understands the contents of this consent document and is competent to give legally effective and informed consent.

Name: _________________________________________________
Signature: _________________________________________________
Date: _______________________________________________
**APPENDIX E**

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Review Informed Consent*

**Introductory Questions:**

Tell me about yourself.

Think about when you were deciding where to attend college. Tell me about your process and how you decided to enroll at the university.

**Pre-Summer Bridge Program Experience:**

You participated in the program during summer______, tell me about how you learned about the program and got involved with the program.

- Tell me about why you decided to participate in the program?
- What did you know about the program prior to participating?
- What aspects of the program interest you?

Did anyone, such as friends, family, current students, university staff, or faculty members, encourage you to participate in the program?

- If yes, why did they encourage you to participate?
- Were you required to participate in the program? If yes, by whom?

When you prepared to join the program, tell me about whom you thought was going to be in the program with you?

- How would you describe the other students you thought of?
- Think about different student characteristics. Their goals, objectives, academic abilities, and/or academic intentions.

What did you think the program what going to be about?

- What types of activities did you think you would be involved in?
- Who on campus did you think you would interact with?

What were your expectations of what you’d get out of participating in the program?

- Did you think the program would impact your academic preparation for college? Why or why not?
- Did you think the program would impact your academic success for college? Why or why not?
### Summer Bridge Program Experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe the Summer Bridge Program to your peers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe for me your program cohort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cohort refers to the group of students that participated in the program with you during the same summer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you encourage incoming students to participate in the program? Please explain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If yes, what types of students would you encourage to participate in the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe the students that participate in the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Would you consider there to be a “typical” program participant?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If yes, how would you describe the typical program participant?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your program experience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What types of program activities did you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What types of classes did you take?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did you interact with other participants?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe for me some of the most significant benefits or opportunities to participating in the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe for me some of the biggest challenges to participating in the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Impact of Summer Bridge Program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The next few questions focus on the impact the program may have played on your college experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways, if any, did the program impact your first year in college?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways, if any, did the program impact your academic preparation in college?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways, if any, did the program impact your academic success in college?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Perception of the Summer Bridge Program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe the goals of the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rank the following elements (1, 2 or 3) in terms of the level of importance the Summer Bridge Program on these items?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College acclimation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social exposure and networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you rank the following elements (1, 2, or 3) in terms of the level of importance to you when considering what you got the most out of participating in the program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College acclimation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social exposure and networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you would like to share about your participation and experience in The Summer Bridge Program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIX F

## CROSSWALK TABLE OF DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

RQ = Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>RQ1</th>
<th>RQ2</th>
<th>Relation to Literature</th>
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<td><strong>Introductory Questions</strong></td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Question 2 | | X | Douglas & Attewell (2014)  
Duffey (2015)  
Jensen & Jetten (2016)  
Kadlec & Gupta (2014)  
Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett (2016) |
| | | | |
| **Pre-Summer Bridge Program Experience** | X | | |
| Question 1 | | | Duffey (2015)  
Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
Krogstad (2016)  
O’Keeffe (2013)  
Strayhorn (2019) |
| Question 2 | | X | Duffey (2015)  
Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
Krogstad (2016)  
O’Keeffe (2013)  
Strayhorn (2019) |
| Question 3 | | X | Duffey (2015)  
Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
Krogstad (2016)  
O’Keeffe (2013)  
Strayhorn (2019) |
| Question 4 | | X | Duffey (2015)  
Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
Krogstad (2016)  
O’Keeffe (2013)  
Strayhorn (2019) |
| Question 1 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 2 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 3 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 4 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 5 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  

**Summer Bridge Program Experience**

| Question 1 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 2 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 3 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 4 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  
| Question 5 | X | Duffey (2015)  
|           |   | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |   | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |   | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |   | Strayhorn (2019)  

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| Question 6 | X         | X         | Douglas & Attewell (2014)  
|           |           |           | Duffey (2015)  
|           |           |           | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |           |           | Jensen & Jetten (2016)  
|           |           |           | Kadlec & Gupta (2014)  
|           |           |           | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |           |           | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |           |           | Strayhorn (2019)  
|           |           |           | Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett (2016)  
| Question 7 | X         |           | Duffey (2015)  
|           |           |           | Hillman, Tandberg, & Gross (2014)  
|           |           |           | Krogstad (2016)  
|           |           |           | O’Keeffee (2013)  
|           |           |           | Strayhorn (2019)  

| Impact of the Summer Bridge Program | Question 1 | X         | Douglas & Attewell (2014)  
|                                     |           |           | Duffey (2015)  
|                                     |           |           | Jensen & Jetten (2016)  
|                                     |           |           | Kadlec & Gupta (2014)  
|                                     |           |           | Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett (2016)  

| Perception of the Summer Bridge Program | Question 1 | X         | Douglas & Attewell (2014)  
|                                         |           |           | Duffey (2015)  
|                                         |           |           | Jensen & Jetten (2016)  
|                                         |           |           | Kadlec & Gupta (2014)  
|                                         |           |           | Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett (2016)  

| Question 2 | X         | Douglas & Attewell (2014)  
|           |           | Duffey (2015)  
|           |           | Jensen & Jetten (2016)  
|           |           | Kadlec & Gupta (2014)  
|           |           | Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett (2016)  

| Question 3 | X         | Douglas & Attewell (2014)  
|           |           | Duffey (2015)  
|           |           | Jensen & Jetten (2016)  
|           |           | Kadlec & Gupta (2014)  
|           |           | Wathington, Pretlow, & Barnett (2016)  

122
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wathington, Pretlow, &amp; Barnett (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW CODEBOOK

Table 23

*Interview Codebook*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Code</th>
<th>Secondary Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Background</td>
<td>a. Local student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Out of state student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. International student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Honors program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sources of SBP Information</td>
<td>a. Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Researched the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The expectation of SBP before participating</td>
<td>a. Take classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Get college course credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Experience may be like summer camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Participate in activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Meet new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Learn about resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Interact with advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. No expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The expectation of the Impact of SBP before</td>
<td>a. Get adjusted to academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Get adjusted to campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Lower stress come fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Get ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Interest in SBP</td>
<td>a. Eager to start college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Get a jump start on college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Something productive to do for summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Get to be away from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Prepare before the fall starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Learn about university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Live on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. Meet new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Take a course in subject struggled in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j. Get course credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k. Support from parents to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Attitude toward SBP</td>
<td>a. Encouraged others to participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Randomly signed up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Proactive opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Code</strong></td>
<td><strong>Secondary Code</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7. Perception of other participants before participating | a. Motivated  
b. Outgoing  
c. No plans for summer  
d. High academic ability  
e. Students “like me.”  
f. Want to get used to college  
g. Athletes  
h. International students  
i. Exploratory students  
j. Out-of-state students  
k. No preconceived ideas |
| 8. Participation in SBP | a. Classes  
b. Activities  
c. Leadership certificate  
d. Creating goals  
e. Interaction with faculty  
f. Interaction with advisor  
g. Interaction with peers |
| 9. Perception of other participants after participating | a. Willingness to come early  
b. No plans for summer  
c. High academic ability  
d. Academic focused  
e. Here to have fun  
f. Diverse participants  
g. Sent by parents  
h. Students required to participate  
i. Athletes  
j. No typical participant |
Table 23 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Code</th>
<th>Secondary Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Positive Impact of SBP</td>
<td>a. Learn the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Learn time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Learn about academic life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Learn leadership skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Learn study skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Learn balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Learn how to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. Feeling of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. Feeling of preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j. Feeling of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k. Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>l. Career ambitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m. Learn from mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n. Overcome challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o. Prepared for advanced classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. Credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>q. Get ahead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>r. Able to take non-required classes later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>s. Kick start to GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t. The easier workload for fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u. Knowledge of university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v. Connections with faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>w. Social network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x. Academic achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>y. Experience living on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>z. Smaller setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aa. Knowledge of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bb. Opportunity to graduate early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cc. Opportunity for growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Challenges while participating in SBP</td>
<td>a. Homesick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Fast-paced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Self-discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Being an international student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Individuals not committed to the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Code</td>
<td>Secondary Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12. Students would encourage to participate | a. Introverts  
| | b. Homeschooled  
| | c. Specific academic program  
| | d. Out-of-state students  
| | e. International students  
| | f. Everyone  
| | g. Should be mandatory  
| 13. Program goals | a. Prepare students  
| | b. Social network  
| | c. Skills-based learning  
| | d. Share resources  
| | e. Help academically  
| | f. Help students transition  
| | g. Help students be successful  
| | h. Get to know the diversity of the campus  
| | i. Get a jump start on college  
| | j. Have fun  
| | k. Fluctuate based on participants  
| 14. A most important aspect of the program by SBP (3 options provided) | a. Campus acclimation  
| | b. Academic success  
| | c. Social exposure and networking  
| 15. A most important aspect of the program by the participant (3 options provided) | a. Campus acclimation  
| | b. Academic success  
| | c. Social exposure and networking  

APPENDIX H
MEMBER CHECKING PROTOCOL

1. Interview participant taking notes and recording interviews

2. Transcribe recording

3. Prepare a synthesized summary from emerging themes (interpreted data) and interview data quotes to give to participants

4. Ask participants to read, comment, and return transcript:
   - Does this match your experience?
   - Do you want to change anything?
   - Do you want to add anything?

5. Gather responses and record any additional data from the participants

6. Integrate findings
APPENDIX I

PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym (Gender)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Current Year in College</th>
<th>Year in the Summer Bridge Program</th>
<th>Mother’s Highest Educational Level</th>
<th>Father’s Highest Educational Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria (Female)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
<td>Some Grade School</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael (Male)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>Grade School</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brianna (Female)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon (Male)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla (Female)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica (Female)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher (Male)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX J

### PARTICIPANT RESPONSES AND COMPOSITE EMERGENT THEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Developing Collegiate Confidence:</th>
<th>Bridge Program as the Foundation for Support and Success:</th>
<th>Identifying sources of motivation and support:</th>
<th>Promoting the Historical Culture and Language of Students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brianna</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX K

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**  
Foust 104, Mount Pleasant, MI 48859  
Phone: (989) 774-6401  
Fax: (989) 774-2631

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DATE:</strong></th>
<th>September 18, 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TO:</strong></td>
<td>Barbara A Klocko, PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FROM:</strong></td>
<td>Central Michigan University Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IRB NUMBER:</strong></td>
<td>2019-430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT TITLE:</strong></td>
<td>A Phenomenological Exploration Study: Exploring Lived Experiences of Undergraduate Students Previously Enrolled in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Summer Bridge Program for Rising High School Juniors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBMISSION TYPE:</strong></td>
<td>New Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTION:</strong></td>
<td>DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DETERMINATION DATE:</strong></td>
<td>September 17, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVIEW CATEGORY:</strong></td>
<td>Exempt Category # 1 2 (ii)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The reviewer has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to section 45 CFR 46.104(d)1 2 (ii) of the revised Common Rule, which the CMU IRB has adopted for reviewing research not supported or sponsored by a Common Rule agency.

Please notify the CMU IRB Office at 989-774-6401 or cmuirb@cmich.edu before you modify this protocol, as additional review will be necessary.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact the CMU IRB office at 989-774-6401 or cmuirb@cmich.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Central Michigan University Institutional Review Board 1’s records.
REFERENCES


Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation?. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802-1811.


Hardesty, J., McWilliams, J., & Plucker, J. A. (2014). Excellence gaps: What they are, why they are bad, and how smart contexts can address them or make them worse. *High Ability Studies, 25*(1), 71-80.


