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EXPLORING THE NEED OF SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SETTINGS SERVING YOUTH-AT-RISK

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

---

by  
Ana Hernandez  
June 2020

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IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SETTINGS SERVING YOUTH-AT-RISK

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Ana Hernandez

June 2020

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## ABSTRACT

Today's young 21st century workforce has so much to offer in an array of industry sectors. Yet so many are not achieving their full potential with underdeveloped or lack of soft skills. Vulnerable youth-at-risk who have not experienced healthy developmental stages growing up are at a higher risk of not developing soft skills essential for workforce and lifelong success. This study aims to analyze the gap in soft skills development in youth-at-risk who are attending alternative education. Using a Constructivist paradigm, this qualitative research was completed using maximum variation and snowball sampling to capture the full experience and the individual perspectives of key stakeholders who have/had direct contact with youth-at-risk. Faculty, staff, and a local workforce development agency participated in a joint construct via face-to-face interviews and a member-checking meeting to analyze the effects of the soft skills gap. All participants were over the age of 18 and reside within a selected Southern California county. This research aimed to contribute to the field of social work in both macro and micro practice as it relates to the enhancement of curriculum and enrichment of the learning environment that alternative education students currently have. Through this contribution, it is the hope of the researcher that youth-at-risk will develop or enhance their social and emotional skills so that they are better prepared to go into the workforce and post-secondary education thus achieving self-sufficiency and lifelong success.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my beloved husband for supporting my decision to return to school and obtain not only my bachelor's but also my master's degree. During the last five years he has stepped up to the occasion more than I am sure he expected, but I will forever be grateful for sticking through this process as I immersed into finding my true passion for helping others. To my three children; Trinity, "Cowboy", and Sean. My hope is that you, too, will also follow your passion and keep your hearts humble and help as many people that cross your path. You were, and will continue to be, my biggest instruments of motivation, hope, and faith. To my parents, Jose, and Martha, whom from early childhood taught the meaning of strong work ethic, held me accountable for my actions, and built a foundation of mutual respect and admiration among all my siblings. The many sacrifices they have made for our family while having to be away from my oldest sibling so that the rest of us can have an opportunity at the American dream will never be taken for granted. Mamá y Papá - esta maestría es para ustedes. Por tantos sacrificios que han hecho y por el amor incondicional que me brindan a mi, a mi esposo y mis niños.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### ASSESSMENT

#### Introduction

Chapter one begins by identifying the research focus of the study that was conducted. An explanation of the selected research paradigm and literature review related to the research follows, along with the development of its theoretical orientation. Chapter one concludes with the discussion for potential implementation of the study to micro/macro social work practice.

#### Research Focus

There has been a significant amount of focus around the soft skills employers ask for in employees to be able to succeed in the workforce, particularly younger employees. Perreault (2004) defines “soft skills” as personal qualities, attributes, or the level of commitment of a person that sets him/her apart from other individuals who may have similar skills. Additionally, according to the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) identified five competencies needed for successful job performance: managing resources, working with others, managing information, understanding systems, and utilizing technology. It is evident that the attainment of soft skills can increase workforce, academic, and lifelong career success. However, vulnerable youth-at-risk who have not experienced healthy developmental stages growing up are at a higher risk of not developing soft skills essential for workforce and lifelong success.

The term “at-risk” has been a universally used term over the years. This research paper identifies “youth-at-risk” as youth who have experienced adverse childhood experiences or trauma, disability, behavioral problems, substance abuse, familial stressors, and community related factors such as; poverty and crime, which can be a contributing factor to the lack of attainment of soft skills development.

Most youth-at-risk in alternative education have been expelled from their respective school districts for various reasons and often have already experienced other socioeconomic and psychological barriers to academic success; including the lack of a stable adult figure who can foster the teaching of soft skills. The purpose of this research was to focus on the need for soft skills development in alternative education settings for youth-at-risk. It is hoped that after the research study there is a better understanding for the need of possible implementation of a curriculum that can be integrated within the current common core curriculum to help address the skills gap of youth-at risk and improve economic self-sufficiency.

The perspective of the researcher is that although core curriculum subjects such as English Language Arts, Math, Science, and History are an integral part of academic success; soft skills attainment is equally important to teach students before they graduate from high school as many enter the workforce right after graduation. The researcher gained individual perspectives of key stakeholders about their opinions on the need to help close the skills gap,

what they might consider to be essential soft skills for employment and lifelong success, and barriers they have experienced that may be preventing them from teaching soft skills development.

### Paradigm and Rationale for Chosen Paradigm

Given that the researcher obtained direct perspectives from key stakeholders who work directly with youth-at-risk in alternative education settings, a constructivist paradigm was selected to conduct the research. A constructivist paradigm proposes that human experience can only be understood as a subjective reality (Morris, 2006). Additionally, Morris (2006) states that this perspective assumes that “the only way we can understand a human phenomenon is to completely and thoroughly understand the perceptions, or constructions, of those people who are engaged in that human phenomenon” (p. 194). Furthermore, a collaboration with those involved in the direct experiences of the phenomenon assisted in obtaining a collection of valid, authentic, and shared construction of the human experience, therefore, creating a “hermeneutic dialect”. The hermeneutic dialect compared individual interpretations as well as change perspectives throughout the research study.

The constructivist paradigm was chosen because it is the most effective methodology which allowed the researcher the opportunity to be directly involved in the collaboration with stakeholders, gain insight of individual perceptions, study the setting, validate the accuracy of findings, and create an agenda for possible change or reform based on the need to implement a curriculum to help address

the lack of soft skills development in alternative education settings to improve self-sufficiency in youth-at-risk.

### Literature Review

The literature review was used as an auxiliary source and was analyzed in conjunction with data collection from the hermeneutic dialect circle to enhance the validity of the research. The literature review focused on statistical data, risk factors influencing lack of soft skills in youth-at-risk, and interventions aiming to address the skills gap.

#### Statistical Data:

The Department of Labor and Statistics conducted a National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 cohort (NLSY97). This study included a sample of about 9,000 youth between the ages of 12-16 years old, which surveyed participants on their transition from school to work and into adulthood. The study gathered data related to participant's education, employment, family formation, and other behaviors. The results indicated that vulnerable youth that had relatively high levels of risky behaviors as adolescents also had relatively lower earnings and connectedness to the labor market and school since early adulthood.

In relation to students with disabilities, in a National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) 2012, found that youth with disabilities are more socioeconomically disadvantaged and less likely to have experiences and expectations that are associated with success after high school.

“Approximately 30% of high school students participate in or experience multiple high-risk behaviors (e.g., substance use, sex, violence, depression, attempted suicide) that interfere with school performance and jeopardize their potential for life success” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008; Dryfoos, 1997). Furthermore, “large percentages of students who lack social-emotional competence, believe their teachers do not care about them, and disrupt the educational experiences of classmates” (Benson, Scales, Leffert, & Roehlkepartain, 1999).

Risk Factors Influencing Lack of Soft Skills:

“Millions of youth across the nation are at risk of not achieving economic self-sufficiency as they transition to adulthood. The most vulnerable include youth who have dropped out of school and are not working, those in high-risk groups such as teenage parents and homeless or runaway youth, young people aging out of foster care, and juvenile offenders” (Belfield, Levin, Rosen, 2012). Additionally, “at least 6.7 million youth between the ages of 16-24” are considered ‘opportunity youth’ (Belfield, Levin, Rosen, 2012). Opportunity youth is defined as young teens who may have left the educational system and are unable to find a job; may have been involved with the justice system; may have a mental or health condition that may prevent certain activities or may depend on a caregiver for activities of daily living. Furthermore, an estimated 3.4 million youth had some type of educational or work experience beyond 16 years old but unable to secure a stable attachment to the labor market. Both groups are failing

to build an economic foundation for adult independence (Belfield, Levin, Rosen, 2012).

#### Interventions Aiming to Address the Skills Gap:

Job Corps is among one of the largest and well-known adult education programs available nationwide. Job Corps provides residential education and job training for at-risk youth between the ages of 16-24. While enrolled, participants earn their high school diploma, gain vocational and academic skills.

Unfortunately, according to the Department of Labor (2010), 16% of those who enroll end up leaving within the first 60 days. A study conducted by Stark (2015) indicated that external barriers such as large class size, lack of attention from teachers, racism, and placement in special education courses were all contributing factors to enrollment dropouts. While Job Corps is often referred to many youths, distance is a barrier as not many Job Corps locations exists near the study demographics. The closest possible location is over 70 miles away, making it seemingly impossible for youth-at-risk to take advantage of this opportunity.

Local American Job Centers such as the Workforce Development Centers provide a comprehensive job search, training, and provide many employment related answers to workers of all ages. They also offer the Youth Employment Opportunity Program (YEOP), which provides services to youth between the ages of 15-25 to help achieve educational and vocational goals. Their services include peer advising, referrals to other services such as jobs, placement



services, workshops, and classes at training centers. While these centers may provide great services based on the needs of the needs of youth, location is once again a notable barrier for youth-at-risk. Youth living in the eastern part of the research study would need to drive over 35 miles to the nearest location to obtain access to these services.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Career Pathways have become more popular in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade educational settings, which helps close the skills gap and promotes the transition of high school students into the workforce. CTE and Career Pathways courses taken at the high school level give students a basic understanding of a specific career. Whether it be culinary, agriculture, aviation, automotive, or early childhood education, youth gain exposure to a future career or at least developing technical skills which are also essential for career success. According to the Department of Education (2016), “a growing body of evidence indicates that CTE programs produce positive outcomes for underserved youth, including increased rates of high school graduation and achievement of credentials”. However, not all schools have CTE related courses available to students. In many instances, school districts rely heavily on district educational funding to be able to offer a CTE related course to students, which often means not being able to offer early exposure to a field if the school district does not enough funding to allocate funds to run a CTE program for that school year.

Although there are various interventions aiming to help close the skills gap among youth, there are additional barriers to youth-at-risk in the region studied that prevent them from utilizing such services. One of those barriers is transportation. Many youth-at-risk must rely on parents/guardians to drive them to locations to receive services. Some rely on public transportation, and others are relied upon to take care of younger siblings while parents/guardians work - making the use of centers a challenge. An even bigger and more complex barrier is the lack of proper district funding to run programs such as CTE related courses that provide students more of a hands-on experience or work-based learning environment. Many youth-at-risk already struggle academically, however, because CTE courses offer more of a technical and hands-on approach, students seem to respond much better than certain core subjects. During the research study, the researcher gained insight on other resources and additional barriers youth-at-risk were experiencing.

The literature identified various contributing factors to why youth-at-risk lack soft skills development including barriers to achievement. The literature indicates that indeed soft skills development is an important component in the lives of any youth, and that vulnerable youth-at-risk are at a greater disadvantage in developing soft skills essential for lifelong success.

### Theoretical Orientation

Soft skills development begins in the home and later applied in educational settings and further into the workforce environment. For youth that

have experienced barriers to achieving soft skills development, schools can help in filling in the gap by supporting their social-emotional development through inclusiveness and fostering the need of physical and psychological safety. In many schools across the country Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has been implemented as part of the teaching curriculum as part of a federal policy to incorporate social, emotional, and behavioral factors into education accountability metrics such as Every Child Succeeds Act (The Wallace Foundation, 2017).

Social and emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills required to succeed in schooling, the workplace, relationships, and citizenship (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2017). Additionally, SEL's framework refers to the building of skills needed to recognize and manage individual emotions, develop empathy for others, make responsible decisions, establish healthy relationships, and handle interpersonal situations more effectively ([www.thewallacefoundation.org](http://www.thewallacefoundation.org)). SEL programs are defined as those that include specific "instruction in processing, integrating and selectively applying social and emotional skills in appropriate ways" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 3), as well as programs where adults model these skills and children have opportunities to practice using them in diverse situations such that "safe, caring learning environments" are established organization-wide (ibid, p.3). Research increasingly suggests that social and emotional learning (SEL) matters a great

deal for important life outcomes like success in school, college entry and completion, and later earnings (Doolittle & Jones, 2017).

SEL is essentially derived from the roots of two theoretical orientations: Ecological Systems Theory and Self-Determination Theory. Ecological systems theory posits that the settings youth inhabit, like school, shape their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Safe school environments can give youth an opportunity to feel empowered and further develop social and emotional skills. According to self-determination theory, youth are more likely to flourish when in settings that address their social and emotional needs, such as experiencing meaningful relationships, having confidence in their abilities, and feeling autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The theoretical orientation guiding this study is the social emotional learning theory.

#### Potential Contribution of the Study to Micro and/or Macro Social Work Practice

Based on the outcome of the research and the feedback received from the hermeneutic dialect, the research has provided a meaningful contribution to the life-long needs of youth-at risk in alternative education settings, the county agency overseeing the educational outcomes of students, and local employers in the community who will potentially hire these individuals. At the macro level, the research has provided a foundation for possible curriculum revision and implementation to meet the needs of the soft skills gap in youth-at-risk. At the micro level, students in alternative education will reap the benefits of receiving instruction based on a curriculum that addresses to close the soft skills gap in

youth-at risk and continue to enhance their social learning capabilities through a social-emotional theoretical framework.

### Summary

This research focused on exploring the need of soft skills development in alternative education youth-at-risk. As the innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce continues to grow, it is important to ensure youth possess the required skills to be able to sustain a job and make a meaningful contribution to the economy. Youth-at-risk are among the most vulnerable groups who lack social-emotional skills essential for life-long success as many have experienced adverse childhood experiences or trauma, disability, behavioral problems, substance abuse, familial stressors, and community related factors such as; poverty and crime. A Constructivist paradigm was applied to carry out this research, which allowed the researcher to be a direct contribution of the study, along with other key informants of the hermeneutic dialect circle in addressing the skills gap. The ecological systems theory and self-determination theory were utilized to further analyze how to better prepare youth-at-risk in alternative education setting, so they make a meaningful contribution to society and retain a sense of self-sufficiency.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ENGAGEMENT

#### Introduction

Due to the nature of the constructivist paradigm, rapport building and professional engagement with key informants and stakeholders was paramount in creating a hermeneutic dialect circle. Efficiency, time management, interpersonal skills, active listening and attending skills, organization, and proper record keeping were basic requirements for ensuring the effectiveness of engagement. Transparent communication between the researcher, research site, and gatekeepers were initially established so that all participants were aware of the time, energy and commitment required for this type of research. Such terms and conditions were shared in paper and/or electronic form at the beginning stages of engagement. During the research process, special attention was given to possible cross-cutting issues related to ethics, politics, and diversity. The use of technology was beneficial and a convenient form of communication once the initial comfort level was established between the researcher, research site, and participants. Proper technological etiquette and sensitivity to privacy and confidentiality was shared among all participants. This chapter further expands on the study site demographics, actions taken for preparation of the study, and how potential diversity/ethical/political issues were addressed throughout the duration of the research.

## Research Site

The research site for this research study was an educational setting that provides alternative education to students in 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade who have been expelled from their respective school districts in Southern California. In addition to serving students in middle/high school, the site also provides education to students over the age of 18 who seek to obtain a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). The research site provides common core curriculum, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) curriculum, physical education, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) to students. The research site was staffed by one core curriculum-multi-subject credentialed teacher, one CTE culinary teacher, principal, an instructional aide, a GED credentialed teacher, two admissions and records personnel, a parole officer on call, counselor on call, and security guard. Due to the limited personnel, the researcher attempted to obtain referrals to similar alternative education sites within the region, including personnel at the juvenile hall.

The clients served at the research site included students who had been expelled from their respective districts, parents/guardians, students enrolled in Independent Studies, students enrolled in the GED program, and county personnel. Most of the population in alternative education settings in this region were male and predominantly minority groups such as Hispanic, Native American, and African American. Additionally, each student had experienced some type of trauma throughout their childhood. Some had been part of the

foster care system, victims of abuse, experienced homelessness, lost a primary caregiver, and/or had been involved in the juvenile justice system.

According to recent data published by the California Department of Education, the study region served over 300 students in alternative education in grades 7 – 12, 96.1% of those students are socioeconomically disadvantaged, 25.8% are English learners, and 7.7% are foster youth. Additionally, 43.9% had chronic absenteeism and 24% had been suspended at least once in any given school year. Although the graduation rate of alternative school students was 62.5%, only 7.5% were prepared for college and career success after graduation based on measures like graduation rate, performance on state tests, and completion of dual enrolment or college level course.

#### Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers at Research Site

Various strategies were used to engage with gatekeepers at the research site. The researcher was a former social work intern during the research, which provided an advantage in established relationships. Known gatekeepers included faculty, staff, and personnel from a local employment development agency that were identified by the hermeneutic circle once the interview process begun.

The researcher provided all gatekeepers a formal letter of introduction related to the research and obtained verbal or written commitment to participate. The researcher utilized a snowball sampling technique to identify other gatekeepers who were willing to participate in the study. Once the initial gatekeepers are identified, terms of the study were shared again, including the



process of the research, estimated timeframe, and confidentiality. At this time, the research addressed any participation questions participants had. Because a constructivist research study was driven by the researcher and participant movement, initial terms established needed to be renegotiated to maintain transparency among all participants and researcher throughout the research study. Gatekeepers were informed of the importance of working towards a common goal to address the skills gap between young workers and meet the demands of the region's top industries. By addressing this issue, students, employers, and the region's economy will eventually reap the benefits of having a well-trained marketable young worker.

#### Self-Preparation

Due to the nature of the constructivist research paradigm, change occurred and required the researcher a high level of adaptability, redirection, and inclusiveness while embracing change. The researcher prepared ahead of time by becoming familiar with the site's population, demographic background, and the students it served, including information about the site's mission and vision, which is to ensure the success of all students through extraordinary service, support, and partnerships. The researcher also became familiar with the educational background and experience in the research topic that each participant brought to the hermeneutic circle. Additionally, the researcher prepared by maintaining ongoing communication with participants of important

meeting dates and times. Forms of communication included, phone calls, email, and in-person conversations.

### Diversity Issues

Given the openness of the constructivist research paradigm, issues of diversity were acknowledged throughout the study and addressed in collaboration with study participants. Sensitivity and cultural competence were fostered before the study by analyzing any personal biases related to the research topic and during the research process to promote inclusiveness. Awareness of social class and ethnic makeup of the research team was also considered, including those who held leadership roles vs. those who did not.

Education levels varied among study participants from high school diplomas to master's degrees and each had differences of opinion on what specific soft skills were needed to be able to successfully transition into a work environment after high school. Additionally, study participants had different levels of experience in working with youth-at-risk and whether they felt they had a direct or indirect impact to helping youth-at-risk obtain soft skills attainment in a school setting. The experience level from the participants ranged from as little as four years up to 20 years directly working with youth-at-risk. Because the target group's experience, education, and role of authority varied vastly, the dignity of youth-at-risk and their adverse experiences were protected by communicating to all participants the purpose of the research and the potential opportunity to make

a difference in the future of youth-at-risk by enhancing their employability skills before high school graduation.

### Ethical Issues

It was crucial to establish trust in all participants, however, when ethical issues arose, the researcher maintained a high level of due diligence in addressing the issue immediately to avoid harming any participant, the reputation of the agency, and/or possibly the established culture of the hermeneutic circle. Due to the receptiveness of the constructivist research, ethical issues related to confidentiality and anonymity were challenging to maintain as the research consisted of obtaining additional participants that were referred into the hermeneutic circle. A constant need for renegotiation of terms and privacy protection was conducted by the researcher as the research progressed. Transparency to any potential risks and/or breach of confidentiality was made aware to study participants in a timely manner.

Confidentiality of each participant was withheld from constructs collected; however, participants were made aware of the constructivist model, which involved the discussion of the data collected during the member check-in meeting in which some participants self-disclosed their own opinions. A confidentiality agreement was given to all participants at the beginning of the study to protect the confidentiality of the group and the dignity of youth-at-risk. Throughout the study, reminders were provided to the participants to avoid potential ethical issues.

## Political Issues

The researcher ensured politics of a constructivist study were negotiated before the study began. Study sponsors committed to the constructivist process that required sharing of power, honesty, and an intense commitment. The researcher fostered development of meaningful partnerships with study participants and thoroughly explained the research process during the initial negotiation stage of the research. The group disagreed on certain topics and did not necessarily share opinions about the study, however, the researcher acted as a mediator to ensure every participant was heard and had their opinion respected using shared power. This ensured all participants collaborated in a harmonious manner.

After each participant agreed to participate in the study and signed a confidentiality agreement, the researcher discussed the importance of shared power throughout the study regardless of the participant's role in the agency. While each participant may have had differences of opinion of certain questions, everyone maintained a level of professionalism and respect to achieve a construction of mutually agreed ideas during the member check-in meeting.

## The Role of Technology in Engagement

The use of technology was implemented during the research study after the initial face-to-face individual meetings were made with participants. Email, telephone, and informal in-person visits back to the site were used as mediums for engagement, depending on what worked best for participants.

## Summary

Building rapport and engaging with key participants was paramount in this constructivist study. Various techniques of engagement were utilized by the researcher to cultivate participation of key participants and gatekeepers of the study in forming a hermeneutic dialect circle. Self-preparation of the research ensured a level of professionalism and competence in the research topic. The researcher addressed ethical, political, and diversity issues in a timely fashion to avoid any potential harm to the participants and acted as a mediator in ensuring everyone had equal shared power.

## CHAPTER THREE

### IMPLEMENTATION

#### Introduction

The trajectory of this research study took place at alternative education and workforce development settings. Key participants/stakeholders were identified through a purposive snowball sampling to later conduct individual interviews and identify additional participants to take part in the research study. During the in-person interview process, qualitative data was collected through individual recordings. Interview transcripts were further analyzed using open coding and ATLAS.ti software. Findings of the data collected was shared among participants via email instead of an in-person member check-in due to COVID-19 restrictions. Through email correspondence, participants had an open dialog

related to the findings and came to an agreement of the findings. A final report of the study results was disseminated among all participants and the study was then terminated. Once the study was terminated, the researcher had the intention to present the final report to the hermeneutic dialect circle and the Board of Directors at Riverside County Office of Education; however, COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and nationwide school closures did not allow for the final report to be disseminated as planned by the researcher.

### Study Participants

Study participants were primarily staff and faculty who worked directly with students in alternative education settings as they have an immediate interaction with students. The researcher traveled to two main sites serving youth-at-risk in alternative education and one site serving youth in a workforce development setting. Once the initial participants were identified, those participants then referred others to take part in the study. Key participants included a school Secretary, Counselor, Community Drop-out Prevention Specialist, Work Readiness Specialist, Career Coach, and Quality Assurance Coordinator. The staff and faculty at the research sites were instrumental in providing direct insight on the study as they directly interact with youth-at-risk. Some of the school staff members were also able to provide insight on what is currently being done to address the skills gap at the K-12 level. Understanding where the agency stood on the topic was instrumental in determining the direction of the research results

and what potential change could be made to enhance student success that met the needs of the local economy.

### Selection of Participants

When selecting study participants, a purposive sampling strategy was utilized as this method allowed study participants who had a direct interest on the topic to provide feedback and exclude those who do not suit the purpose of the study. Additionally, maximum variation sampling was used as a form of purposive sampling method to capture the full experience of the phenomenon being studied. Maximum variation sampling identified the diversity of experiences with a social phenomenon and give in-depth descriptions of unique cases as well as important shared patterns that were common to diverse cases (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, the adaptation of this method aimed to sample for heterogeneity to fully understand the phenomenon among different people in their respective roles, in different settings, and at different times.

Participants were chosen based on meeting the basic criteria of minimum age of 18 and their willingness to voluntarily participate in the study. Once key stakeholders were identified, initial participants were asked to refer others upon completion of their interview. This type of snowballing recruitment was used during the study once the initial hermeneutic dialect circle had been identified. The establishment of rapport was paramount for the researcher to obtain additional referrals.

The researcher obtained referrals to other staff members and the workforce development agency. These additional participants had a direct contact with youth-at-risk looking to be hired and shared valuable information about their experiences working with youth and were able to provide insight on gaps that needed improvement at the educational level.

### Data Gathering

Due to the constructivist approach of the study, interviews were structured utilizing Erlandson's four stages of interview process: preparing for the interview, beginning the interview, maintaining productivity during the interview, and closing the interview. The researcher applied macro practitioner interviewing skills to ensure valid and comprehensive data was collected.

The researcher prepared prior to the initial interview meeting by creating a pool of general questions related to the topic following Patton's (1990) six types of questions related to behavior/experience, opinion/belief, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and background/demographic. Participants were provided a copy of informed consent before the interview began. Some of the sample questions asked, but not limited to, included: What are some characteristics of youth-at-risk? What is your definition of soft skills? What soft skills do you think are most valuable to be successful in the workforce? In your experience, what soft skills do you think youth-at-risk lack the most? In your opinion, what causes youth-at-risk not to develop soft skills? What are your thoughts on the belief that schools have an obligation to teach soft skills to youth? What are some agency and youth



limitations? Once all questions were answered, the researcher clarified any answers to improve validity and accuracy. In addition to interviews, social artifacts such as documents, reports, legislations, and/or public posters were utilized, which assisted in the development of the individual and joint constructs.

### Phases of Data Collection

During the study, the process of data gathering to build a joint construction through a hermeneutic dialect circle was one that started with an open-ended approach and become more structured as the study progressed as anticipated in (Morris, 2006). As interviews continued and information was repeated by the participants, a focus was developed, joint constructions were shared (both areas of agreement and areas of disagreement), and action to address the joint construction was shared via a group email due to COVID-19 restrictions, instead of the anticipated member-checking meeting.

### Data Recording

Data collected from the interviews was recorded primarily using a voice recording device. The participants were also be given a paper format of all formulated questions, including new questions based on the reflective feedback of the previous participants. The researcher documented notes as needed. This process allowed the researcher to accurately transcribe and analyze the data collected. Additionally, the researcher utilized documents and artifacts as suggested by the hermeneutic circle. Furthermore, the researcher maintained a

reflective research journal throughout the study to be able to reflect on any potential biases and properly address them to avoid harm to the study.

Throughout the study, two research journals were maintained: reflective journal and data collection journal. The reflective journal was utilized to document the researcher's thoughts on carrying out the study and what the researcher was trying to learn. This included information pertaining to the selection of the research site, possible key players, and the researcher's ideas about possible findings. The reflective journal helped the researcher with subjective understanding and experience of the topic as well as developing empathy for the study participants to minimize any biases. The second journal included recordings of data sets, which included narratives of interviews, observations, notes, and social artifacts. Both journals were kept confidential in electronic and written form. A final audit by the faculty research advisor was conducted utilizing Lincoln and Guba (1985) audit structure to obtain an overall assessment of trustworthiness of the study.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis of data was completed after each interview or review of relevant documents, as suggested by Morris, 2014. The researcher obtained all data, analyzed transcripts, recorded findings of the data, and broke down data into themes or categories, also known as units of information, through an open coding method. When implementing the open coding, data was gathered from several key players so that all relevant concepts were identified (Morris, 2014).

Once units of information were built into specific categories, they were combined into a joint construct, which was shared by the researcher via email as opposed to in-person during the member check-in due to COVID-19 restrictions. Accuracy of the analysis gathered was based on corroboration of the hermeneutic circle. Examples of units of information that emerge during the study included: common characteristics of youth-at-risk, soft skills definition, what soft skills are essential for the workforce, why are youth not developing soft skills, and agency and youth limitations for soft skills training and development.

### Summary

Study participants included staff and faculty who worked directly with students in alternative education settings as well as local workforce development agency personnel. Participants were further identified through a purposive snowball sampling. The researcher gathered qualitative data via interviews, readings, and artifacts. Interview narratives were further transcribed and developed into units of information through open coding. Commonalities and dissimilarities of units of information were shared with the participants via group email correspondence and came to a joint construct to confirm accuracy of findings. The study was terminated once the final constructivist report was disseminated among all stakeholders.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EVALUATION

#### Introduction

The findings of the research project are discussed in this chapter. A total of six participants completed individual recorded interviews. Ages of the participants ranged from 29 to 47 years old. There were only one male and the rest were female participants. Five (83%) participants were Hispanic, and one (17%) was Caucasian. It is important to highlight that the area study area is predominantly a Hispanic community. Participants held various educational levels; one (17%) participant held a High School diploma education level, a second participant (17%) held an associate degree, two participants (33%) held a Bachelor's of Science, and two participants (33%) held Master's level education. Combined, all six participants share over 50 years of experience working with youth-at-risk. A brief discussion of the data results and possible next steps in making an official proposal to implement a soft skills development framework in both agencies was held via electronic correspondence that replaced the physical member check is included.

#### Data Analysis

The following major themes emerged from participant responses during the interviews: characteristics of youth-at-risk, soft skills definition, soft skills lacking in youth-at-risk, soft skills needed for the workforce, addressing the skills

gap, youth limitations for soft skills development, agency limitations for soft skills delivery, and soft skills training and development ideas.

### Characteristics of Youth-at-Risk

To obtain a better understanding of the population the agencies serve and given their extensive experience in the field, participants were asked to share any characteristics among the youth-at-risk they serve. Table 1 highlights a list of the most common participant responses. As shown on the table, all six (100%) participants indicated that the youth they serve have dropped out of the school system at some point in their lives. The list is followed by poverty, homelessness, lack of adult figure guidance, and previous trauma as the most common characteristics. “Supporting students living below poverty line requires that we seriously rethink our mindsets, beliefs, and actions about them, and their capacity, and reject deficit conceptions – negative views, mindsets, and worldviews-and consequently practices that influence students” (Milner IV, Cunningham, Murray & Alvarez, 2017). Additionally, “student and family home structures, particularly homelessness, have been shown to influence students’ experiences and outcomes in school” (Milner IV, Cunningham, Murray & Alvarez, 2017).

Table 1

Characteristic	<i># of Participants</i>	<i>%</i>
Dropped out of school at some point	6	17
Poverty	5	14
Homelessness	5	14
Lack of adult figure guidance	5	14
Experienced trauma	5	14
Justice-involved	3	9
Deficient in academic skills or credits	3	9
Teen parent	2	6
Foster care system	1	3

Note: Data for list of characteristics is based on a list of 35 total entries from the six participants that indicated were the most common among youth-at-risk. The majority were mentioned by more than one participant.

### Soft Skills Definition

Participants reported a brief definition of soft skills based on their own interpretation. One participant stated:

“Soft skills are skills you learn from your everyday life experiences”

(Interview #1, September 2019).

Another participant stated:

“Soft skills are things you learn as you grown up. It is the ability to be self-driven to get to the next step instead of waiting around for someone to hand things to you. Being aware of the resources available and making every attempt to use them (Interview #2, September 2019).

A third participant shared a similar response and added “...soft skills are really hard to train, especially for the youth we serve” (Interview #3, September 2019).

In general, most of the participants felt soft skills are skills that are learned as you grow up and apply in other situations you are exposed to that can also be applied in not only school but in the work environment as well. Two of the participants did not elaborate much on their own definition of soft skills, but rather indicated that core values such as honesty, respect, and trust were attributes that were equally important in youth overall.

### Soft Skills Lacking in Youth-at-Risk

When participants were asked to share their opinion on which specific soft skills youth-at-risk lacked the most, three common themes among all six participants were discovered. All six (100%) participants indicated that motivation and drive is the skill that youth lack the most. Additionally, all six (100%) participants lack strong work ethic followed by three (50%) of participants that shared people skills or social skills were also lacked by youth-at-risk. When asked further about their perception of why youth lack motivation/drive, strong work ethic, and social/people skills, the majority of the participants indicated that lack of parental guidance or having someone to model from early childhood was a contributing factor as to why youth-at-risk lacked these skills. Additionally, one participant indicated that "...not all schools are teaching the youth soft skills. The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program in high schools really helps prepare students for college, but not necessarily for the workforce" (Interview #1, September 2019).

### Soft Skills Needed for the Workforce

Study participants were further questioned on what they believed to be important soft skills when entering and staying in the workforce. In general, participants indicated that having a strong work ethic speaks volumes for anyone in the workforce, but more importantly for youth who are entering the workforce because it leaves a lasting positive or negative impression on the employer. Based on the data collected, all six (100%) participants indicated that motivation or having a “go-getter” attitude is one of the strongest skills to possess along with respect for others or diversity awareness. Four (66%) of the participants named communication and empathy as the second set of skills essential for the workforce. Additionally, three (50%) of the participants indicated that time management was the top third skill to possess among young workers. Lastly, two (33%) of the participants added resiliency and adaptability as other skills that can benefit youth in the workforce. Overall, the seven soft skills (motivation, diversity awareness, communication, empathy, time management, adaptability, and resiliency) highlighted by participants correlate with other research that has found similar skills to be essential for the workforce, including the Talent Development Association (ATD), which indicates that employers are observing that today’s American workforce is missing important soft skills, which include good communication skills, the ability to work with others, and the ability to think critically (ATD, 2012).



## Addressing the Skills Gap

When exploring the potential skills gap between youth-at-risk and the workforce, all six (100%) participants agreed that there is a tremendous skills gap between the education setting and the workforce. Participants were further asked to share their perspectives as to what could be contributing to the skills gap. A respondent described the skills gap as follows:

“I definitely think there’s a skills gap because I feel everyone’s home life experiences are different. We may have youth that have incredibly involved parents that check-in on their children and want them to succeed even if they have previously dropped out. Then you have those youth that their parents are not involved at all. And that can be discouraging for the youth. Schools can only teach so much, and if a youth is not applying themselves to succeed, then they will lack many of those skills that are essential for workforce success” (Interview #2, September 2019).

In addition to parental involvement, or lack of, respondents shared their belief that the educational system should have some responsibility in providing skills development opportunities to youth-at-risk before high school graduation as they prepare for the workforce. Two respondents stated the following:

“I think schools should be responsible in getting students prepared for the workforce and for the future” (Interview #4, March 2020).

“I think there’s a disconnect when it comes to youth not receiving the same career guidance in high school coming from counselors. Some counselors

push more on the Career and Technical Education (CTE) and some more on the four-year institutions, and I think all students should be able to know what is out there for them and prepare them accordingly. From personal experience, I was always told 'you're going to a four-year university'. I ended up dropping out after my first year because of financial aid and I felt like a failure and I had to figure things out on my own. Then I found out later that there were other opportunities for me in the CTE field that I could've been introduced to in high school, but never was because according to my counselor, I was destined to go straight into a university" (Interview #3, September 2019).

As the participants further shared their views on the skills gap, participants were also asked how their respective agencies were addressing the skills gap. In general, participants located at the workforce development agency indicated that the agency is addressing the skills gap by providing workshops, conducting community employer engagement, creating partnerships with other organizations, staying up-to-date with the latest labor market information, creating innovative work-based learning opportunities for their clients, conducting outreach, and providing resources for employability to community members of all ages.

Participants in the alternative education setting shared limited information on how the agency is addressing the skills gap; however, participants did indicate that Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) were being implemented, but did not elaborate on how exactly MTSS meetings were addressing the skills gap.

According to the Riverside County Office of Education website, MTSS is a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students.

#### Youth Limitations for Soft Skills Development

When exploring any potential limitations youth may have in further developing soft skills, all six (100%) participants indicated that psychological issues related to mental health, substance use, family dynamics, and previous trauma were contributing factors that often limit youth-at-risk in developing these skills. Additionally, five out of the six (83%) participants shared that little to no parental involvement in the success of youth-at-risk is a second limitation. Furthermore, three out of the six (50%) participants indicate that because youth lack the motivation to succeed, it often becomes a barrier as well and clients end up terminating services prematurely.

#### Agency Limitations for Providing Soft Skills Delivery

When participants were asked to share any potential agency limitations, in general, all participants indicated that lack of parental involvement, funding or budget limitations, and lack of employer participation were among the most common barriers for the workforce development agency and alternative education setting in maximizing success outcomes.

“...one of the barriers we have is finding occupational skills certificates. We currently offer Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, guard card, and hotel

guest service certifications, but we are limited to just those because other certifications are expensive” (Interview #1, September 2019).

“I would probably say funding, training, and lack of staff. We only have one teacher that teaches grades 6-12 in the same classroom and almost half of the class require for the student to follow an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)” (Interview #4, March 2020).

In relation to the classroom environment in the alternative education setting, participants felt that the learning environment of having all students grades 6-12 in the same classroom was not be effective; however, they attribute this structure due to lack of funding. One participant stated the following:

“...every student has different levels of maturity and it’s not a one-size-fits-all type of environment. I’m not really in the classroom much, but I do know that is a constant struggle for teachers and students to adjust the learning environment” (Interview #5, March 2020).

The participants in the workforce development agency also shared several limitations related to employer engagement and providing more work-based learning opportunities to clients and stated the following:

“...employers are not willing to build partnerships with our agency because we are a for-profit agency, although services are free for clients” (Interview #1, September 2019).

“...employers are not willing to provide entry-level positions or partner with us, so it can be a smoother transition for the youth” (Interview #2, September 2019).

“...many companies are not willing to create entry-level positions for those students who are just starting their careers. They automatically want someone who already has experience, which makes it challenging for clients to fulfill their dreams and often end up having to move out of the area or state to gain that experience elsewhere” (Interview #1, September 2019).

“...employers sometimes get discouraged with the amount of documentation that we have to complete when building a partnership” (Interview #1, September 2019).

#### Soft Skills Training and Development Ideas

Considering the number of limitations shared by participants based on their experiences, participants were given the opportunity to explore and share ideas on how to improve training and development of youth-at-risk in their respective settings. In the workforce development setting, all three participants indicated they would greatly benefit from additional training, professional development, and would like to have additional workshops, an on-site therapist as part of a wraparound service to clients, and increasing staff and streamlined certifications to better serve clients. Participants in the workforce development setting stated the following:

“I would say having additional training for us Career Coaches to better serve our youth. More professional development on how to better engage with our youth. Maybe even training on to teach a specific topic in practical terms so that students will be able to better engage instead of just providing training on how we should follow policies and procedures. We could benefit from training on how to make better connections with youth” (Interview #2, September 2019).

“...we do a very good job in maximizing our budget, but it would be amazing to have an on-site therapist or if we could partner with an outside agency to provide services to our youth to address their psychological needs. Most of the youth we serve have had serious trauma and that sometimes gets in the way of learning. If they have not addressed their trauma, it makes it more challenging to learn” (Interview #2, September 2019).

“...it would be nice to have more streamlined credentialed programs, short-term certifications, or apprenticeship opportunities for the youth” (Interview #3, September 2019).

The participants in the alternative education setting further shared the following in exploring ideas for soft skill development in youth-at-risk:

” I think the agency should offer curriculum or classes, maybe even workshops to help our student’s growth and success” (Interview #4, March 2020).

“It would be nice to bring a program separate from their core classes to teach these soft skills. Maybe set up a program where they teach them basic communication and social skills” (Interview #5, March 2020).

“...also add parenting classes. It would be nice to have a collaboration with local agencies and local employers that can probably come in and teach the youth employment skills and hopefully empower them” (Interview #5, March 2020).

### Data Interpretation

The goal of this study was to analyze the need for soft skills development in youth-at-risk, using qualitative research methods. A total of eight themes emerged from the study, which were; characteristics of youth-at-risk, soft skills definition, soft skills lacking in youth-at-risk, soft skills needed for the workforce, addressing the skills gap, youth limitations for soft skills development, agency limitations for soft skills delivery, and soft skills training and development ideas. Based on the qualitative responses of the six participants in the study, the group concluded that there is a significant soft skills gap among youth-at-risk and their transition into early adulthood. Some of the contributing factors that were captured during the study included psychological and ecological barriers for the youth, and limitations for the agency mainly revolved around funding, lack of community partnerships, and lack of parental support to join forces in empowering youth-at-risk to reach their full potential in developing soft skills essential for the workforce and lifelong success. The study group agreed to further consider the possibility of proposing a curriculum specific to training youth soft skills. Among the group, some participants shared brief information related to the New World of Work (NWoW) curriculum that is being implemented at the

local community college level for post-secondary students. The NWoW curriculum was created shortly after 2012 after conducting a series of Skills Panels to gather feedback from employers, entrepreneurs, human resources specialists, educators, and students to determine the essential employability skills required in our emerging global economy ([www.newworldofwork.org](http://www.newworldofwork.org)). Due to COVID19 restrictions, further discussion on the NWoW curriculum was limited. However, all participants agreed it would be beneficial for both agencies to further investigate how to implement the high school curriculum for the clients it serves.

#### Implications of Findings for Micro and/or Macro Practice

There has been extensive research on analyzing the skills gap among individuals and the workforce. The findings of this study are consistent with the theoretical orientation mentioned in chapter on of the study report: Ecological Systems Theory and Self-Determination Theory. Due to the many limitations youth have in developing soft skills and agencies delivering further training to teach those soft skills, it requires multiple systems working together to achieve the goal in closing the skills gap. At the macro level, participants can further explore a grant proposal to the office of education to provide funding for a possible pilot program to bring the NWoW curriculum to the educational setting. Should the office of education reject the proposal, the workforce development agency in the study can also present a grant proposal for the staff to be trained to teach the curriculum due to its application flexibility in various settings that include high



school, post-secondary, workforce development agencies, adult schools, and employment training facilities. At the micro level, if implemented, students will be able to learn from the curriculum and earn valuable skills.

### Summary

The data generated through in-person formal interviews and group electronic correspondence created momentum among participants. The participants are hopeful that through the findings of this research project, both agencies will be able to collaborate in making cross-referrals going forward and continue exploring the implementation of the NWoW curriculum or something similar. When asked to share their vision of the future in regards to youth being better prepared for the workforce, participants revealed thoughtful and meaningful suggestions to improving the services they currently provide and made a commitment to continue to explore other ways that will help youth-at-risk develop soft skills needed for the workforce.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### TERMINATION AND FOLLOW UP

#### Introduction

Chapter five covers the termination process used at the end of the study. Due to COVID19 restrictions, the study participants were not able to gather in person for the member check-in meeting. However, electronic correspondence was utilized

to formalize the joint construct and begin the termination process of the study, as well as the researchers exit from the study environment.

### Termination of the Study

Termination was initiated as part of the electronic group correspondence that was held in place of the member check-in due to COVID19 restrictions. The study participants were provided a preliminary report, which was reviewed and acknowledged by all participants. A call to action was described in the previous chapter and agreed upon and all participants shared interest to continue the work started by the study to in the future bring soft skills training and development to both agencies.

Along with the preliminary report, each participant was provided a debriefing statement that indicated termination of the study and removal of researcher from the study. Each participant was provided contact information of the researcher to allow for any additional debriefing and/or follow-up questions, if needed.

### Communicating Findings to Study Site and Study Participants

During the study, the participants were engaged through in-person interviews with the researcher to formalize individual constructs including ongoing feedback on the constructs of others within the research group. To finalize the study, participants engaged in a group electronic correspondence (due to COVID19) as opposed to an in-person member check-in. Participants

had the opportunity to discuss their own constructs and those of others in the study group to further develop a final joint construct. Participants were once again reminded that the final report will be made available upon request as outlined in the debriefing statement provided.

### Ongoing Relationship with Study Participants

During the research study, participants were able to engage through in-person interviews with the researcher to form individual constructs and were provided feedback. All six interviews were transcribed, and participants were called by the researcher if clarification was needed to ensure accuracy of their thought process. At the end, participants collaborated via electronic means to further discuss their joint construct and further explore the common themes and units that were discovered during the study. During this final member check-in, participants were empowered to continue the vision study results independently and separately from the researcher. At this time, the study group was also informed the researcher would be available for resource referrals only and if needed, as suggested by (Morris, 2006).

### Dissemination Plan

The results and report of this study was shared with the study site via electronic correspondence. Participants were reminded that once the research project is published and recorded in CSUSB library system, access may be granted to the research site upon request.

APPENDIX A  
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Developed by Ana Hernandez

#### Interview Guide: Questions for Faculty & Staff

- In your opinion, what is your definition of soft skills?
- What soft skills do you think are most valuable to obtain by the time youth graduate high school, which will be essential for lifelong success?
- What are some characteristics of youth-at-risk?
- What soft skills do you think are lacked the most in youth-at-risk?
- What is your opinion about the skills gap between students and the workplace?
- What are your thoughts on the belief that schools have an obligation to teach soft skills development to youth?
- How long have you worked with youth-at-risk? What is your occupation? What is your age?
- In your opinion, what can be done to improve soft skills attainment in youth-at-risk?
- What are some agency and youth limitations to obtaining soft skills development and training?

#### Questions for workforce development staff:

- What are some characteristics of youth-at-risk?
- What is your definition of soft skills?
- How does your agency address the skills gap in young workers?
- What soft skills are required to be successful in the workforce?
- What soft skills do you think are lacked the most in youth-at-risk?
- What barriers do youth experience in job preparation, attainment, and retention?

APPENDIX B  
INFORMED CONSENT



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
School of Social Work

**INFORMED CONSENT**

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to analyze the need for soft skills development in youth-at-risk in alternative education settings in the local region. The study is being conducted by Ana Hernandez, a MSW (Master of Social Work) student under the supervision of Dr. Levine-Sapozhnikov, professor in the School of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. The study had been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-Committee, California State University, San Bernardino.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study is to analyze the need for soft skills development in youth-at-risk that are in alternative education settings.

**DESCRIPTION:** Voluntary participants will be asked a few pre-set questions related to the current status of soft skills development in youth-at-risk in alternative education settings.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY:** Your responses will remain anonymous and data will be reported in group form only.

**DURATION:** It will take 20 – 30 minutes to conduct the interview.

**RISKS:** There are no foreseeable risks involved to the participants.

**BENEFITS:** There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

**CONTACT:** If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Brooklyn Levine-Sapozhnikov at (909) 537-5501.

**RESULTS:** Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>) at California State University, San Bernardino after December 2020.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

\_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date  
Place an "X" mark here

I agree to be tape recorded for the interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

909.537.5501 · 909.537.7029

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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APPENDIX C  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT





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College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
*School of Social Work*

**DEBRIEFING STATEMENT**

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate the need for soft skills development in youth-at-risk attending alternative education settings in the local region. We are interested in assessing the soft skills gap between youth-at-risk and employment preparation and self-sufficiency. We are also interested in examining how youth-at-risk in alternative education are meeting their social and emotional needs within their learning environment and if any contributing factors are presented in meeting those needs. This debriefing statement is to inform you that no deception is involved in this study.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Brooklyn Levine-Sapozhnikov at 909.537.5501. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact the ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) after September 2020.

909.537.5501 · 909.537.7029

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

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APPENDIX D  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**  
***Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee***

Researcher(s): Ana Hernandez\_\_\_\_

Proposal Title: Exploring the Need of Soft Skills Development in Alternative Education Settings Serving Youth-at-risk

\_\_\_\_\_ # SW1953\_\_\_\_\_

Your proposal has been reviewed by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board. The decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

-----  
Proposal is:

- X Approved  
 To be resubmitted with revisions listed below  
 To be forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- Faculty and Student signature missing  
 Missing informed consent  Debriefing statement  
 Revisions needed in informed consent  Debriefing  
 Data collection instruments revision  
 Agency approval letter missing  
 CITI missing  
 Revisions in design needed (specified below)

  
\_\_\_\_\_ Committee Chair Signature

6/10/2019  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Distribution: White-Coordinator; Yellow-Supervisor; Pink-Student

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