Summer 2021

The Devaluation of Career Technical Education (CTE) by the Graduates of Wonderwood High School

Jason J. Weiss

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Secondary Education Commons, Secondary Education and Teaching Commons, Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons, and the Vocational Education Commons

THE DEVALUATION OF CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) BY THE
GRADUATES OF WONDERWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

by

JASON WEISS

(Under the Direction of Meca Williams-Johnson)

In Georgia, high school graduates are expected to be college and career ready, however due to recent educational legislative changes the focus has been placed on being college ready. These modifications have led to a low number of graduates completing a Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway as well as a low number of graduates passing their CTE End-of-Pathway assessments and earning industry credentials. To assist in determining the factors that have led to the devaluation of CTE by Georgia graduates, a critical qualitative inquiry study was conducted on a sample of 13 graduates from Wonderwood High School, in South Heights, Georgia. The study aimed to identify how the graduates of Wonderwood would both describe the perceived value of completing a CTE pathway as well as how they view CTE curriculum objectives and their relationship to their post-secondary plan(s). In-depth phone interviews were conducted, transcribed, coded and the data analyzed to determine overarching themes. The first theme developed involved the graduates' awareness of CTE curriculum's value and purpose, of which 100% of the graduates stated that CTE adds value to a student's education and allows for career exploration. However, the results indicated that they did not have this opinion until after they had graduated and entered a post-secondary institution. The participants acknowledged skills attainment, Advanced Placement (AP) versus Dual Enrollment (DE), Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) school evaluation measures and misinformation from Non-CTE faculty and staff as the reasons they saw a lack of CTE

value while attending Wonderwood. The second theme comprised of the cultural/societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE of which a lack of student voice, power dynamics, social reproduction and the idea of hidden curricula were indicated as leading to Non-CTE completers feelings towards how CTE impacts post-secondary readiness. To assist in alleviating the devaluation of CTE in Georgia, the secondary education process must entail active participation from all stakeholders to include teachers, parents, administrators, counselors, and students with the goal of determining the educational path required for a student to become successful in their post-secondary plan.

INDEX WORDS: Career technical education, Critical theory, Dual enrollment, Advanced placement, Social reproduction, Hidden curricula

THE DEVALUATION OF CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) BY THE

GRADUATES OF WONDERWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

by

JASON WEISS

A.S., Macon State College, 2003

B.S., Macon State College, 2005

MBA, Georgia College and State University, 2006

MAT, Georgia College and State University, 2009

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

THE DEVALUATION OF CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) BY THE

GRADUATES OF WONDERWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

by

JASON WEISS

Major Professor:	Meca Williams-Johnson
Committee:	Grigory Dmitriyev
	Sabrina Ross
	Lucy Bush (Non voting)

Electronic Version Approved:
July 2021

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my incredible support team. First to my family who were my constant cheerleaders and always gave me that much needed push when I required it. You all mean the world to me, and I cannot begin to thank you for the love and support you continuously provide to me every single day. To my unbelievable friends who put up with me canceling on them in order to stay in and study or take breaks on our trips to do a little work. I could not have accomplished this journey without each and every one of you. I cannot wait for our next adventures where I can now be completely focused on the experiences and building amazing memories with you guys. Lastly, to my mentors who have given so much of themselves to help mold me into the educator I am today. The impact you have had on life is inconceivable. Thank you for always being that guiding light for me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study and dissertation would not be what it is without the invaluable guidance of my committee. Each of you challenged me along the way to ensure that I was looking at this study from all the required viewpoints and as a result, I was able to produce something I am truly proud of. The journey was long, but you never gave up on me and for that I am forever thankful. Dr. Dmitriyev, the knowledge you have instilled in me as I progressed through this program has forever changed me as both a person and an educator. Thank you for always answering my calls or emails and pushing me to complete my study. I hope you are enjoying retirement as you deserve it. Dr. Meca Williams-Johnson, I cannot even begin to thank you for getting me to the finish line. Without hesitation, you stepped in to serve as my chair when I know your workload was already overflowing. Additionally, your writing circles were just what I needed to make me focus and complete the study. I hope your other candidates are taking advantage of them as they are vital. Dr. Ross, you opened my eyes to countless theorists and looking at education in a whole new light. Your insight added a perfect twist to my theoretical framework. Dr. Bush, thank you for giving so much of your time to support me through this process. With you being an individual who graduated from the program, I found myself referencing your advice on an almost daily basis. You were an asset to the committee, and I want to sincerely thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Schools do not only control people; they also help control meaning. Since they preserve and distribute what is perceived to be 'legitimate knowledge'—the knowledge that 'we all must have,' schools confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge of specific groups. But this is not all, for the ability of a group to make its knowledge into 'knowledge for all' is related to that group's power in the larger political and economic arena…"
[Italics added] (Michael W. Apple, 1979, pp.63-64)

In 2012, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) implemented a new

evaluation mechanism, called the College and Career Ready Performance Index

(CCRPI), which gauge how effectively a secondary educational institution is preparing a

student to be both college and career ready (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). As

a result, the Career Technical Education (CTE) department gained a level of importance

that it did not previously have under such prior assessment tools as the Adequate Yearly

Progress (AYP). In fact, the 2012 CCRPI included CTE in one of its performance

indicators: percent of graduates completing a CTE pathway, or an advanced academic

pathway, or a fine arts pathway, or a world language pathway within their program of

study. Furthermore, a school could earn additional points in the following CTE areas:

school has earned a Georgia Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

Program Certification; percent of graduates completing a career-related Work-Based

Learning (WBL) Program or a career-related Capstone Project (2012 CCRPI, 2015).

Additionally, during the 2014-2015 school year, the GaDOE added an additional CTE

specific indicator: percent of CTE Pathway Completers earning a national industry

recognized credential, or an IB Career-Related Certificate, or a passing score on a

GaDOE recognized end of pathway assessment (2014 CCRPI, 2015). In 2018 the

GaDOE revised the CCRPI as part of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in regard to CTE by only providing schools CTE points based on pathway completion, passing the end of pathway assessment and completing a WBL program. However, though the CCRPI has indicated the importance of CTE through its various indicators, it has not made it a requirement. The CCRPI simply states that secondary educational institutions should prepare students for college and their future careers though it does not specify that the student's career will be offered under the CTE career pathways. For example, a student may want to be an artist, musician, photographer, actor or translator, which are all covered under the Fine Arts discipline.

Through the implementation of the CCRPI, the GaDOE has placed value on the CTE curriculum; however, this level of importance has not reached the students of Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. This can be seen through their low number of CTE pathway completers, through their high CTE course failure rates and their low CTE End-of-Pathway scores. By utilizing a critical constructivist theoretical lens, I have conducted a qualitative study to identify the factors that are contributing to the graduate's devaluation of the CTE curriculum at Wonderwood High School.

When employing a critical constructivist theoretical lens, one main belief is that "…different individuals coming from diverse backgrounds will see the world in different ways" (Kincheloe, 2005, pg. 9). As a result, identifying those factors that are contributing to the devaluation of the CTE curriculum at Wonderwood High School will serve the interests of numerous stakeholders. First, Wonderwood High School who will have the chance to increase their CCRPI scores in regard to the CTE indicators. Second, the CTE teachers at Wonderwood High School whose evaluations, number of pathway completers

and End-of-Pathway (EOP) scores could all increase. Third, the students of Wonderwood High School will gain a new insight into the opportunities that CTE offers at the secondary level. Lastly, the South Heights, Georgia employers who are depending on the Wonderwood High Students to be their future workforce.

Problem Statement

At Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia, graduates are failing to see the value in the CTE curriculum. This can be observed through the low number of CTE pathway completers and low CTE EOP scores. Table 1 below highlights the number of CTE pathway completers for the six high schools and one college and career charter academy program from 2016-2019. Furthermore, the average EOP scores were low for those students who completed a CTE pathway at Wonderwood High School. For example, the 2016-2019 average scores for the following Wonderwood CTE pathways were: Business & Technology 74.3%, Entrepreneurship 63.9%, Marketing Management 49% and Web & Digital Design 46%. The devaluing of CTE that is taking place at Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia is reflected throughout Georgia. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2018), there were 385, 431 students enrolled in CTE courses of which only 150, 603 or 39 percent completed their CTE pathway. Furthermore, of the 150, 603 only 36, 177 or 24 percent passed their EOP.

Table 1 *Total number of Hope County CTE pathway completers from 2016-2019*

School Name	Total Number of CTE Pathway Completers
Copper Cove High School	326
Coral Springs High School	635

Elk Grove High School	361
Green Valley Academy	308
Highland High School	351
Spring Gardens High School	301
Wonderwood High School	256

Purpose of Study

I have conducted a critical qualitative inquiry study and identify the factors, which are contributing to the graduates devaluing of the CTE curriculum at Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. In Hope County, CTE is not a requirement for obtaining a high school diploma and is held in the same regard as taking a Fine Arts or Foreign Language course. In answering Herbert Spencer's question of "What knowledge is of most worth?" Schubert (2009) stated that the knowledge that is of most worth is the curriculum that will make the US more globally competitive. In my opinion, this is largely due to the idea that the US is an acquisitive society who treats education as a commodity. This builds off Peters (2003) and Olssen (2005) idea of the knowledge economy and knowledge capitalism, whereas each individual must become "economically self-interested" (p. 314). This is due to the idea that "…the intellect of each knowledge worker has become the most important productive resource" (Peters & Reveley, 2012, p. 4).

However, what will make the US more competitive are the skills students will learn in CTE and not the countless facts they will memorize in their college preparatory programs of study. For instance, with the computerization of information most methods

of education are becoming obsolete (De Castell, 1996). Long gone are the days of memorizing countless facts and concepts and wandering through a multitude of literature to find answers or the meanings behind texts. With the simple input of information into any smartphone or computer students can find thousands of answers to any questions posed by the teacher. Education is now becoming a place where students must learn how to navigate this wealth of knowledge and learn how to use it in reference to their future career requirements.

It seems that through the changes initiated by both the GaDOE and Governor Perdue that the state is starting to realize both the benefits and rewards of producing both a college and career ready student however, the reality is that by requiring all Georgia students to take the same program-of-study regardless of the educational path they feel allows them to succeed in the world they have constructed for themselves is in actuality creating students who are neither college nor career ready. In fact, according to *The Global Skills Shortage*, roughly 75 percent of businesses that participated in a study on employee skill deficiencies stated that applicants are missing the skills required to fill their open positions. The study went on to indicate that 69 percent are the technical skills students could learn through the pathways offered at the K-12 institutions (Society For Human Resource Management, 2019).

Research Questions

This critical qualitative inquiry study was designed to answer the following specific questions:

1. How do graduates of Wonderwood High describe the perceived value of completing a CTE Pathway?

2. How do Wonderwood High graduates describe CTE curriculum objectives and their relationship to their future plan(s)?

The research questions were designed as the method to allow me to construct a deeper, logical understanding of the purpose for my study, which includes identifying both the perceptions and themes that are impacting the devaluation of CTE at Wonderwood High School. Additionally, they assisted in guiding the development and configuration of my literature review.

Personal Context

I was a CTE instructor for five years and it did not take me long to come to the realization that our discipline is not valued by students. In fact, not a day went by that I did not hear the words "I don't need this class to graduate, so I really do not care what I get" or "This class doesn't count towards my college entrance GPA, it is just an elective". It was rather clear that the students I have come in contact with were unconcerned in regard to what CTE could offer them.

I attended high school in Middle Georgia. My school was one of three high schools found in the County and located in the lowest socio-economic part of the city. Much like the other high schools, my school offered CTE courses to satisfy the Technology/Career Preparatory Diploma requirements. However, unlike the other electives the CTE courses at the school were held in a run-down building separated from the other elective classrooms and the school as a whole almost as if the school was purposely trying to set CTE apart from the other courses. In addition to location, the CTE courses at the school were largely populated with students who either had learning deficiencies or who did the minimal amount of work to pass their academic/core courses.

I am referring to those students who rarely came to class, and when they did attend class they would sleep and seldom complete their assignments. In addition to the before-mentioned characteristics, the majority of the school's students in the CTE courses were also not on the College Preparatory Diploma path. Due to this fact, the CTE courses garnished the reputation of being the programs that the intellectually challenged students enrolled in. If you were going to college, you would not take a CTE class you would instead enroll in advanced academic courses.

This idea follows the concept of social reproduction, where the social environment in which an individual is born into is where that individual will remain as they progress through life (Nunn, 2014). Equating to affluent, usually White, students that are born into families of privilege and advantage who then tend to secure professional lives that afford them the same level of advantage they were born into. While lower-income, minority students who are born into families that suffer from economic disadvantages will then tend to build lower-skilled technical lives that are impacted by the same disadvantages that were present in their childhood. Apple (1995) stated that "a fundamental problem facing us is the way in which systems of domination and exploitation persist and reproduce themselves without being consciously recognized by the people involved." (p. 12) Take for example, my high school experience with CTE where those in power (School Administrators, Counselors and Parents) made my curriculum choices for me instead of providing me with the options and asking for my input. This was over twenty years ago, and this decision-making process is still in practice today. As both a former CTE instructor and current administrator, I have witnessed the lower socio-economic make-up of the CTE classes and when I ask the

students why they are not participating in either the Dual Enrollment (DE) or the

International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, they state that the counselors have never

spoken to them about these programs and that their schedules were selected for them.

Currently, there are only 50 students enrolled in the IB program at Wonderwood High

School out of 971 students. Furthermore, if you look at the socio-economic make-up of

those 50 students, you will see that they are majority white students from middle to high

class families. If you ask these students why they are participating in these opportunities,

they will state that their counselors spoke to both their parents and them about the

programs and how they will provide the students with advantages as they apply to

college. Additionally, these systems of domination are not solely impacting the

educational arena. In fact, take into consideration the death of both Ahmaud Arbery and

George Floyd whose lives were both impacted by a system that has historically treated

minorities as if their lives are of less value then those that come from privilege.

Moreover, the system in question goes unchecked by those that it is impacting. In the

case of Mr. Arbery, it took nearly three months for any arrests to be made and with Mr.

Floyd it took only eight minutes for the system to end his life for buying an item with an

alleged counterfeit bill.

 My first impression of CTE, which I gained through my experiences in high

school, remained with me all throughout my college and professional careers. It was not

until I started to teach in the field that I came to realize the opportunities CTE has to offer

secondary education students. CTE provides exposure to the skills needed in almost any

career path. In fact, the components of CTE include: *Career Awareness, Career*

Exploration, Instructional Related Activities, Connecting Activities and Foundational

Skills (Association for Career and Technical Education, 2012). *Career Awareness* provides students with real world business connections. Examples of career awareness activities include guest speakers, career days and career fairs. *Career Exploration* provides the students with a chance to gain both knowledge and experience in the career field that interest them. The lessons include such events as: career guidance and advisement; job shadowing and Internet searches/reports. *Instructional Related Activities* allows the students to put into action the skills and knowledge they have gained in the CTE courses by creating school-based enterprises, entrepreneurship projects and participating in after-school jobs. *Connecting Activities* allows the CTE students an opportunity to exhibit the skills they have obtained to local business partnerships that could be their future employer. The ways in which the students show their talents is through mentor training, advisory committee participation and Tech Prep articulation. Lastly, every CTE course despite its specific curriculum must incorporate the Foundational Skills. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2012a),

> The Foundation Skills for Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) are critical competencies that students pursuing any career pathway should exhibit to be successful. As core standards for all career pathways in all program concentrations, these skills link career, technical and agricultural education to the state's academic performance standards (p. 1).

They include such areas as: *Technical, Communication, Problem Solving, Safety, Health and Environment, Teamwork, and Ethics*.

In addition to the standard-based curriculum taught within schools lies what scholars like to call "hidden curricula" which consists of the norms and values tied to a targeted student body (Nunn, 2014, p. 18). The teachers and administrators do not necessarily emphasize these traits and values consciously within the various courses as they entail what the curriculum states as the expectations for success within both life and post-secondary educational endeavors. For example, the "working class" students who are predominately present in the CTE courses are taught the values of following instructions, being on time, respecting authority, which align to what low skill employers' value. While students in the advanced academic courses are assigned activities that allow them to think creatively, problem solve and practice assertiveness through questioning their teachers. These coincide to the traits managers and highly paid professionals are required to possess in order to obtain employment (Nunn, 2014).

Social Context

In 2008, changes to the graduation requirements occurred regarding both the number and the type of courses students are now required to complete in order to graduate from a public high school in South Heights, Georgia. Prior to the passing of Georgia Legislative rule 160-4-2-.48 better known as the "New Graduation Rule", South Heights's diploma structure consisted of four tiers each with different requirements (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). The four tiers were: College Preparatory (CP), College Preparatory with Distinction (CP+), Technology/Career (TC) and Technology/Career with Distinction (TC+) (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b). Under the new graduation rule, starting with those students entering high school for the

first time in the 2008-2009 school year and subsequent years, there will be one set of requirements that all students would now follow.

Some readers might view this change as a positive move towards consistency and equality for today's students, but what those same readers are overlooking within this new law is the emphasis on academics and de-emphasis on the CTE courses. Table 2 summarizes the graduation requirements for those students graduating prior to 2008 and Table 3 for those students graduating after 2008.

Table 2 Georgia High School Graduation Requirements Prior to 2008

	Dual	CP	CP+	TC	TC+
English/Language Arts*	4	4	4	4	4
Mathematics*	4	4	4	3**	3**
Science*	3	3	3	3	3
Social Studies*	3	3	3	3	3
Health & Physical Education	1	1	1	1	1
Computer Technology &/or Fine Arts &/or Technology/Career-preparatory &/or Foreign Language	1	1	1	1	1
Foreign Language*	2	2	2	0	0**
Technology/Career-preparatory units*** (from core Technology/Career-preparatory courses)	4	0	0	4	4
Locally required or elective units	0	4	4	3**	4**
State Electives from Core Courses (courses	0	0	2	0	1

with a single asterisk) &/or Fine Arts					
TOTAL UNITS (MINIMUM)	22	22	24	22	24

Table 3 *Georgia High School Graduation Requirements After 2008*

Area of Study	Graduation Requirement (After to 2008) in units
English/Language Arts	4 (no change)
Science	4 (increase of 1 unit)
Mathematics	4 (increase of those on a career track)
Social Studies	3 (no change)
CTAE/Fine Arts/ Foreign Language	3 (increase of 2 units)
Electives	4 (no change)
Health	.5 (no change)
Physical Education	.5 (no change)
Total Minimum Requirements:	23 (increase of 1 unit)

When comparing both sets of graduation requirements I realized that CTE is one of three choices that the students can take in order to earn a credit. In addition, CTE has constantly been considered an option area of study, never a requirement like its academic counterparts (Georgia Department of Education, 2012b; Graduating from a Georgia

Public High School, 2009). The "option" debate will be examined further in chapter two of this study. It can be inferred then from the above-mentioned realization that with the elimination of the Technology/Career Preparatory diploma a student now could possibly graduate from high school without ever having taken a CTE course. However, why should students take CTE courses seriously if the educational lawmakers do not recognize the importance of CTE? In fact, only 11 out of 50 or 22 percent of the states currently offer some sort of a Technology/Career Preparatory Diploma (Dounay, 2007).

Though the ideas of neoliberalism lend themselves more to the way a country should governor its economic policy, many of its core assumptions also apply to educational policy. For example, education has become integrated into the production of wealth via the knowledge economy, society and enterprise (Powell & Snellman, 2004; Brancaleone & O'Brien, 2011). Furthermore, neoliberalism speaks of education as a driving force for economic growth and competitiveness where intellectual rather than physical labor is the basis of production (Peters, 2003; Tsogas, 2012). By combining the four diploma options into one it would appear as if the legislatures were trying to eliminate curriculum inequality and provide all students with the same opportunities for success. However, viewing this law through a critical lens reveals the actual purpose of this law was a way to perpetuate the elitist class system and continue the idea of social reproduction. Assuming that all students are equip with the prior knowledge needed to prosper in the college preparatory courses and if they lack the prior knowledge that the students understand what tools (tutoring, study skills, technology) are needed to achieve. This is a prime example of the social injustices that plague the educational system. By eliminating the students' power of choice, the legislatures are discounting the

socioeconomic contexts that accompany each student to school. According to Patrick (2013), "children come to school already affected by differences in their abilities to engage with learning because of factors arising from social and economic inequality" (p. 6). Furthermore, failing to account for the socioeconomic injustices' limits "…the extent to which children will be able to develop capabilities to their fullest extent" (p. 6). Where this law was enacted to provide Georgia students with an equal prospect for success, what the legislatures have actually done is provide the students with an equal chance to reach exceedingly unequal positions in society (Hill, 2012).

International Context

Education is about discovery and finding what excites you about life. However, that is not the way the United States (US) has structured its educational system. As mentioned previously, in 2008 policymakers in Georgia enacted the "New Graduation Rule" law. As a result, the four diploma track options decreased to one and sent the message that all students are the same and will learn in exactly the same manner utilizing the same curriculum. By examining the graduation rates from 2008 to the present can reveal that students in fact do not find the same level of educational success by being exposed to matching curriculum. For example, by looking at Georgia's 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 high school graduation rates by race illustrate how this way of thinking could be flawed. In 2010-2011/2011-2012, Georgia's high school graduations rates were: 68%/67% American Indian/Alaska Native, 79%/82% Asian/Pacific Islander, 58%/60% Hispanic, 60%/62% Black and 76%/78% White (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014). These students were exposed to the same curriculum, yet some found the ultimate educational success of earning a high school diploma, while others faulted in some manner. There is

an abundance of research exploring the many factors that affect graduation rates and they will not be explored in this study. The example of graduation rates was used to simply highlight just one broad case against the idea that all students learn information similarly. Furthermore, the material students are presented in school is not relevant to the world they see themselves. Kincheloe (2005), stated that

> nothing exists before consciousness shapes it into something we can perceive. What appears as objective reality is merely what our mind constructs, what we are accustomed to seeing. The knowledge that the world yields has to be interpreted by men and women who are part of that world (p. 8-9).

Prior to 2008, a Georgia student had the opportunity to choose the educational path that made sense for him/her based on how they saw themselves fitting into the world they had constructed. Whether that world included a four-year institution, a teller window at the local bank or the Broadway stage. However, after 2008 the Georgia legislatures took that option away and constructed a world that all students now had to fit themselves into. As a result, in 2018 3,839,148 Georgia students from ages 18 to 24 have failed to find their place as they possess less than a high school education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

The US's educational system can make both significant as well as positive changes. First, policymakers are formulating decisions based on elitist class biases and are failing to get input from those currently in the system. The US dynamic is changing and what might have appealed to students two or three generations ago no longer appeals

to them today. However, the policymakers have fallen out of touch with their own society and thus are making comparisons that are inaccurate.

According to the United States Department of Education (2020b), the mission of the educational system is to prepare its citizens for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence. However, the percentage of US citizens ages 15 to 29 years old who are not currently enrolled in secondary education, not employed nor attending any training courses is 12.69 percent above those countries that have embraced CTE curriculum such as Germany whose percentage is 9.19 and Finland's whose percentage is at 11.95 (OECD, 2018). In fact, both Germany's and Finland's current educational structure slightly resembled the four-diploma track structure that was utilized in Georgia till 2008. At the age of ten years old, a German student is provided the opportunity to choose the educational path they feel fits their constructed world (Hainmüller, 2003). The options include: Hauptschule (head school), Realschule (intermediate or secondary school), Gesamtschule (comprehensive school) or Gymnasium (prep school) of which all four incorporate and highlight the importance of CTE. Additionally, all four options provide both varying curriculum teaching strategies based on the students' academic achievement, potential, and personality characteristics. The age is a little older in Finland for students to decide which curriculum track they would like to focus on. The age of sixteen is when a Finnish student will decide which track they would like to attend, Lukiokoulutus (general upper secondary education) or Ammatillinen Koulutus (vocational upper secondary education) (European Commission, 2020). Some may view both Germany's and Finland's educational structures as a way of tracking and perpetuating the class system. However, what both systems offer is the chance for a

student to earn a complete education where they can explore both academics as well as CTE. Additionally, both tracks are seen as valuable due to the fact that they both offer the students the ability to take their entrance exams and attend university. Furthermore, Sirkin (2013) stated that,

> Our friends in Germany know—as we should—that some students are bored by traditional studies; some don't have the aptitude for college; some would rather work with their hands; and some are unhappy at home and just need to get away. They realize that everyone won't benefit from college, but they can still be successful and contribute to society. Americans often see such students as victims. Germans see these students as potential assets who might one day shine if they're matched with the right vocation (p. 1-2).

Germany is seeing their educational system as a partnership between the student, the government and the future workforce to create citizens who will be competitive globally. In fact, according to Kamm and Lerman (2013) "finding and retaining workers with the right skills is the number one challenge for German companies operating in the US" (p. 3). One factor that is causing the lack in skilled workers is the fact that traditionally, the US defers the importance and preparation for a student's future career until post-secondary education (Lanford, Maruco, & Tierney, 2015).

List of Terms

Career Technical Education (CTE): Are the unwanted elective educational courses that prepare students for technical careers in such industries as culinary, carpentry and auto

mechanics. Additionally, in Georgia, the grades students earn in these courses do not impact their entrance into a post-secondary institution.

Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathways and Programs: Are the specific curriculum course strands and industry initiatives available to assist students in becoming college and career ready upon graduation.

College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI): A comprehensive accountability and communication platform, which measures the college and career readiness of students graduating from the various school districts (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

Hope Scholarship: A scholarship and grant program offering financial assistance to qualifying Georgia graduates for degree, diploma, and certificate programs (Georgia Student Finance Commission, 2013).

Summary of Introduction

As the US employment landscape changed and companies are now viewing the importance of technical skills education over that of the traditional academic knowledge the Georgia educational system is lagging in its revision of its graduation requirements. It is instead perpetuating the idea that a single college focused curriculum track will provide all students with the skills needed to be both equal and competitive in the job market. However, Georgia is failing to see the students as individuals who are coming to school with a multitude of bias and expectations placed upon them both at home and by the schools in which they attend. In 2008, Georgia legislatures attempted to remove the social injustices they felt impacted many of its lower socio-economic students by providing all students with the same education. Unfortunately, the results of this change

have devalued the importance of the technical skills that would allow these students to

gain viable employment and possibly break the social reproduction cycle.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framework/Introduction

This was a qualitative inquiry study utilizing a critical theoretical framework. This study included an examination of CTE's purpose and legislative history. According to Aldrich (2006), a historical inquiry allows a researcher to comprehend, clarify and evaluate a group's current and particular customs (e.g. long-standing traditions) and information (e.g. through recognizing its contextualized nature). In addition, historical inquires have "the potential to demonstrate not only how people have lived their lives in the past, but also how we may live better in the present and future" (p. 2). In fact, "historical research can illustrate how a past educational policy, theory, practice or setting emerged from, reflected or challenged a range of factors in a specific spatial, temporal and sociocultural context" (McCulloch & Richardson, 2000, p. 50).

As the literature review will show, the mission behind secondary education has historically focused on the liberal/academic curriculum of math, science and literature often times both devaluing CTE or excluding altogether. The CTE curriculum was later added to provide the working-class children the opportunity to gain an education in a field that would allow them to be productive citizens. In addition, CTE can provide students with invaluable information and opportunities pertaining to their post-secondary options. By applying this type of inquiry, it will provide the researcher with the opportunity to create "…interpretations of human experiences which may be of interest in themselves and which…may promote the capacity better to interpret other situations-- both historical and contemporary" (Aldrich, 1996, p. 63). As the old adage goes, "you

can't know where you're going until you know where you've been." In order to identify

the factors, which are contributing to the graduates' devaluing of the CTE curriculum at

Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia, the study has taken into account

the past experiences of its sample.

Critical Theory

> *"Schools should teach you to realize yourself, but they don't.*
> *They teach you to be a book. It's easy to become a book, but to*
> *become yourself you've got to be given various choices and be*
> *helped to look at the choices. You've got to learn that,*
> *otherwise you're not prepared for the outside world".*
> *-Anonymous [Italics Added] (Giroux, 1988, p. 88-89)*

The above quote came from a student who understood the potential of schools and

how those in power over them (politicians, corporations and Board of Education

members) have exploited this potential to fulfill their own class agenda. In fact, Georgia

secondary institutions are promoting the "college for all" idea through the single diploma

track but are actually maintaining the class agenda through both low college completion

rates and the lack of the technical skills needed for non-degreed professions (Rosenbaum,

2001). In 2017, only 39% of Georgians ages 25 years and older possessed a post-

secondary degree (Lee, 2019) and only 32,292 high school students passed their EOP to

earn their technical skill (Georgia Department of Education, 2018). Educational decision

makers in Georgia have systematically redefined the educational trajectory of every

student under the guise of preparing them to be a global citizen. What is the definition of

a global citizen? Is it graduating from high school and then attending a post-secondary

institution where a student can gain a degree that will guarantee them employment upon

graduation? In South Heights, Georgia, the answer seems to be "yes," now that all

students are required to take the same program-of-study with limited opportunities for career exploration. However, the above-mentioned definition is no longer a reality for the majority of students in South Heights, Georgia. For example, in 2019 only 50.9 percent of Hope County graduates were college and career ready, meaning these students are predicted to be successful in first year college courses and not require any remediation or learning support (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2020). In addition, the unemployment rate for South Heights, Georgia is 4.8 percent (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statics, 2020). How competitive/successful are the public-school students of South Heights, Georgia going to be? The following paragraphs will examine critical theory and the notion of power.

Critical Discourse

Critical theory has been a topic for discussion in the realm of education from such theorists as Horkheimer (1972), Kincheloe (2005) and McLaren (2016). Though many of the before-mentioned theorists had their own meanings of critical theory, there seemed to be a few commonalities that they all shared. For this study, we will focus on the idea that critical theory seeks to change the current situation and "…is concerned with extending a human's consciousness of himself or herself as a social being in light of the way dominant power operates to manage knowledge (Horkheimer, 1937; Kincheloe, 2005, p. 10). Where secondary education should allow students the opportunity to construct their future through the exploration of various forms of curriculum it instead is teaching them "…to be deskilled, to be passive, to be citizens who are governed, not citizens who govern (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 111). This can be observed in the public-school system in South Heights, Georgia through the pre-determined graduation program-of-study. Instead

of providing the students with the option to choose their secondary educational program the Boards of Education have dictated what and how the students will learn. This is leading the students "…learning not to construct their worlds but to have their worlds constructed for them" (Kincheloe, 2005, pg. 111).

Power

Critical theorists spoke on the idea that knowledge equals power and by creating a certain knowledge base, those in power can continue to manipulate the actions and responses of a culture. For example, Giroux (1988) spoke on how this concept should work when describing the idea of "Positive Knowledge" as defined in Cusick's (1983) ethnographic study, "… the conventional assumption would have it that the curriculum of a school exists as a body of knowledge, agreed upon by staff…and that it reflects the best thinking about what young people need to succeed in our society" (p. 25). However, what Cusick (1983) found was that this form of knowledge did not appeal to the majority and instead of evaluating the knowledge structure and adjusting it to fit the needs and interests of the students, those in power transformed the curriculum into methods of maintaining order. They moved away from those subjects that allowed for freedom of expression and self-exploration into subjects that could be measured, controlled and add value to the overall performance of the school.

There have been numerous arguments surrounding the idea of power stemming largely from the notion that the creation of the educational system was nothing more than the elites' attempt and their success at creating a way to continue the class system while at the same time camouflaging it as a tool for equalization. Saul (1992) stated that the main theme of the elites was the "possession, use and control of knowledge" (p. 8). For

example, Bowles and Gintis (1976) stated that the schools do nothing more than reproduce and replicate the existing societal inequalities through the hierarchical structuring of the schools. This idea was mentioned prior in terms on the concepts of social reproduction (Nunn, 2014). They equated the school organizations of social interactions and rewards to that of the workplace. A student's social and academic standing in the school mirrored what their life would be like as an adult. Kincheloe (2005) continued this way of thinking by stating that "…the standards-driven education of the twenty-first century attempts to make individuals more compliant with the needs of corporations, more accepting of government by the market…" where the idea of schools serving as sorting machines for corporate order is unchallenged through the notion of compliance (p. 49). Furthermore, reports such as *A Nation at Risk* transferred the responsibility for continuing economic inequality away from the corporations and policy makers onto the educational system (Hursh, 2005). Apple (2001) called this notion "…exporting the blame" (p. 39). As a result of this ability to indoctrinate the masses, Apple (1995) concluded that power could be made invisible by intertwining the control into the work itself. For example, Hope County does not require students to take two years of a foreign language to earn their diploma, however it is a requirement of the University System of Georgia. As a result of the one diploma track, their counselors automatically place all students into a foreign language course. Yet, the two years of foreign language is not a requirement of the Technical College System of Georgia. Why then are all students automatically being placed into courses that might not fit into their post-secondary plan? As mentioned in this section, it is due to the managing of knowledge by the dominant powers in order to portray an image of providing equality to

all students. However, it is a clear example of perpetuating the notion of power through compliance by requiring all students to follow the pre-conceived educational path that will add value back to the school instead of providing relevant knowledge and skills to the students. Furthermore, it is giving higher importance to specific disciplines while at the same time, discounting and devaluing others such as CTE.

The General Mission of Secondary Education

The mission behind secondary education has been in a constant state of flux since its inception. We have seen secondary education focus on preparing students to succeed in college, teaching them to be lifelong learners, continuing to promote the common good, increasing their academic achievement, and forming democratic citizens. Through examining the history of secondary education, it can be observed that the mission is determined by the current political and/or cultural proceedings taking place at the moment. For example, the current political administration has shifted the objective towards preparing students to be college and career ready through a single-curriculum approach focused on college preparatory courses (Barton & Coley, 2011). In addition, there have been various educational incidents that have impacted the current state of CTE in secondary education. In the following paragraphs, I will examine evolution of secondary education and its effect on CTE.

In 1893, a Committee of Ten lead by Charles W. Eliot waged the first attack on devaluing the importance of CTE in secondary education (as cited in Kliebard, 1995). The Committee devised a report outlining what they believed should be the curriculum of all American secondary educational institutions. They concocted four separate programs-of-study to include Classical, Latin-Scientific, Modern Languages, and English. Each

program required three years of mathematics, four years of foreign language and multiple courses in science and literature. However, the most glaring omission from each category was that of manual training and commercial courses, which confused many educational reformists due to the fact that the committee argued that each program would serve as preparation for both college and life (career). It can be inferred from this omission that the Committee was creating curriculum that served one specific segment of the school aged population, those students who educational path included college.

Due to the report being spearheaded by Charles W. Eliot, then president of Harvard University, and including subjects, at that time that were mainly studied at the colleges, had many interpreters view the recommendations of the Committee of Ten Report as the "…colleges imposing a college preparatory curriculum on American secondary schools…" (Kliebard, 1995 p. 198). In fact, the Committee's second recommendation involved failing to modify the programs-of-study based on neither the probable post-secondary destinations nor the mental capabilities of each student, which one can infer as an additional incident of the Committee failing to recognize the realities of the demographic make-up of the new secondary educational system. For instance, Hall (1904), established psychologist and a rather vocal critic of the Committee, accused them of failing to take into consideration the "great army of incapables" entering the secondary institutions (p. 510). The report focused on providing students with a curriculum framework that matched the needs and interests of the elites while ignoring the working class. Though the Committee of Ten Report allowed students the option to study four separate programs-of-study, each was designed with a strong academic focus and was used to filter students into post-secondary institutions. However, with the large influx of

immigrants in the 1890s and farming, manufacturing, and technology being the main

industries at that time it seems that many of the students were in fact heading down a

more career-focused path after the completion of secondary education (Whitten, 2001).

Furthermore, the US was going through an economic depression in 1893 and many

families would not have the financial means to send their children to college and/or they

would need their child to find employment and help provide financially for the family.

In 1918, twenty-five years after the Committee of Ten's report, a commission led

by Clarence W. Kingsley presented an educational plan, known as the Cardinal Principles

of Secondary Education, which combated the recommendations of Eliot's report

(Kliebard, 1995). The principles ushered in an era of curriculum diversification focusing

on providing students with "…subjects that suited their talents, passions, and aspirations"

(Mirel, 2006; Wiggins, 2001, p. 28). The commission saw The Cardinal Principles of

Secondary Education as a way to serve the new and diversified high school population

identified earlier by Stanley G. Hall. Furthermore, with the large influx of foreign

adolescents (14-17 years of age) into the secondary institutions, it was expected that a

less rigorous curriculum was required. In fact, in 1920 less than 17 percent graduated

from high school (Mirel, 2006). In essence, Kingsley and his commission believed that

their recommendations allowed for educational equality by building curriculum that is

based on the interest of all students instead of the elite few (Kliebard, 1995). The

proponents of the Committee of Ten's Report would argue that the principles' curriculum

resulted in the lowing of the educational standards and in fact provided students with an

equal education defined as "…equal access to different and unequal programs" (Mirel,

2006, p. 17). All students had access to the various programs-of-study and received the

same credential, a high school diploma, however the academic preparation and post-secondary trajectory for each program was vastly different. Inferring that CTE was an inferior curriculum that was introduced through the principles as a tool to in fact perpetuate educational inequality. The inequality stemmed from the implementation of IQ tests and the rise of guidance and counseling programs which used the results of the IQ tests to match students to the new programs based on their perceived ability level and not their passions, interests nor talents. As a result, it would appear that the Commission's goal of providing educational equality was not accomplished. The secondary students were being educated in preparation to replicate their current class status.

The implementation of CTE curriculum through the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education began a rather important debate. Many students were entering the secondary institutions with varying levels of academic abilities and instead of providing the lower-level students with tools, strategies, and tutoring the educational leaders of the time decided that they would rather implement curriculum programs that they believed were less rigorous then the liberal/academic subjects in order to keep the students from dropping out. These programs were the CTE courses, which then provided the college-preparatory students with the perception that CTE was a less valuable form of education. When in fact, CTE curriculum could be just as challenging as its academic counterparts due to CTE being the application of the academic courses' terms and concepts. For example, the college-preparatory students might have been studying how to find the area and the perimeter in textbooks but in the industrial CTE courses they were applying those concepts to build houses, cars, and factories. As a result, the CTE students needed a

stronger understanding of these concepts in order to be able to employ them in the industrial world and not simply on a scenario-based assessment. Furthermore, according to a recent Gallup study, "80% of students taking a college preparatory academic curriculum with rigorous CTE met the standard for college and career readiness, compared with 63% of students taking the same academic core without rigorous CTE" (as cited in Hodges, 2015, para. 6). This perception of CTE being a less rigorous form of education was amplified in the 1930s with the Great Depression. The youth labor market crumpled and forced over 7 million adolescent back into the secondary institutions (Mirel, 2006). As a result, the school system's new goal focused on being "custodial" meaning that they were to keep the adolescents out of the labor market instead of preparing them for it (p. 18). The educators of the time decided that they would accomplish this task by channeling "…increasing numbers of students into undemanding, nonacademic courses…" such as industrial arts, agricultural and home economics (p.18).

Following the beginning of World War II came a curriculum reform movement headed by the director of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, Charles Prosser, called the Life Adjustment Movement (OCTAE, 2007). Prosser believed that 20 percent of the secondary age students would be adequately prepared for skilled occupations upon graduation while another 20 percent would be prepared to enter college upon graduation. However, he felt the remaining 60 percent would not obtain the proper life adjustment skills such as effective use of leisure time, driver training, dating, buying on credit and how to rent an apartment (as cited in OCTAE, 2007; as cited in Mirel, 2006). This movement caused a diluting of the secondary educational curriculum and an influx of nonacademic course taking by secondary education students. For example, in 1928

nonacademic course enrollment accounted for roughly 33 percent and by 1961

enrollment increased to 43 percent (Mirel, 2006). Despite a large number of students

graduating high school neither prepared for a post-secondary profession nor entrance into

college, educational leaders and policy makers asserted that great strides had been made

towards educational equality. The leaders justified this progress by highlighting both the

high enrollment data as well as the high graduation rates as they believed that "…getting

diplomas in the hands of more students was far more egalitarian than having all students

educated in discipline-based subject matter" (p. 18). The driving force of education

during this time was quantity over quality resulting in a large number of socio-economic

disadvantaged students being tracked into the less rigorous general education program-of-

study, which will lead to them fulfilling the idea of social reproduction.

During this same time period, the educational system was entrenched in two

rather impactful battles. One dealing with the civil rights and equal educational

opportunities of minority students and the other concerning the ramifications resulting

from the supposed diluting of the secondary educational curriculum. In 1954 the US

Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in all public schools (Clare Boothe Luce

Policy Institute, 2012; OCTAE, 2007). This decision transformed minorities from

individuals pleading for equal treatment and opportunities into constitutionally protected

citizens who now demanded their rights (Bell, 1979). However, in the long run this

decision failed at its goal of providing minority students with access to the best programs

available in the new integrated school (Mirel, 2006). This was due largely to the institutes

becoming battlegrounds for political/racial ideals, which overshadowed/overwhelmed the

efforts to improve the quality of education for the minority students. Furthermore, many

middle-class families moved from the urban communities into suburban regions decreasing the tax base that funded the urban schools (OCTAE, 2007). The cities were then "…left with large low-income minority high schools" who continued to strain financially despite funding provided by the federal government (p. 3).

In 1981, a report on the current state of the United States' educational system shook the nation into a state of turmoil. The report was called "A Nation at Risk" in which Terrell Bell, then Secretary of Education, chartered the National Commission on Excellence in Education to assess both the quality of instruction and the scholarship in elementary and secondary education (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2013). The study took approximately 18 months to complete; in which America's schools were compared to those of other countries based on their quality of public education (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2013). The study analyzed public and educational changes that influenced student accomplishments and stating those obstacles that hinder a student's educational excellence (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2013). The report was viewed as a pessimistic examination of the nation's educational system. However, it did become a catalyst for an educational movement that is still very much alive today and that is the notion of a standards-based curriculum and classroom (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2013). The report provided recommendations based on five specific areas: content, standards/expectations, time, teaching and leadership (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In regard to content, the commission recommended a new curriculum based on what they called the Five New Basics, which consisted of 4 years of English, 3 years of

mathematics, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies and a half year of computer science (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The commission included two optional content areas that would focus on the students' personal and occupational goals and they were fine arts and vocational education/CTE. In the area of Standards/Expectations, the commission recommended implementing both grades and standardized assessments to gauge the students' achievement and remedial needs. The Commission felt that both schools and colleges needed to adopt more rigorous and measurable standards for academic performance and attainment. In addition to the need for an increase in the level of academic curriculum, the commission also recommended increasing the amount of instructional time on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. In fact, they stated that local school districts and State legislatures should think about increasing the school week from 5 to 7 days and well as lengthening the academic school year to 200-220 days (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The commission also suggested some areas of improvement in regard to the preparation of teachers. They advocated a high standard credentialing program as well as increasing teacher salaries based on student performance and market sensitivity. The commission felt that master teachers should be part of designing their own preparation programs (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Lastly, the commission made endorsements in regard to leadership. The report made the statement that education should be a priority for all citizens and levels of government. They believed that it is up to the local school boards and superintendents to provide support through local and federal funding to accomplish the reforms laid out in the report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The success of "A Nation at Risk" can be argued;

however, whether good or bad it did provide a national spotlight on America's educational system and provided suggestions for enhancement.

In 2001, President George W. Bush enacted the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) that placed rather strict standards and accountability measures on local school districts and States that received federal funds under the law (Federal Education Budget Project, 2014). It was the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (Federal Education Budget Project, 2014). The focus of the act was to improve educational equality for those students from lower socioeconomic families and placed high requirements on testing, accountability and school improvement. Like the majority of federal educational policy NCLB focused on improving the academic subject areas of reading, science and mathematics and neglected the importance/value of CTE (Federal Education Budget Project, 2014).

The before-mentioned paragraphs provided a historical progression of the mission of secondary education and the exclusion of CTE from its very incarnation. How then can we expect the students of today to have a high regard for the importance of CTE when its very existence was barred from much of the foundational aspects of education as a whole? In fact, the majority of the focus was put on the academic areas that the CTE department was completely neglected. However, with the implementation of the CCRPI school systems are now holding the CTE teachers accountable and placing pressure to increase the number of pathway completers and credential earners. The issue then becomes how does CTE increase the number of pathway completers when the curriculum has never been presented as an important part of the students' educational programs-of-study? This question is the main driving force behind this study.

Career and Technical Education: A Historical Perspective

As mentioned previously, CTE curriculum was established as an educational equalizer. However, many minorities viewed it as nothing more than an attempt to disguise classism and elitism as a method to help all citizens become competitive in the workforce. This portion of the literature review will focus on the five theorists who, in my opinion, have had the most influence on the direction of CTE as well as education as a whole. The five theorists include: Booker T. Washington (Educational Leader), W.E.B. Du Bois, John Dewey (Philosopher and Father of Education), David Snedden (Educational Administrator), and Charles Prosser (Lawyer and Father of CTE). In order to present the historical accounts and thoughts that have led to CTE's current position, I will first discuss where the minorities fit into the implementation of CTE into mainstream school curriculum. This will be accomplished through analyzing the debates and stances of Booker T. Washington and W.E. B. Du Bois. Second, I will examine David Snedden's notion of "Social Efficiency" and its impact on CTE's historical presence. Third, I will dissect David Snedden's student Charles Prosser's thoughts of CTE and the implementation of a dual system (Liberal Arts vs. Vocational Education/CTE). Lastly, I will highlight John Dewey's criticisms of Snedden and Prosser and his ideas on how CTE should be incorporated into school curriculum.

The Debate of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois

According to Meeder (2006), many citizens' perception of vocational education/CTE is that it "…prepares young people who are 'non-college bound' for direct entry into the workplace, directly after completion of high school" (p. 4). This view is strongly held by minority groups due largely to the struggle of African Americans'

attainment of an equal education. With the abolishment of slavery in the 1800s came the yearning for equal educational advancement for the now freed slaves. However, the type of education that was needed garnished a rather interesting debate between two prominent, educated African Americans by the names of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois.

Booker T. Washington's post-Civil War ideas for his race's success came from the perspective of relatability. His background was very similar to theirs as he was from a poor, enslaved family and through hard work and humility was able to advance his community in the rather racist southern, white culture. In researching Washington's ideals for the progression of his race it became clear that he saw educational equality for his race through embracing industrial education as can be witnessed through his extensive work at the Tuskegee Institute. I have made this linkage by examining the following text penned by Washington: *Working with my Hands, My Larger Education, Industrial Education for the Negro, and the Atlanta Exposition Address of 1895.* As I analyzed the previously mentioned texts, it became apparent to me that regardless of popular belief Washington was not conceding to the southern, white man by advocating that the now freed slaves should pursue a more industrial education over that of the liberal arts (Greek, Latin, Literature…etc.). What Washington was supporting was the idea of a purpose driven education. Washington (1911) described industrial education as "… a means of connecting education with life (p. 143). Washington did not see the benefit of providing an academically focused education when the majority of the industry in the south was that of agriculture. In fact, education for the southern African Americans lacked any time on how to survive and make a living in the rural southern community. This was

detrimental to the African Americans' fight for economic independence as roughly 85 percent of the African Americans in the south lived in rural settings (Washington, 1903).

It was a rather interesting twist that the majority of Washington's critics were those from his own race and was born out of his *1895 Atlanta Exposition Address.* Washington lost a great deal of support from his own race with this speech as they felt that he surrendered their political and civic equality. In fact, Washington (1895) stated that

> no race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities (p. 2).

Many African Americans believed that Washington resigned to the white, Southern community by discounting their right to be angry by slavery and by stating that the African Americans must start at the very bottom of the economic system, which equated to manual labor. However, what Washington failed to realize were the expectations of the freed slaves now that slavery was over. It quickly became evident to Washington that he was fighting the young black lad's notion that the end of slavery brought with it the freedom from having to perform manual labor (Washington, 1904). Washington had the insight to make sure that part of his campaign for equality in both education and society as a whole hinged on the African Americans' understanding the difference between being worked (slavery) and working. Being worked was seen as a form of degradation whereas working equates to civilization and being a productive contributor to society (Washington, 1903). It seems that he was currently fighting against the perception of

idleness, which largely stemmed from what the freed African Americans witnessed from their white counterparts. It was a rather common practice for the sons of the plantation owners to never have had to perform any form of manual labor and the African Americans felt that after suffering the toils of 250 years of the most severe forms of manual labor they deserved the same life as the southern, white community. However, what the African Americans were not realizing was the fact that the skills they earned as slaves would allow them the opportunity for equality and freedom, but they had to work for it. For example, the white, southern man always consulted the African Americans regarding construction, tailoring, shoemaking, blacksmithing, and housekeeping (Washington, 1903). The African Americans already possessed these skills, usually learned while in slavery, and now Washington was advocating the process of turning those abilities into a version of economic self-reliance.

In my opinion, Washington was an advanced, shrewd political advocate for his race. Whereas his culture saw him as a lackey for the southern, white man when in reality he was a master manipulator. Through my research it has become rather obvious that the southern, white community had no interest in educating the African American community. Washington understood this notion early on and realized that the quickest approach for educational equality was through providing the white man with a purpose and the benefits of educating African Americans (Washington, 1911). Washington knew that the abolishment of slavery left a hindrance on the southern industry as the majority of the economy of the South was tied up in Agriculture, Mechanical and other manual trades. Allowing the African Americans', the ability to be educated in the industrial trades would help to offset the economic ramifications of the Civil War. In fact,

> …crude labour could be managed and made to some degree profitable
>
> under the methods of slavery, it could not be so utilised in a state of
>
> freedom…. They perceived that intelligence, coupled with skill, would
>
> add wealth, in which both races would increasingly share, to the
>
> community and to the State (Washington, 1904, p. 25).

It was Washington's (1904) understanding that "…industrial education would enable one generation to secure economic independence, and the next, on this foundation, to obtain a more abstract education, if desired" (p. 25). It is an important realization that Washington was not strictly against a more traditional liberal arts education; he understood that the most efficient method to earn educational equality was through the practice of industrial education. In fact, Washington (1911) stated the "…greatest nation today is not the nation with the greatest army, not the nation that can destroy the most, but the nation with the most efficient labourers and the most productive machinery; the nation that can produce the most" (p. 255). Exercising this logic allowed Washington to sway the Southern, white community to both socially and financially support the education of the African American community. However, for one African American in particular industrial education was nothing more than legalized slavery.

In direct opposition of Washington, stood a man who had rather different views when it came to the direction of the southern African Americans' education. Du Bois' opinions stemmed largely from his up bring, which was drastically different from that of Washington and many of those he was advocating. Du Bois was from a well-to-do family in Massachusetts and received a very formal education comprising of Latin, Greek, English, chemistry and physics. This later led to his elitist educational belief that only a

chosen few, the "Talented Tenth" he labeled them should receive an advanced education due to the fact that they can assimilate into the social and political movements of the day. The "Talented Tenth" can then become the leaders of their race and guide them into economic and societal equality. The two pieces of work that in my opinion culminate the views Du Bois had in reference to industrial education/CTE and education as a whole are: *The Souls of Black Folks* and *The Talented Tenth*. Through analyzing these works it is clear that Du Bois was not against industrial education/CTE, he simply saw it in the same way many of the Southern, white community did as a tool to help those less fortunate.

Du Bois understood that the United States, specifically the South, was stricken with a problem based solely on the color of one's skin. This conflict stemmed from the abolishment of slavery through the Civil War and the rise of having to educate a new group of individuals who were now supposed to be equal to the "white" majority (Du Bois, 1903a). Within his text *The Souls of Black Folks*, Du Bois (1903a) took a rather extensive look at the years following the Civil War and saw that, due to Southern oppression and national neglect, the education of African Americans was in trouble. The only advantage he saw during this time was the emergence of Washington as a role model and spokesman for the African American population. However, Du Bois was quick to point out that Washington made some very vital mistakes in his quest for educational equality. Du Bois (1903a) argued that Washington's approach to utilizing industrial education/CTE, as a way to mend racial tension in the south was detrimental to the long-term goals of the African American population. Du Bois went on to criticize Washington's approval of segregation within all aspects of society, which he believes

contributed to the African Americans' loss of voting rights, civil status, and aid for institutions of higher education.

Unlike Washington, Du Bois was looking for a new form of education that combined the concepts and practical applications of industry and merges it with the liberal arts of the common school movement of Du Bois' up bring. However, Du Bois saw this form of education fitting a rather small minority of the African American population. For instance, Du Bois (1903b) described his view of the Southern African American education,

> I insist that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, it is to make carpenters men; there are two means of making the carpenter a man, each equally important: the first is to give the group and community in which he works, liberally trained teachers and leaders to teach him and his family what life means; the second is to give him sufficient intelligence and technical skill to make him an efficient workman; the first object demands the Negro college and college-bred men--not a quantity of such colleges, but a few of excellent quality; not too many college-bred men, but enough to leaven the lump, to inspire the masses, to raise the Talented Tenth to leadership; the second object demands a good system of common schools, well-taught, conveniently located and properly equipped (p. 20).

Du Bois (1903b) went on to argue that Washington's form of industrial only education is flawed in that in order to accomplish the tasks set out in the industrial trade schools they must train cultured men and women to educate future teachers and teach the students in public schools. In fact, Washington himself was educated in both industrial trades and the

liberal arts before teaching at Tuskegee and, as a result, has become a leader within his race (Washington, 1911). I could then make the conclusion that Du Bois' combined educational method is the more appropriate choice, as Washington seems to be a living representation of his theory.

The debates of Washington and Du Bois set the stage for the future inability of vocational education/CTE to gain national acceptance and status as an indispensable form of educational curriculum. Though it has been a century since the debates of these two men, the argument has still remained regarding the significance of vocational education/CTE. Shortly following the debates, federal legislation went into effect that segregated vocational education and academic (liberal arts) curriculum. What is interesting is the fact that both men were fighting for equality and yet by working against each other, rather than with each other, they contributed to a whole new form of educational classism. As a result, they ended up denying students of both races the opportunity to hone their passions and interests for industry into a respected and productive economic existence. Washington and Du Bois may have planted the seed of industrial and academic segregation, but there were two individuals who grew this seed into educational law and the history books.

The Impact of David Snedden and Charles Prosser

As mentioned, previous with Kingsley and the Cardinal Principles, one of the earliest purposes of vocational education/CTE was democratic equality (Kliebard, 1995). In fact, the public secondary schools were serving less than 15 percent of the school-aged population and vocational education/CTE was viewed as a way to reach those students not currently being educated (Gordon, 2008). David Snedden and his student Charles

Prosser where two advocates of vocational education/CTE in reference to the social efficiency doctrine in which Snedden believed that, as part of the schooling process, students should be prepared for their future occupations (Snedden, 1910).

Schooling was then becoming an option for all citizens, regardless of their economic or intellectual capabilities and with this progression came the need for a change in the curriculum structure (Snedden, 1910). Previously at the time, the curriculum was based largely on religious beliefs and was broad in nature. Though this fit the current status quo, society's needs were changing and as a result the educational structure needed to transform in order to maintain its positive impact. Snedden felt that education needed a new configuration that took into account a student's capabilities and social trajectory and placed them into a program that would allow them to perform at their most efficient level. Snedden's plan called for vocational education/CTE to be at the forefront of the new common school movement, as it would allow a student to learn the necessary skills needed to contribute to society. This new movement was coined "Social Efficiency" and through multiple works such as: *The Problem of Vocational Education, Problems of Educational Readjustment, The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917,* and *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education,* Snedden was able to change the way public school was organized within the United States.

Snedden's intentions for the students were admirable, however his plan was flawed, and many would argue undemocratic. Snedden's (1910) thoughts resembled that of Du Bois in that they both felt that a certain minority of the population should be exposed to the liberal/cultural arts while the majority should focus more on learning a trade that would allow them to become financially sound. He realized that the only

efficient way to educate the masses was through scientifically based methods such as tracking. His justification hinged on the economic revolution the country was experiencing. America's industry as well as their students were becoming differentiated, which required the introduction of distinct forms of curriculum that would prepare all students, despite their intellectual limitations, for the numerous career opportunities that were forming. Snedden (1913) understood that in order for society to be both efficient and competitive, educational time could not be wasted by requiring students to participate in curriculum that would not allow them to fill an economic need.

Where Snedden (1910) gained a large amount of criticism was in his campaign for segregated institutions, one for liberal arts and another for vocational education/CTE. He was intrigued by the structure of reform schools and their methods of targeted training and social discipline. He wanted to implement this idea throughout the nation in the form of specialized vocational schools. This idea had its opponents who saw this as nothing more than classism, in which there would be a school for the leaders (liberal arts) and a school for the followers (vocational education/CTE) (Snedden, 1913). This would also result in a narrow program-of-study, which would be damaging to the student and society in the end.

Despite opposition from educational theorists such as John Dewey, Snedden's movement was making ground in the educational world and he even mentored two theorists who would help him cement vocational education's influence on the common school movement through two pieces of powerful work. First, Snedden's protégé Charles Prosser, lawyer by trade, penned the first piece of federal law that allowed for the recognition of vocational education/CTE as creditable curriculum. The *Smith-Hughes Act*

of 1917 provided federal funds for the sole purpose of supporting and creating vocational training courses leaving the states and the districts responsible for funding all forms of general education. In addition, the law also required that roughly half of all class time needed to be spent on practical application (Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, 1998). This legislature created a divide between the two forms of education that would not be mended for seventy-three years. Clarence Kingsley, was also a protégé of Snedden and helped to create the second piece of policy that advanced the idea of social efficiency while at the same time striking down Snedden's main element of separate facilities for the two forms. *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, as mentioned before, endorsed the standard of offering an array of curriculum tracks within the same establishment and ushered in the ability of institutions to create countless course offerings (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918). Snedden felt that *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* missed the entire point of social efficiency in that it would now allow schools to ban those vocational courses that did not conveniently fit into the secondary school curriculum.

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 and *The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* advanced the idea of social efficiency within the common school movement, yet there were consequences to their implementation. A divide was created between the two curriculum tracks, which produced a sense of resentment from those in the liberal arts to those in the vocational education/CTE arena. In many schools, vocational education courses were taught in a completely different building away from those "academic" subjects. The realization of this structure eventually backfired for those in the vocational education/CTE realm and ended up promoting the idea of classism, which has

resulted in the current image of vocational education/CTE as for the working class. After analyzing Snedden's work, I can conclude that his belief of separate facilities might have allowed vocational education's image to be held in the same respect as that of the liberal arts. However, you cannot have two dominant forms of education in one building, and due to the fact that the liberal arts were aligned with the upper class and the idea of being cultured it overshadowed vocational education/CTE and become the dominant curriculum in secondary institutions.

Charles Prosser rose to fame within the realm of vocational education due largely to his connections with David Snedden and his legal background. Despite having little to no experience and knowledge in regard to vocational education/CTE, he was able to create both State and Federal law that transformed the course of vocational education in both secondary and postsecondary institutions. Prosser was an advocate of Snedden's idea of a socially efficient educational system; however, he disagreed with the idea that education should be divided based on its curriculum (general/liberal vs. vocational) (Prosser & Quigley, 1949). In fact, he defined education as "…the result of experiences whereby we become more or less able to adjust ourselves to the demands of the particular form of society in which we live and work" (Prosser & Quigley, 1949, p.1). He advocated a mixture of both forms in which the general, liberal education prepared citizens to live a more intelligent life while vocational education/CTE would prepare citizens to be more efficient producers/workers (Prosser & Quigley, 1949). Through examining Prosser's contributions to the educational field, I have concluded that he was attempting to remove the image of classism from vocational education/CTE and rebrand the field as a method of democratic equality where individualized differences are

recognized as having value. In order to arrive at this conclusion, I examined the following works penned by Prosser and contributors: *The Evolution of the Training of the Worker in Industry* (1915), *Vocational Education in a Democracy* (1925), and *Vocational Education in a Democracy* (1949).

Prosser was at the forefront in regard to the implementation of vocational education/CTE into the common school environment and due to this fact, he was able to help design the field. In fact, he created 16 theorems based on his philosophy of vocational education/CTE, which was slightly different from that of his mentor Snedden (Prosser & Allen, 1925). Where Snedden saw liberal education as a waste for the majority of students who could neither comprehend nor implement it in an efficient manner, Prosser (1915) saw it as a tool that would help to increase vocational education's importance and effects. He advocated that practical application and theory be intertwined into a program-of-study that would allow for the immediate success of all students despite their career calling. Instead of trying to create expert workers through specialized vocational institutions, Prosser (1915) was trying to get the educational policy makers to embrace the current industrialized systems and rework their efforts towards creating workers that will make production smoother and more efficient.

It can be presumed that due to Prosser's legal background he was more attuned to the discriminating factors of Snedden's plan of social efficiency based on segregated facilities. He understood that due to economic inequalities the intellectual capabilities, educational attainments, and educational awareness of the students entering secondary education were vastly disparate. Within a classroom, much like today's classroom, could be students who cannot read nor write and that is all they want to learn to do, because

they live on a farm and will work the farm for the rest of their lives. Within that same classroom could be a child who has visited Europe and has the career goal of being biologist. Where I believe Prosser (1949) went right and educational reformers went wrong, was understanding that what this influx of new, previously excluded students needed was a program-of-study that allowed them to pursue their specific career, while satisfying a societal need. Where Prosser saw vocational education/CTE as an equalizer for those undervalued students/citizens, other theorists saw it as catering to the manufacturers and putting society's needs above those of the students. The theorist who championed the rights of the student above all others was John Dewey and he was strongly against both Snedden and Prosser's notion of social efficiency, which impacted the way vocational education/CTE, and all curriculums were created.

John Dewey's Educational Philosophy vs. Social Efficiency

Around the same time of Snedden and Prosser was a theorist by the name of John Dewey who viewed vocational education/CTE as an important facet of the educational process; however, disagreed with the direction that Snedden and Prosser was trying to take it. Dewey was more concerned with the student and creating curriculum that would foster a passion for learning. He saw social efficiency and Snedden's proposed version of vocational education/CTE as narrow, specialized and controlled by individuals who possessed a greed driven agenda (Dewey, 1914, 1916). In order to further dissect Dewey's thoughts on education and social efficiency I felt it was important to probe some of his most famous works as well as a few that focused specifically on industrial education. The works were: *Democracy and Education, The Child and the Curriculum,* Education vs. trade-training, and on industrial education.

As I examined Dewey's work and thought back over the policies of Snedden it became clear to me that these two men saw the purpose and aim of education at completely different ends of the spectrum. Snedden wanted to do the best for society, whereas Dewey wanted to do the best for the child. He believed that a child's focus is on building relationships and while they are growing older and progressing through their education, they lack both a framework and context to process the world around them (Dewey, 1902). As a result, Dewey thought Snedden was creating vocational/CTE curriculum that was both limited and ready-made based on the needs of society. Dewey (1902) concluded that the curriculum would lack the ability of cultivating motivation and/or connection to the material within the child. The information would then become nothing more than a punishment or consequence of the impoverished. For example, if a child wanted to work in a steel factory, they would be placed on a specific curriculum track at a specialized vocational institution and would lack exposure to a variety of pedagogical learning. Dewey thought that if Snedden was able to segregate the facilities then classism would remain and hinder the chances of any lower-class citizens advancing themselves in society and creating a worldview context instead of one that is based solely on a specialized trade. In addition, what would happen to the child if society's needs changed and all they knew was how to work at the factory? Dewey (1916) wanted to teach the child how to learn and conquer the above problem if it was presented to them.

Dewey (1916) also viewed the democratic educational process as one where schools generate a desire to grow and explore both knowledge and the world. He saw vocational education/CTE as the method that would equalize the classes. In his opinion, knowledge should be relatable and child/community centered, where the children

understand what and why they are learning the curriculum (Dewey, 1902). In my opinion it is clear to Dewey, that a child's vocational educational/CTE program-of-study should be broad in nature and allow a child to organically discover what will be their career calling. In Dewey's (1915) opinion, vocational education/CTE, as with any form of education, should add value to the student.

The Outcome

It is apparent that despite the diverse views the above theorists possessed about vocational education/CTE a few commonalities can be identified. First, it seems that all the theorists viewed the purpose of education as a method to improve the lives of the students. For example, making the students financially independent, employable, productive and equal. Secondly, it appears that all the theorists had the realization that education had to have meaning for the students. In fact, education was a new option for many students and by participating in the movement would require them to give up time, money, and in some cases their family to attend these institutions. Lastly, I personally believe that all the theorists, in their own justified ways, were trying to do the best for their culture or society as a whole. For instance, Washington wanted to provide his race with financial independence; Du Bois wanted to provide his race with the possibility of advancement; Snedden wanted to provide students with a program that they could master; Prosser wanted to provide students with adaptability; and Dewey wanted to provide students with knowledge and self-awareness.

Analyzing vocational education's history through the works of these five theorists has allowed me to begin to piece together the historical perception of the field. It seems vocational education's first purpose was to provide the financially and intellectually

diminished with a simpler form of education that was based largely on practical

application rather than abstract thought. In addition, the vocational programs were

created based on the needs of society, allowing the student to work at their most efficient

level. This included a reduction in the level of rigor for most of the vocational programs.

As a result, society viewed the areas as inferior to those that were more diverse in nature

and led to higher paying careers. What has always intrigued me in regard to this way of

thinking is the fact that trade jobs have the potential to produce wage earners who far

surpass those with the highest degrees. I believe that the argument comes down to

economic status and the notion of entitlement equating to blue collar versus white collar.

Just as in Washington's experience the now freed slaves felt that they were entitled to a

position that did not include manual labor because that is consider menial and degrading.

Utilizing this logic, it can be concluded that vocational education/CTE or attending a

trade school will lead to a profession where you will have to work harder for less money.

A liberal arts, theory-based education will allow you to enjoy a profession where you will

work less and earn more. This is essentially due to the belief that the highest paying

professions require advanced degrees that are not offered in vocational/trade institutions.

However, what I believe vocational education/CTE provides is the chance to access

knowledge and skills that coincide with a student's ultimate career choice.

CTE's Impact on Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities

Educating Georgia students to be both college and career ready as required by

GaDOE can be a rather difficult process due to the fact that the majority who graduate are

not prepared for the post-secondary institutions they have been trained to attend during

the last twelve years of schooling. In fact, in 2019 only 56.8 percent of high school

graduates were college and career ready (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2020). Meaning 43.2 percent of the graduates are not prepared for a post-secondary education based on the "college preparatory" diploma track they have received. The students then enter a post-secondary institution and only 39 percent will obtain the degree (Lee, 2019). The Georgia post-secondary graduation rates for students of color are even lower with 22 percent of Latino and 32 percent of Black earning their degrees (Lee, 2019).

Utilizing the before-mentioned statistics, highlights the importance of CTE curriculum in that it will provide the students with an alternative option upon graduation and allow them the opportunity to build a successful life for themselves and become contributing citizens within their community. According to the US Department of Education (2020a), there are 30 million jobs that do not require a four-year degree and have an average median income of $55,000 or more. In addition, 84 percent of graduates who completed a CTE pathway were employed 8 years after their expected high school graduation date.

Students in the United States spend approximately 16 percent of their lives learning how to survive and thrive for the other 84 percent. It is important that we as an educational system provide all the various options for success available to them. In fact, by the year 2028 the projected job market will grow by 8.4 million jobs to roughly 169.4 million (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statics, 2019).

CTE's Importance in Curriculum Studies

According to Schubert (2010), Curriculum Studies is a field that speaks to the diverse issues of education to include: the design, implementation, and evaluation of

educational programs. In addition, the results of the studies help to answer such questions as: What should be taught in schools? Why should it be taught? To whom should it be taught? What does it mean to be an educated person? Utilizing this definition of Curriculum Studies, my research will help to garnish why the graduates of Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia devalue the CTE curriculum as well as divulge how these perceptions are being formed, and lastly help to guide policymakers and educators in creating ways to reposition CTE in the minds of current and future generations. I understand the limitations of this study and in no way am I trying to change the entire educational system, nor do I think I can. What I would like to accomplish with this study is to take advantage of the curriculum changes taking place in the state and present the importance of CTE in the creation of an educated citizen.

Individuals graduating from secondary and postsecondary institutions in Georgia are competing in a job market where the degree and the diploma will no longer secure a position. In fact, according to the United State Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), in February 2020 the unemployment rate for Georgia was 3.1 percent. In March 2020 the world was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which adversely impacted the employment rates. Thus, I have chosen to use the February 2020 employment data for Georgia to provide an accurate explanation for my points. Additionally, Georgia students are also graduating from postsecondary institutions with approximately $28,824 in debt (The Institute for College Access & Success, 2019). The above statistics equate to the importance of students becoming exposed to CTE in secondary institutions. As a result, the students will understand the schooling required and the occupational outlook for their chosen career without spending large quantities of time and money. In addition, the

students will be able to take part in numerous CTE exclusive programs such as: job shadow, work-based learning, youth apprenticeship and internships to provide them with the technical skills needed for their chosen career field (Gordon, 2008).

Summary of the Literature Review

CTE's position in the American secondary educational system has been a constant uphill battle. In fact, since the inception of secondary education, CTE has either been completely devalued or positioned as an optional curriculum choice for those that could not manage the liberal/academic programs-of-study. In addition, there have been historical debates within both minority and educational theorists' groups surrounding the educational benefits and intent of CTE. On the one hand, some minority leaders viewed CTE as a viable purpose-driven curriculum that could help their race progress into a financially stable faction. While other minority leaders saw CTE has nothing more than a watered-down version of the elitist's liberal/academic education. Additionally, many educational theorists such as Snedden, Prosser and Dewey have had heated conversations over the implementation of CTE to the masses. Often times throughout history, CTE was segregated from its academic counterparts both financially and geographically. This contributed to the classism argument as many students either took the liberal/academic or the CTE curriculum track. This led to what some groups would call educational tracking or predetermined social standing. Where CTE was conceived as the great educational equalizer due to governmental interference and cultural bias it became the exact opposite. However, with the disparities between the economic growth of the United States and the ever-shrinking secondary and post-secondary graduation rates exposure to CTE curriculum has never been more important.

Within my literature review, I found it important to include the majority of my research from the beginning of the 20th century as it laid the foundation for how CTE's valuation was constructed. Additionally, there is a gap in the literature from the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century focusing on the contemporary youth's attitudes towards CTE. One could infer that this is not surprising as CTE has often been a neglected discipline.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This was a critical qualitative inquiry research study, utilizing the data collection method of in-depth interviews. According to Merriam (2009), the goal of critical inquiry "…is to critique and challenge, to transform and empower" (p. 34). Furthermore, Patton (2002) notes that what makes critical research critical "…is that it seeks to not just study and understand society but rather to critique and change society" (p. 131). The participants of this study have gone through 12 years of public schooling in South Heights, Georgia following the same generic program-of-study with the same result preparedness for college or career ready. However, the predominate focus presented to them through their program-of-study is to be "college ready" and thus gain acceptance into a post-secondary institution upon graduation. As such students who are career focused do not have equal attention as the college ready students. In 2019 only 50.9 percent of Hope County graduates were college and career ready (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2020), furthermore, that same year 52.4 percent of Wonderwood High School's graduates were college and career ready (Georgia Department of Education, 2019). Thus, in South Heights, Georgia the college focused program-of-study is failing to capture half of the students.

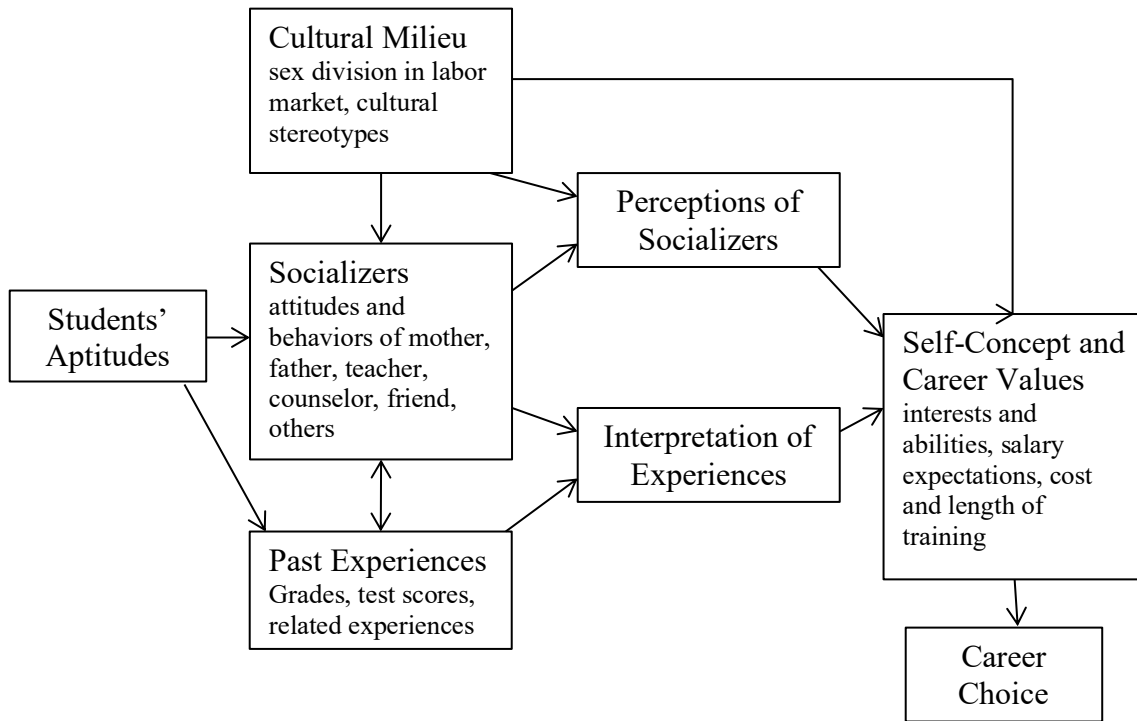### *The Career Choice Model*

Having taught CTE in the secondary education for five years, I have gained insight and formed hypotheses regarding my county's perception of CTE as well as the themes that have led to this perception. The majority of my opinions are based on CTE's past image and the fact that students are not able to see the opportunities CTE can offer

them prior to advancing to their post-secondary options. In addition, I personally believe that high school students have an unrealistic idea of their future careers. For example, there are countless students who would like to enter the Healthcare field as either a nurse or doctor. However, they have not made the connection that these occupations involve the utilization of math and science on a daily basis as their grades in these courses range from average to below-average. Furthermore, many of the students also have a phobia of blood, which is part of the duties and responsibilities for the majority of the healthcare professions. Thus, becoming a nurse or a doctor will not become a reality for many of these students. If they take a CTE course and participate in a work-based learning internship at a hospital they could understand the requirements of these occupations and realize that the medical industry is not an appropriate career choice for them. The students could then focus their attention towards a more suitable option. I share this example to illustrate why I believe many students' opinion of the value of CTE is negative and it all stems from career choice.

As a result, for my study I utilized the model for career choice originally developed by Meece, Parsons, Kaczala, Goff, and Futterman (1982) and adapted by Dick and Rallis (1991). According to Dick and Rallis (1991), "a student's career goal directly shapes the student's perception of both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of academic tasks. This perception of task value has, in turn, a direct effect on the student's academic choices, performance, and persistence" (p. 282). In fact, the model for career choice encompasses what I believe is the main themes and influences that are affecting graduates' value of CTE at Wonderwood High School. According to the model, when a student is deciding on a career choice, they determine its value based on both intrinsic

and extrinsic factors (See Figure 1). A few examples of intrinsic factors are interests, abilities, attitudes, behaviors, and self-esteem. Extrinsic factors include such examples as: salaries as well as cost and length of schooling. In addition to the intrinsic and extrinsic factors, Dick and Rallis (1991) explained how past experiences and individuals in the students' lives could contribute to the choice of career. They first mentioned past experiences, which encompass such items as grades, standardized test scores (EOCT, Milestones, ACT, SAT, MCAT, LSAT and GMAT), and other related experiences that could happen in or out of the school environment. Next, they mentioned the attitudes and expectations of whom they liked to call the "socializers" (Dick & Rallis, 1991, p. 283). This group is made up of parents, teachers, counselors and friends. This is a rather important group due to the fact that they can influence the student through not only their attitudes and expectations but also by providing them with experiences and then impacting how the student interprets that situation. It is important to point out that this influence is not one-sided in that a student's own aptitude can influence his/her experience, which in return can manipulate the socializer's expectations for the student (Dick & Rallis, 1991). The last part of the model for career choice is the element that I believe has the closest tie to my topic and purpose. According to the model, a society's culture has a large influence on the career choices for students/citizens. Areas that fall under this category are sex division in the labor market (culturally, gender-specific jobs), competitiveness, and status (blue vs. white collar).

Figure 1 Model for Career Choice

```
┌─────────────────────┐
│ Cultural Milieu     │
│ sex division in labor│
│ market, cultural    │
│ stereotypes         │
└─────────────────────┘
```

Cultural Milieu
sex division in labor market, cultural stereotypes

Perceptions of Socializers

Students' Aptitudes

Socializers
attitudes and behaviors of mother, father, teacher, counselor, friend, others

Self-Concept and Career Values
interests and abilities, salary expectations, cost and length of training

Interpretation of Experiences

Past Experiences
Grades, test scores, related experiences

Career Choice

Research Questions

As mentioned previously, this was a critical qualitative inquiry study designed to answer the following specific questions:

1. How do graduates of Wonderwood High describe the perceived value of completing a CTE Pathway?

2. How do Wonderwood High graduates describe CTE curriculum objectives and their relationship to their future plan(s)?

Research Design

According to Van Maanen (1979), qualitative research is "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p. 520). Additionally, there are four main characteristics associated with qualitative studies. First, the main focus is on the

process, understanding and meaning (Merriam, 2009). In fact, the central concern

regarding a qualitative study is to comprehend the research topic from the participants'

viewpoints and not those of the researcher. Furthermore, critical qualitative research

requires a framework that is based in rights and social justice (Denzin, 2017). It requires

that we give a voice in society to those individuals who are members of the least

advantaged groups (Denzin, 2017; Mertens, Holmes, & Harris, 2009). We are garnering

the Wonderwood High School graduates' perceived value and purpose of the CTE

curriculum as well as how they see it relating to their post-secondary options. As a former

CTE educator and now CTE administrator, I carry my own personal perceptions and

awareness of CTE and by conducting a qualitative study; I can ensure that those

experiences will not be injected into the study. Additionally, with the research

participants being graduates we are now able to give them a voice that was often times

muted by those in power during their high school experience. The second characteristic

involves having the researcher serve as the primary instrument of data collection and

analysis (Merriam, 2009). Due to the main purpose of a qualitative study revolving

around the idea of understanding the phenomenon, having the human element of the

researcher collecting the data allows for instant modifications to be conducted as well as

adding accuracy to the data. This study used in-depth individual interviews with each

participant as well as a chance for me to further explain and/or probe deeper into the

responses if the need arises. The third characteristic of a qualitative study is that the

process is inductive (Merriam, 2009). Meaning that in a qualitative study, the researcher

uses the data gathered to shape themes, categories and concepts rather than merely testing

a pre-determined hypothesis. In fact, in terms of critical qualitative inquiry this idea relies

on the importance of interpretation (Denzin, 2017). Moreover, Denzin (2017), stated

"…everyday life revolves around persons interpreting and making judgements about their

own and other's behaviors and experiences" (p. 12). The research questions for this

study lend themselves to a qualitative study in that they are trying to identify exclusive

themes and categories pertaining to CTE curriculum at Wonderwood High School in

South Heights, Georgia from the respondents' personal views and/or experiences. Lastly,

qualitative studies are rather descriptive in nature (Merriam, 2009). Due to the topic of

this study revolving around the participants' perceptions and experiences of CTE, a

qualitative study has allowed me the ability to include personal notes and quotations from

the various interviews to help support the findings.

Merriam (2009) identified seven various types of qualitative research to include:

basic interpretive, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis,

critical research and case studies. Each of the before-mentioned forms of research lends

themselves to different studies based on the research topic and the type of information the

researcher is attempting to discover through data analysis. I utilized the critical research

method. Merriam (2009) pointed out that at the heart of critical research is the idea of

power dynamics. In fact, she stated,

>Questions are asked about who has power, how it's negotiated, what
>
>structures in society reinforce the current distribution of power and so on.
>
>It is also assumed that people unconsciously accept things the way they
>
>are, and in so doing, reinforce the status quo. Others may act in seemingly
>
>self-destructive or counter-productive ways in resisting the status quo.
>
>(p. 35)

Numerous examples of the power dynamics at Wonderwood High School can be witnessed in the school's participation in such educational programs as the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) as well as the low College and Career Readiness percentages and the low number of CTE pathway completers/student credentials. In addition to highlighting the various power dynamics, it is important to point out that critical research is also focused more on the context of a situation rather than on the individuals involved in the situation (Merriam, 2009). This is done through asking such questions as: whose interests are being helped by the manner in which the educational system is arranged, who has the power to effect change and who has access to the various programs. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors, which are contributing to the students' devaluing of the CTE curriculum at Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. For 12 years, these graduates have taken a pre-determined program-of-study focused on preparing them to enter college upon graduation. However, as was mentioned previously in the literature review, the majority of students in Georgia are not prepared for college nor do they complete their degree programs. This then leads to the question of why is the college preparatory program-of-study still the dominate curriculum path in Georgia. Whose educational interest are really being served and how can those not currently in power (students, parents and teachers.) effect change? These are the types of questions critical research tries to answer.

Sample Selection

For this study, I used non-probability sampling. This form of sampling is the best choice if the researcher "…expects mainly to use his data not to answer questions like 'how much'…but to solve qualitative problems, such as discovering what occurs, the

implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences" (Honigmann,

1982, p. 84). The most common form of non-probability sampling is called purposive or

purposeful sampling and is based on the idea that the researcher's goals are to discover,

understand, and gain insight (Merriam, 2009). As a result, he/she must select a sample

that the most can be learned from. Numerous researchers have identified various types of

purposeful sampling to include typical, unique, maximum variation, convenience, and

snowball/chain (Cressell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). For this study, I

used a typical sample because it "…reflects the average person, situation, or instance of

the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009, p. 78). Due to the fact that I am trying to

gauge the perceived value and purpose of CTE through the eyes of the graduates of

Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia the typical sampling method is the

perfect option.

In order to conduct purposeful sampling, the researcher must first compile their

criteria list regarding the attributes each participant should possess in order to qualify as a

member of the sample (Merriam, 2009). LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) referred

to this process as "criterion-based selection" (p. 69). The first criterion that a qualified

participant of my study must possess is that they graduated from Wonderwood High

School in South Heights, Georgia between 2018-2020. I chose the graduates of

Wonderwood High School, because they have the lowest pathway completion rate within

the Hope County School District. Additionally, in order to eliminate any influence from

districts outside of Hope County, the participants must have only attended public

schooling in the Hope County School District. Interviewing graduates who have attended

other school districts will not allow for a clear picture of the perceived value of a Hope

County student as the participants will be responding to the questions based on their complete experience with CTE, which includes the time they were attending schooling in another district. The third criterion involves the race and gender of the participants. Due to the critical lens to which this study is being conducted, the majority of the participants will be of a non-Caucasian ethnicity. In order to draw some conclusions regarding the perceived value and purpose of CTE the fourth and fifth criteria will be considered interchangeable. This process will be explained in the paragraph below. The fourth criterion states that the graduate should have been a CTE pathway completer. A pathway completer, as mentioned briefly before, is any student who has successfully completed the three CTE courses that make up a specific pathway. For example, in order for a student to be a Marketing and Management pathway completer, he/she would have had to take and pass Marketing Principles, Marketing & Entrepreneurship and Marketing Management (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). The fifth criterion states that the graduate has never taken a CTE course. This will allow myself to create a continuum regarding the value and perception of CTE based on each participant's personal exposure to the curriculum.

The sample size for my study included 13 graduates of Wonderwood High School. In order to formulate an accurate perception of the value of CTE at Wonderwood High School, sample selection from the class of 2018-2020 included 6 graduates who have not taken any of the CTE courses and 7 graduates who have completed one of the CTE Pathways. In order to select the participants and conduct the interviews, I needed to first gain approval from Georgia Southern University through the IRB process. Once approved, I requested participants through social media, tagging teachers from

Wonderwood High School. Once a prospective participant responded to the post, I then

verify, through private messages not viewed or accessed by the general public that the

prospect met the criteria. Upon verification, I sent an email with the informed consent for

the interviewee to review prior to their scheduled interview.

Data Collection

Due to COVID-19, the data collection method that was used for this study was

telephoned, in-depth interview that I taped and later transcribed (See Appendix A).

According to DeMarrais (2001), an interview is defined as "a process in which a

researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a

research study" (p. 55). Interviewing was chosen as the data collection method for its

ability to allow the researcher "…to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton,

2002, p. 341). Seeing as I am trying to determine the value and opinions on the CTE

curriculum, interviews allowed me the ability to see what is "…in and on someone else's

mind" (Patton, 2002, p. 341) regarding CTE.

According to Merriam (2009) there are various types of interviews that can be

categorized based on their level of structure and theoretical stances. There are three types

of interviews based on structure to include: highly structured/standardized, semi-

structured and unstructured/informal (Merriam, 2009). For this study, I applied a semi-

structured interview. In semi-structured interviews, the questions are less regulated and

flexible in their wording and order (Merriam, 2009). As a result, the researcher has the

ability to respond to any situation/comment that arises from the participant (Merriam,

2009). The researcher also has the ability to probe deeper or clarify a comment. In regard

to their theoretical stances, Roulston (2007) identified six different types to include: Neo-

positive, romantic, constructivist, postmodern, transformative and de-colonizing. I applied the transformative interview type to this study. According to Merriam (2009), transformative interviews "share a critical theory philosophical orientation in which issues of power, privilege, and oppression are made visible" (p. 92). Additionally, the researcher in transformative interviews, "intentionally aims to challenge and change the understandings of participants" (Roulston, 2007, p. 25).

In-depth interviews were chosen based on their ability to gather detailed information about a respondent's thoughts and behaviors (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In addition, in-depth interviews allow for the ability to distinguish each respondent's individual opinion in regard to the question at hand. This capability allowed me to pinpoint specific themes to different grade levels and CTE participation as well as determine external factors that influenced this specific part of the county that are not necessarily affecting the county as a whole. Some might argue that a properly designed survey would return similar results, however in-depth interviews allow for probing into why the respondent answered a question the way they did. This probing is the result of the atmosphere that is created through in-depth interviews. Additionally, this form of interviews often creates a very relaxed atmosphere where participants are engaged in a conversation and are more willing to open up about the topics being discussed (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Limitations

There are some limitations to in-depth interviews to include bias and being time-intensive (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Participants may want to see a program or idea be successful and will respond to the questions in a way that they see will guarantee this

success. For example, if the graduate feels that their former teacher's feelings might be hurt by their negative opinion of the value of CTE there is the possibility that the graduate might answer the interview questions with bias. It was my duty and responsibility as the researcher to create both an instrument and an interview process that permits for marginal bias. As a result of this requirement, there exist the chance of the interviews taking a significant amount of time to conduct, transcribe and analyze. Due to my sample consisting of high school graduates who were part of the class of 2018, 2019 or 2020 and have already transitioned to the next portion of their post-secondary path, both their memories of their secondary experience and schedules will have to be factored into the interview design.

In addition to the limitations with the research instrument, there is also my limited knowledge of the benefits and purpose of college preparatory programs of study. I have only taught CTE curriculum and have not been exposed to the required academic/liberal curriculum in twenty years. My lack of knowledge could hinder my construction and delivery of a fair interview. In order to combat this deficiency, I had my interview questions reviewed by current academic teachers from the Hope County School District.

Data Analysis

Sharan B. Merriam (2009) defined data analysis as "a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (p. 176). In regard to this study, the data analysis was conducted using the transcribed, audio-recorded in-depth interviews as the data set. Additionally, the research questions served as the initial point of analysis as they provided the preliminary categories that the

responses will be sorted in to. This portion of the data analysis was initiated during the data collection phase. In fact, according to Merriam (2009), in a qualitative study, "the final product is shaped by the data that are collected and the analysis that accompanies the entire process. Without ongoing analysis, the data can be unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming…(p. 171).

The data was then managed and organized utilizing Reid's (1992) three phases of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) data management: data preparation, data identification and data manipulation. According to Reid (1992), data preparation involves entering the data into the system by typing any notes and transcribing any interviews. Data identification on the other hand is designed "to divide text data into analytically meaningful and easily locatable segments" (Reid, 1992, p. 126). This process is usually completed by assigning codes to each portion of the data. Coding is defined as "…making notations next to bits of data that strike you as potentially relevant for answering your research questions" (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). Lastly, during data manipulation the before-mentioned segments are grouped, reorganized and retrieved based on the researcher's categories (Reid, 1992).

According to Merriam (2009), the construction of data categories is extremely inductive in that the details and results of your research method contribute to the inception and naming of each category. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1981) identified four main guiding points for the development of categories to include: frequency of responses, the audience, the uniqueness of the category and identifying areas not otherwise recognized by the data. In the case of my study, when constructing my categories I employed not only the key points from my research questions (CTE value,

CTE purpose and CTE curriculum studies) but also those elements that appeared in both

my theoretical framework (critical theory-liberation, knowledge and power) and the

career choice model (culture, socializers, past experiences and self-concept). Once all the

data was placed into one of the created categories, I then look for ways to reduce or

combine the categories into a manageable number for data manipulation and

themes/findings creation. Cresswell (2007) stated that five or six categories are ideal and

that is the number I was able to achieve.

Validity and Reliability

When conducting research, there is the concern for producing ethical studies that

are both valid and reliable. In qualitative studies, this honesty is provided to the reader

through a detailed depiction exhibiting that the author's inference "make sense"

(Firestone, 1987, p. 19). The two research terms that depict this honesty are

validity/credibility and reliability/consistency. Validity is broken up into two parts:

internal and external. According to Merriam (2009), internal validity "deals with the

question of how research findings match reality. Whereas external validity "is concerned

with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. That

is, how generalizable are the results of a research study?" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). In

conjunction with validity is reliability that "refers to the extent to which research findings

can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated, will it yield the same results?"

(Merriam, 2009, p. 220). Due to the human element of qualitative studies, reliability is

hard to prove. Lincoln and Guba (1985) decided instead to view reliability in terms of

whether the results of a qualitative study are consistent with the data collected. There are

eight strategies that can be used to promote validity and reliability in a study, and they

are: triangulation, member checks, adequate engagement in data collection, researcher's position or reflexivity, peer review/examination, audit trail, rich, thick descriptions and maximum variation (Merriam, 2009). For this study I utilized the following strategies: member checks, researcher's position or reflexivity and peer review/examination.

Member checks, also known as respondent validation, is the process of taking your preliminary analysis back to a few of your participants to verify that you captured their experiences and/or opinions accurately (Merriam, 2009). Maxwell (2005) stated

> this is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed (p. 111).

As I conducted the preliminary data analysis as an ongoing process during the data collection phase, I conducted member checks with every participant interviewed. This equated to half of my participants conducting a check. The second strategy I exercised is the researcher's position or reflexivity. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000), this is "the process of reflecting critically on the self as a researcher, the 'human as instrument'" (p. 183). By applying this strategy, I had to be as transparent as possible regarding my personal biases towards CTE and the liberal/academic curriculums as well as my preconceived assumptions regarding the graduates' opinions of CTE at Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. Maxwell (2005) explains the reasons for articulating these items to the reader is not to remove "variance between researchers in values and expectations they bring to the study, but with understanding how a particular

researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study" (p. 108). The last strategy I implemented was peer review/examination. As this study is also my dissertation for a doctoral program, the committee served in this role reviewing and evaluating my methodology section to include the data collection and analysis.

Trustworthiness

In conducting qualitative research, the main perspectives revolve around the notion of credibility and trustworthiness (Cope, 2014). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), instilling trustworthiness in your qualitative research involves: credibility (truthfulness of the data), dependability (consistency of the data when replicated), confirmability (data is a representation of the participants), and transferability (ability to be applied in other settings). They later added authenticity (process of expressing the feelings and emotions of the participants) as the fifth principle (Cope, 2014). In terms of this study, credibility was exemplified through the interview and transcription process when I disclosed my position within the school district as well having the participants conduct member checks on their transcribed interviews to ensure the information was recorded accurately. In terms of dependability, the research design process is outlined and can be replicated by another researcher. Regarding confirmability, quotes provided by the participants were utilized as the foundation for the theme development process. Transferability was not exhibited in this study as the research is specific to how graduates in South Heights, Georgia views the value of CTE curriculum and should not be used to generalize. Lastly, in terms of authenticity, conclusions were drawn by critically evaluating the data through interpretations of the literature.

Summary of Methodology

I conducted a critical, qualitative study regarding the perceptions of the value and purpose of the CTE curriculum through the eyes of the graduates of Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. My data collection method was in-depth interviews based on various research tools such as my research questions, my theoretical framework of critical theory and the career choice model. I chose to conduct a critical qualitative study due to its characteristically unique make-up. In fact, a critical qualitative study is focused on understanding a phenomenon through the occurrences and views of those individuals who have and are experiencing it. Furthermore, its goal is to confront the current social system through altering the current status quo and emboldening the powerless to liberate themselves from their current situation. Qualitative studies are also inductive, descriptive and allow the researcher the ability to collect the data through such methods as one-on-one interviews. This then allows the researcher the ability to clarify any confusing questions as well as probe deeper regarding the participants' responses.

In regard to my sample, I utilized non-probability sampling consisting of 13 graduates of which 6 of the participants have not taken any of the CTE courses and the other 7 participants have completed one of the CTE Pathways. In order for an individual to qualify for my study they were required to meet a certain list of criteria. First, they had be a member of the class of 2018, 2019 or 2020 from Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. Second, they have only attended public school in Hope County. Third, due to this being a critical study, the majority of the participants will be of non-Caucasian ethnicity. Fourth and fifth, they should be a CTE pathway completer or have never taken a CTE course. Pertaining to the construction of my research instrument, I applied in-depth interviews that were semi-structured with a transformative theoretical stance.

In the matter of the analysis of the data, it was an ongoing process employing Reid's (1992) three phases of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) data management: data preparation, data identification and data manipulation. Furthermore, it began after the first interview had been conducted. This allowed for the creation and ultimate condensing of the categories that were used for the themes/finding's portions of the study. As the data was collected, I assigned codes to identify/classify the responses. Additionally, to ensure that the results of this study were credible and consistent with the data collected, I employed the strategies of member checks, researcher's position or reflexivity and peer review/examination.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The Process

To determine how graduates of Wonderwood High School would describe the

perceived value of completing a CTE pathway as well as how CTE curriculum and

objectives relate to their future, I conducted in-depth interviews with 13 graduates. The

interviewees were solicited using social media and recommendations from Wonderwood

instructors. There was a total of 20 respondents of which 13 matched the criterion. Table

4 below provides demographic information on each participant with pseudonyms for

confidentially.

Table 4 *Participants' Demographic Information*

Participant	Graduation Year	Ethnicity	Gender	CTAE Pathway Completer?	Currently Enrolled in 4-Year Institution?
Austin	2020	Caucasian	Male	No	Yes
Sally	2020	African American	Female	No	Yes
Christina	2018	African American	Female	Yes	Yes
Riley	2019	East Asian	Female	No	Yes
Kelly	2019	African American	Female	No	Yes
Stephanie	2019	African American	Female	No	Yes
Larry	2020	Caucasian	Male	Yes	Yes
Casey	2020	Caucasian	Male	Yes	Yes
Cate	2019	African American	Female	No	Yes
Natalie	2020	Hispanic	Female	Yes	Yes
Andy	2018	East Asian	Male	Yes	Yes
Blake	2019	Caucasian	Female	Yes	Yes
Helen	2019	African American	Female	Yes	Yes

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, I had to conduct the interviews over the phone instead of in-person as originally planned. A schedule was created based on the participants availability and all were recorded and later transcribed. The interview questions were semi-structured and allowed for me to be flexible in the wording to ensure that the interviewee understood the question and I was able to secure the intended information.

As mentioned previously, there lies limitation to my research study to include student bias, scheduling and my own knowledge of the college preparatory benefits. During the interview process, one of the three limitations appeared. Student bias was exhibited by all the participants as each had interacted with the subjects of the research questions (CTE instructors, Counselors, Administrators and Parents). As a result, I had to probe deeper into their initial responses to ensure they were providing their genuine thoughts and experiences and not a contrived account created to protect the feelings of the instructors and to ensure the responses would not negatively impact any of the employees of Wonderwood High School. I reassured the participants that all data would remain confidential and that pseudonyms were being used for all parties to include the High School being studied. Furthermore, I mentioned that all information shared during the interviews would be used for research purposes only and would not be applied to evaluate Wonderwood High School or any of its employees. I then asked each respondent to please feel comfortable to speak openly and honestly as well as understand that their answers would remain private. There were two questions where the bias was most prevalent, which required me to ask clarifying questions to ensure the participants were providing reliable responses. The questions pertained to the CTE pathway options and their perceived value to the students' education. For example, 11 out of the 13 graduates

believed that the CTE pathways were not limited at Wonderwood High School. When Sally was asked if the CTE pathways at Wonderwood were limited, she stated "there was a great selection, a variety of everything," however, she never took a CTE course. When I asked why she felt the options were so varied, she stated "…in my opinion there was something for everyone, even if it did not match perfectly to what you wanted to do." I then asked her, if there was something for everyone, why then did she not take any of the courses? She then explained that she was interested in graphics design and that was not offered at Wonderwood, so she ended up taking an Art pathway, which aligned the closest to her desired career option. I queried if she knew that there was a Graphics Pathway offered at the District's Career Center which she could have attended while at Wonderwood and she answered "no." I then asked her, "Did no one at Wonderwood High School ever tell you about the graphic's pathway at the Career Center?" and she again stated "no." The question then becomes, did the counselors not share the information with her? If they didn't, why not? If they did, was Sally just not paying attention when the pathway was communicated to the students of Wonderwood? Or does the Career Center need to do a better job of advertising their pathway options to the students of Wonderwood?

The results were also rather interesting in terms of the participants perceived value that CTE adds to a graduate's education. In fact, all 13 believed that the CTE pathways/programs add value to a student's education even though six of the graduates never took a CTE course. When I asked the "why or why not" part of the question, all the graduates stated that they really enjoyed their time at Wonderwood and how great of a school it was. When I mentioned to the Non-CTE graduates that I understood that their

teachers and high school experience was wonderful at Wonderwood, but why did they believe that the CTE pathways/programs added value when they never took a single course? The participants then explained that it was not their opinion when they attended Wonderwood that the realization came after enrolling in a four-year institution. Riley explained

> …CTE links to a student's future, unlike the broad academic subjects that provide countless facts that you have to memorize for a test. In fact, my college roommate did not take a CTE pathway either and ended up changing from her Computer Science major due to it being too hard and wishes she would have taken the pathway in high school to see if it was something she really wanted to pursue.

As a result of the semi-structured questioning format and its ability to allow me to ask the clarifying or more detailed probing questions while reducing inquiries I was able to reduce student bias.

Data Transcription

In order to conduct an analysis on the data I collected during the in-depth interviews, I utilized Reid's (1992) three phases of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) data management: data preparation, data identification and data manipulation. Regarding the data management phase, I recorded all interviews as well as took real time detailed notes of the responses from each participant to ensure I was capturing the answers accurately. Additionally, the process allowed for me to interject supplementary clarifying questions to both remove the bias mentioned before as well as ensure that the graduates were answering the questions completely. I then transcribed each recording, adding in the detailed notes to construct a complete profile of

each participant. To ensure the reliability of my study, I then had each participant review their transcribed interviews to confirm that I captured their responses accurately and if there was any miscommunication they were then able to provide supplemental data to rectify the error. The process was completed through email correspondence with a time limit of two weeks to verify their profile and/or provide additional responses. All participants responded within the time frame with only Kelly, Casey and Natalie providing revisions. Kelly's modifications pertained to question number nine, Casey's to questions number one and four and Natalie's adjustments were meaning driven throughout the entire transcript due to English being a second language. Several points required additional clarification to ensure I understand what the participant meant. Next, I moved into the data identification phase where I reviewed each transcript and segmented the data into categories via coding. The segments included: value, purpose, curriculum, liberation, knowledge, power, influences and experience. Furthermore, I indicated response frequency, CTE vs. Non-CTE and Ethnicity of the participant. The coded transcripts were then put through the data manipulation phase where I was able to condense the segments into two identifiable themes. According to Merriam (2009), themes are "…detailed bits or segments of data…" that can be clustered together and used in drawing conclusions for a study (p. 183). The following themes were identified and will serve as the topic areas for the discussion section of my research. Theme 1. Graduates' awareness of CTE curriculum's value and purpose; and Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE. Upon reviewing the data derived from the interviews there was a clear distinction regarding how the graduates developed their perception of CTE's value and purpose interwoven

into every participant's response. The connection was tied to the level of awareness of the overall benefits of the CTE's programs and its academic counterparts. Additionally, the theme of awareness aligned to the historical evolution of both the purpose of secondary education as a whole as well as the purpose of implementing CTE into the secondary educational environment. I will describe how the study also shares insights on the evolution within education in chapter 5 as a link to previous research and the findings from the study. After identifying the students' awareness of CTE as one of the major themes of the data, the next step was to use the results to determine the reason(s) behind the deficiency. Upon examination it became evident that influences within the school, household and community were shaping the students' level of involvement in CTE. Furthermore, elements of discrimination, power and culture were prevalent in regard to why certain individuals were not as engaged in the CTE curriculum.

Data Interpretation

The graduates of Wonderwood High described the value of completing a CTE pathway reflecting on their experiences and how prepare they were for the challenges in the next phase of launching into more independent adult. Participants also described CTE curriculum objectives and how they became aware (or not) on the influence of CTE for career preparedness. As a former CTE instructor of five years and now a nine-year veteran CTE administer both in Hope County, I have constructed my own opinions regarding what the results of the study will reveal. Concerning research question number one, I assumed that the graduates of Wonderwood High School will view the perceived value of CTE as less than in comparison to its academic counterpart. Graduates might see the courses and pathways as the "back-up" plan for those students who do not possess

the grades, abilities nor drive to attend a four-year institution. Additionally, due to the

CTE courses not impacting their Hope Scholarship GPA, they tend to limit their efforts in

CTE to focus their time and mental capabilities on the core academic subjects.

Considering the graduates' view of CTE objectives and how they will prepare them for

their future plan(s), I predict that the graduates will not see the relationship between the

curriculum and how CTE is the practical application to the academic course standards as

well as both a preparation and exploratory tool. In fact, the key benefit to taking a CTE

pathway is for a student to explore a possible career field and either confirm it as their

chosen future plan or exclude it. Moreover, many of the career fields offered through

CTE do not require a traditional four-year degree thus saving the students both time and

money. For example, a student may not understand the importance of fractions nor how

and where they will be utilized in their future career until they enter the Culinary CTE

pathway and start to apply those fractions when preparing meals for the restaurant. Then

a fraction becomes more than part of a word problem in the student's textbook. It

becomes real world training, and the student can then notice the differing effects in using

a teaspoon versus a tablespoon of salt when preparing a meal.

Regarding **research question number one** involving how the graduates of

Wonderwood High School would describe the perceived value of completing a CTE

pathway it was determined that all 13 participants viewed CTE as adding value to a

student's education especially in terms of both the WBL and DE programs. However,

only 38% of the participants were enrolled in the WBL program and only 18% in the DE

program while attending Wonderwood. Andy, a CTE pathway completer, detailed that "I

believe 100% that CTE added value to my education. In high school, I did not see the

impact of taking CTE courses, but when I entered college, I saw the true effect it had on my preparation level." Additionally, 77% of the participants stated that CTE allows students the ability to explore career options. Furthermore, when asked "If you could talk to your high school self, what would you tell yourself in regard to your course choices?" every graduate expressed that they would say, participate more in CTE to include both WBL and DE as well as the CTSOs. In fact, Austin a Non-CTE graduate stated, "I should have taken a CTE pathway and dual enrollment courses instead of the extra AP classes, which I did not even receive the college credit for." Kelly, also a Non-CTE graduate, echoed Austin's thoughts when she indicated, "I should have done dual enrollment over AP as you can get more college credit from dual enrollment." Blake, who was a CTE pathway completer, confirmed the sentiments of both Austin and Kelly when she stated that "I should have started CTE in the nineth grade, which would have given me the chance to do WBL and DE my eleventh and twelfth grade years. I could have saved a lot of time and money."

Pertaining to the **second research question**, which refers to how Wonderwood graduates describe CTE curriculum objectives and the relationship of these objectives to their future plan(s) all seven of the CTE pathway completers felt that participating in CTE directly prepared them for their future plans. In fact, according to Helen, if not for the skills and level of preparation provided to her through CTE her life would have ended up completely different. However, due to participating in WBL and the Mock Interview fairs offered through CTE, she has become the first in her family to attend college. Additionally, she interviewed with her dream company and was hired on the spot due to her keen interview skills and community involvement gained through her CTSO. Helen

has already been promoted twice, just purchased her very first brand new car and moved into her own apartment. Regarding the six Non-CTE participants, their level of preparation for their future and CTE's relationship to their plans paint a different picture. Only two out of six or 33.3% felt prepared for their post-secondary plan after graduating from Wonderwood. The other four or 66.6% were unsure of the career field they wanted to pursue. The only portion of their future plan that was constructed while at Wonderwood was the fact that they were expected to enroll into a four-year institution upon graduation. Cate, a Non-CTE participant, has been in college since the Fall of 2019 and has changed her major twice. She stated that "…originally I wanted to pursue a career in Healthcare as my mother is a nurse, but after taking a few upper-level math and science classes, I quickly realized that this was not the field for me". Cate went on to share that "…I then remembered how much I loved chorus when I was at Wonderwood, so now I am pursuing Music Therapy. Not sure what exactly I will be able to do with the degree, but I am enjoying the program". Cate's quandary is reiterated with the other three participants who also felt unprepared and are still struggling to find their chosen career path. Thus, resulting in a possible misuse of time as well as the accumulation of debt.

Interpreting the data identify noticeable patterns between the graduates to include those based on their CTE pathway status. It was observed that if a student was marked as a CTE pathway completer, they felt prepared for the future plans due to their CTE experience. Whereas of those students who had never taken a CTE course only two of the six were prepared while the other four were still exploring their career options at the expense of time and tuition fees. However, regardless of the CTE pathway status, all 13 participants revealed that the CTE curriculum and programs add value. Additionally, all

contributors indicated that if given the chance again, they would have participated even more in the CTE offerings at Wonderwood High School.

Summary of Results

I conducted in-depth, phone interviews with 13 graduates of Wonderwood High School. The questions were semi-structured to allow for flexibility and to ensure that each participant was able to provide a complete response to each inquiry. Due to the participants connection to Wonderwood High School and my position as a CTE administrator within Hope County, a level of student bias was detected during each interview. Thus, requiring both a reassurance of confidentiality and a reiteration of the purpose for the interview responses. For example, a pseudonym would be used for all interviewees as well the site location. Additionally, all data collected will be used for research purposes only and will not contribute to any instrument used to evaluate Wonderwood High School or any of its employees.

Reid's (1992) three phases of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) data management were used to collect, transcribe, and analyze the data. To verify the reliability of each interview transcript, I employed the member check method, whereas each respondent reviewed their data and provided any corrections and/or additional data points. Only three respondents provided corrections to their transcription to which all were updated. Each record was then encoded using the eight segments as well as marked for frequency, CTE versus Non-CTE and Ethnicity. The sections were then categorized into the following themes which will be delve into in the discussion section of the study: Theme 1. Graduates' awareness of CTE curriculum's value and purpose; and Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates'

participation in CTE. In constructing the themes that were developed from the transcribed interviews I was able to correlate elements of my educational theories to include: educational purpose, discrimination, power and culture. The historical purpose behind secondary education and the inception of CTE within its curriculum contributed to the level of awareness of CTE's value to the graduates of Wonderwood High School. Upon identifying the students' lack of awareness as an overarching theme, I then explored the factors that contributed to it. These factors included influences within the school, the household as well as the graduate's community. The process resulted in the recognition of various internal and external influences that were shaped by the theoretical elements of inequity, authority, and traditions.

In conducting the study, I had constructed my own perception regarding how the graduates would perceive the value of completing a CTE pathway as well as how they would describe the CTE curriculum and its relationship to their level of preparedness for their future. My perception was that the graduates would see no value in CTE and view it in terms of an elective course that had no bearings on their graduation success. Furthermore, the graduates would fail to see the connection between the CTE curriculum objectives/programs and the effect they have on their level of post-secondary readiness to include enrollment into college, enlistment into the military or employment into a specific career field. Upon evaluating the results, it appears that a 100% of the graduates interviewed believe that completing a CTE pathway adds value to a student's education specifically regarding the WBL and DE programs. Furthermore, 77% of the interviewees indicated that a large benefit of taking a CTE pathway is its ability to allow for career exploration. Whereas a student can investigate a career path to determine its viability as

their chosen occupational plan. In terms of how the graduates view CTE's objectives and the impact they have on the student's future plans, the results were divided based on whether the participant was identified as a CTE or Non-CTE completer. Those graduates who were CTE completers felt that the curriculum had an impact on their post-secondary readiness while only two Non-CTE completers felt this way. The other four Non-CTE completers are currently enrolled in a four-year institution but are still questioning the career pathway they will pursue.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Overview

Since the establishment of secondary education, CTE has been viewed as an

optional, alternative curriculum geared towards individuals who could either not handle

the liberal/academic courses or had a lower socio-economic standing. Thus, positioning

the curriculum as inferior to its academic counterpart. As time progressed and the ideas

of inequalities and social justice started to impact the educational systems, the US

government attempted to eliminate the disparities by implementing legislation like NCLB

and providing the States with the option of restructuring their graduation requirements.

As a result, in 2008 a change was made to the Georgia graduation requirements for K-12

students that converted the four-diploma track system into a standardized course of study

focused solely on preparing students to enter a four-year institution. With this educational

reform came the legendary disappearance of curriculum diversity within our secondary

institutions and the uprise of a dominant single curriculum focus (Schubert, 2009).

Preparing students to be career ready was no longer a requirement for graduation. In fact,

a student could progress through their entire high school program-of-study and never step

foot into a CTE classroom. Therefore, missing out on those ever-important technical

skills that 75 percent of businesses state applicants are missing (Society For Human

Resource Management, 2019). What was meant to diminish the disproportions between

students created a larger division and the unintended consequence of producing students

that are neither college nor career ready. In fact, in 2019 only 56.8 percent of Georgia

high school graduates were college and career ready (Governor's Office of Student

Achievement, 2020). Additionally, that same year only 50.9 percent of Hope County and 52.4 percent of Wonderwood High School graduates were college and career ready (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2020; Georgia Department of Education, 2019). CTE and the liberal/academics should be viewed as partners helping students to understand the concepts (academics) and then applying them (CTE) in the real world. As Dick and Rallis (1991) stated, "…a student's career goal directly shapes the student's perception of both the intrinsic and extrinsic value of academic tasks." (p. 282). The intrinsic factors include intellectual interest whereas the extrinsic factors include salary potentials and the amount and costs of additional education (Dick & Rallis, 1991). As was exhibited in the results of the study, the majority of the participants knew that they were going to attend a post-secondary institution which required them to take certain academic courses and meet the intrinsic factor. However, they were unsure of their major which resulted in the absence of the extrinsic factors leading to low participation and interest in the CTE pathways. If the counselors, teachers and parents, also known as the socializers in the Model of Career Choice, would exert their influence by providing students with the guidance of participating in the various CTE pathways to explore future career options, the students would then see the value in both curriculums thus aiding the students in becoming college and career ready.

As a result, this study was designed to answer the following research questions: How do the graduates of Wonderwood High describe the perceived value of completing a CTE pathway? How do Wonderwood High graduates describe CTE curriculum objectives and their relationship to their future plan(s)? To answer these questions, I conducted in-depth interviews with 13 graduates of Wonderwood High School, using

semi-structured questions. Seven of the graduates were CTE completers and six of the graduates had never enrolled in a CTE course. All respondents believed CTE added value to a student's education especially in terms of the WBL and DE programs, which emphasis CTE's ability to allow students to explore future career options. However, what was interesting about this realization was the fact that many of the graduates did not participate in either the WBL or the DE programs, which then raised the question regarding why they felt this way. Through further questioning, the participants stated that they did not possess this opinion of CTE while they were attending Wonderwood that their comprehension of CTE's value came after graduating and having to navigate the post-secondary world. Additionally, the graduates were divided regarding how they viewed the CTE curriculum objectives and how they would impact their future plan(s). Those that completed a CTE pathway felt extremely prepared for their future though some still wished they would have started taking the courses earlier, so they could participate in all the CTE program offers to include WBL and DE. Regarding the Non-CTE graduates only two of the six felt prepared upon graduation for their future plan(s). The four others are still struggling to determine their major and indicated that they wished that they would have taken a CTE pathway, so that they could have established their career of choice or at least had the opportunity to exclude those careers that they did not want to pursue. The following section of this study will examine the findings in terms of the resulting themes that were identified from the participants' responses as well as the literature that was the basis for the research: Theme 1. Graduates' awareness of CTE curriculum's value and purpose; and Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE.

Interpretation of Findings

Theme 1. Graduates' Awareness of CTE Curriculum's Value and Purpose

Upon reviewing the findings of the study, it was determined that the graduates of Wonderwood High view CTE as both valuable and purposeful to a student's education as well as in preparing them for their future. However, the understanding is not identified until after the student graduates and enters their post-secondary path, which can be exhibited by the low number of graduates participating in the CTE programs as well as the lack of knowledge known by or shared with students regarding the CTE offerings. For example, when I posed the question of "Why did you not participate in the CTE Programs or Pathways?" I received the same response of "I did not understand what it was, and I needed to focus on my academic courses, so I could get into college". CTE programs are overlooked because there is not a national system in the United States that links education and the workforce (Stone & Lewis, 2012). Thus, employers are required to view an applicant's college degree as certification that they possess the skills and training required to seek employment within their industries (Stone & Alfeld, 2006). The importance of college as the preferred post-secondary option can be observed through the results of interview question number seven. The question asked "Tell me about your experiences with the Dual Enrollment Program? How did it impact your post-secondary plan? If you did not participate in the program, why not?". Eleven out of the thirteen graduates did not participate in the Dual Enrollment (DE) program, however 8 of those 11 did participate in the Advanced Placement (AP) program. Demonstrating that they understood the importance of college and that it was the expected post-secondary design for them. For example, when I asked Austin why he did not participate in the DE

program but did participate in the AP program, he stated, "DE does not look as good as AP on your high school transcript" and "AP credit is accepted everywhere, and DE credit is not." When I asked Austin, "Why did you feel this way?". He stated, "That is what I was told from my academic teachers and counselors." The sentiment was shared with the other 7 participants who were all told that AP is viewed more favorably by post-secondary institutions when compared to DE. The study cannot determine the reasoning behind why the teachers and counselors at Wonderwood High School shared the aforementioned inaccurate information with the participants, however it is further confirmation that the Wonderwood High CTE programs and pathways are viewed as inferior in the eyes of those outside of the department and can in fact have a negative impact on the post-secondary future of its graduates. Moreover, it is further confirmation of the influence of power the dominant parties in education are employing. As Kincheloe (2005) mentioned, secondary education should allow the opportunity for students to explore all forms of curriculum to construct their ultimate opinions and career path, but instead the adults (teachers and counselors) are constructing the plan for them with misinformation thus replicating the notion of creating "…citizens who are governed, not citizens who govern." (p. 111)

The second part of question seven asked, "Do you wish you had participated in the program? Why or why not?." These results were rather fascinating because of the 11 graduates who did not participate in the DE program all 11 stated that looking back, they wish they would have. In fact, Helen stated "I wish I would have taken DE in high school. When I started college there were classmates of mine that took DE and entered college a full semester ahead of me. That was a huge academic and financial advantage

for them." When I asked Blake, an AP student, why she now wishes she would have taken DE, she mentioned "I now understand that DE credit is accepted everywhere and I did not have to take a test to earn the credit." and she went on to state "I took three AP courses while at Wonderwood High School and I failed all three exams, so I never earned the college credit. I did not feel prepared for the tests as my teachers never mentioned the importance of the assessment." In fact, one of my teachers stated, "Don't worry about the exam, you will still get the bonus points on your transcript for taking the class." The two graduates, Casey and Cate, who did participate in the DE program, explained how it provided them with enough college credit to be a full semester ahead when they entered college and saved them thousands in tuition fees. In fact, they both mentioned how envious their roommates were who did not participate in the DE program and were having to take and pay for courses such as English 1101, which the two interviewees took for free while attending Wonderwood. When I asked them both, how they made the decision to enroll, Casey stated that he had a friend at another school in the district that suggested it to him. While Cate mentioned it was both suggested and explained to her by a classmate who participated in the DE program the prior school year.

The results of this portion of the interview are not surprising given the historical and local perception of CTE's purpose and value. When CTE was first introduced by Snedden and Prosser as a curriculum through the idea of social efficiency it was designed to be an alternative to the liberal education, directed at the lower socio-economic citizens and preparing them for skilled labor (Snedden, 1910). Though the CTE curriculum is now promoted to all students, at Wonderwood High there still lies the underlining idea that CTE is for the students not planning to pursue an academically rigorous post-

secondary plan. As a result of the divide between the academic and CTE disciplines, at Wonderwood High School, the students' ability to be college and career ready is negatively impacted, which is ironic in that the goal for all Wonderwood graduates is to attend college. The previously mentioned divide can be witnessed with the 52.4 percent College and Career Readiness rate in 2019 for Wonderwood High School (Georgia Department of Education, 2019). To aid in rectifying this divide, an education needs to take place where the teachers from both disciplines see how their curriculums are actually partners that complement each other. As Washington (1911) mentioned, industrial education is "…a means of connecting education with life." (p. 143) Additionally, according to Newmann et al. (1992), students are more prone to become engaged in their academic courses if the process includes allowing them to utilize their inquiry to solve real world problems that extend beyond the school environment. CTE programs and standards are derived from real world situations thus utilizing them to teach academics will increase the students' engagement and positively influence their overall academic progress. Furthermore, according to Trilling and Fadel (2009), the duties of a teacher have extended to include employing their knowledge and experiences to help expose students to all the opportunities afforded to them. In fact, student participation in CTE courses has decreased the high school drop-out rate when at least one CTE course is taken for every two academic courses (Plank et al., 2005). Additionally, CTE academic programs such as DE provides students with numerous benefits that align back to Wonderwood High's overall mission of ensuring students are college and career ready. For example, "…dual enrollment addresses two factors in particular: high school students' need to be academically prepared for additional study, and their need to become

familiar and comfortable with the college environment." (Hughes et. Al., 2012, p. 9)

Currently, Wonderwood High School is following the Georgia Department of

Education's attempt to provide an equitable education to all students by providing a one-

size-fits-all curriculum plan with the end goal of entering a four-year institution. In order

to prepare students to be college ready, schools are promoting the college preparation

academic program of AP, while at the same time discounting the CTE program's

counterpart of DE. In fact, in 2019 a student at Wonderwood High was four times more

likely to take an AP course than DE (Georgia Department of Education, 2019). Both

options are designed to provide students with a rigorous curriculum, however only one

takes place on a college campus and guarantees college credit upon completion of the

course and that is DE. By promoting the AP college preparatory option, Wonderwood is

failing to expose their students to the various post-secondary career and educational

opportunities that can lead to the goal of being a productive, competitive citizen. In its

attempt to rectify the inequalities of its students, Wonderwood has in fact stripped the

democratic ideals of schooling as defined as a place that generates a student's desire to

both grow and examine knowledge and the world around them (Dewey, 1916).

Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE

Further exploration of the findings identified how cultural/societal influences

impacted the graduates' participation in CTE. For example, in question one when I asked

the participants "When you attended Wonderwood High School, tell me about how you

chose your courses?" Most of the graduates, 10 out of the 13 or 77%, stated that their

counselors selected the courses for them. It is important to point out that eight of those

ten participants are minorities and three of the four counselors at Wonderwood are
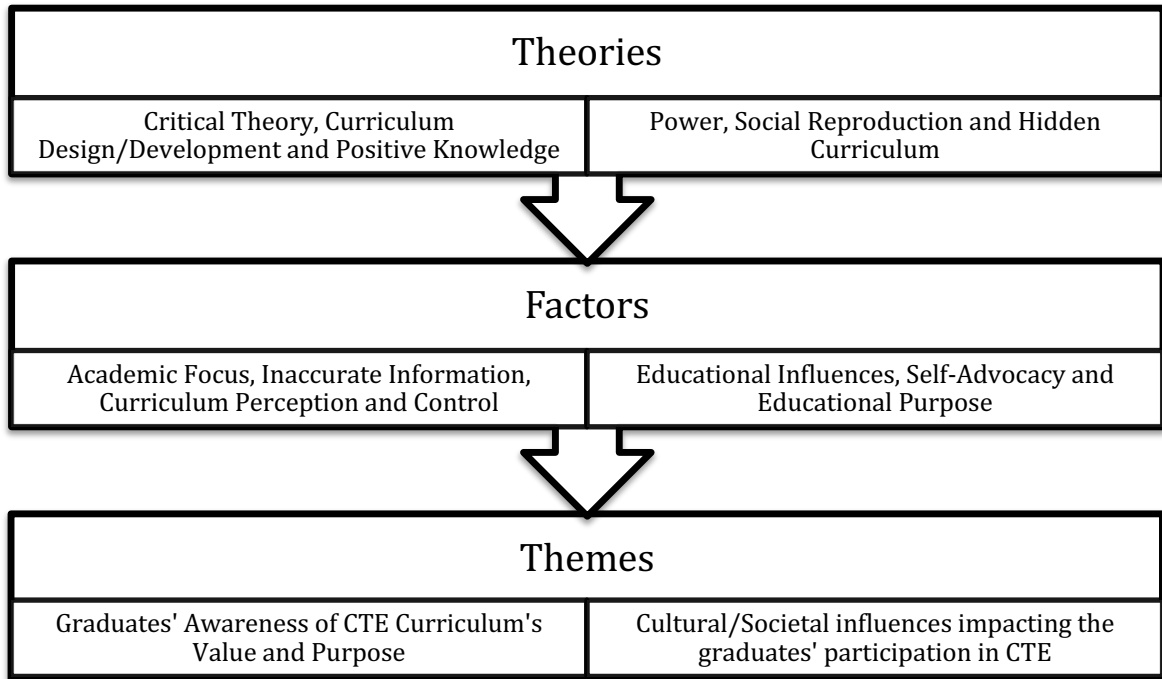
European American. When asked the second part of the question, "Did you feel you had input into your course selections?" only four of the participants stated "yes," which was due to having parental involvement during the process. From the prior theme it was identified that power dynamics have played a pivotal role in the devaluation of CTE, which was exhibited by the incorrect information shared with students, by teachers and counselors, regarding DE. The inaccuracies were employed as a way to encourage students to take AP over DE. The information came from individuals that both students and parents viewed as knowledgeable on the subject matter and thus were not questioned. However, what also must be address is the cultural bias/stereotypes that are influencing the education of the students at Wonderwood High School. Scholars have proposed that the school structure operates as a reflection of broader societal inequalities such as race and class based, which is the first experience many minority students have to these injustices (Fine et al., 2004). Furthermore, "when…discrimination occurs in schools, it can signal to students that they are devalued as members of the school community, and thus society at large…" (Hope et al., 2014) For example, when reviewing the data for question four "What educational opportunities do you feel you missed out on while attending Wonderwood High School?" all respondents mentioned a CTE program to include: WBL, DE, CTSOs or a Pathway at our district's Career Academy. What signified a concern were the responses to question five "If you had a younger sibling attending Wonderwood High School, what would you do to ensure that your sibling does not miss out on those opportunities?" 8 of the 13 or 62% of the respondents stated, "tell them to advocate for themselves." For example, Cate mentioned, "I would encourage them to ask questions to their counselors and teachers regarding the various course

options. I didn't do that and missed out of some great opportunities." Additionally, Andy shared "I would tell them about my experiences and all the mistakes I made. If I could redo my high school experience all over again I would take advantage of DE and explore even more CTE pathways." These examples denote that the graduates understand the importance of having a voice and being an active participant in their education.

It is important to point out that I am not accusing Wonderwood High School of discriminating against its minority students, unfortunately unintentional bias can subconsciously influence how educators interact with students. As Apple (1995) stated "a fundamental problem facing us is the way in which systems of domination and exploitation persist and reproduce themselves without being consciously recognized by the people involved." (p. 12) Take for example, Riley who is East Asian and was placed in AP courses. When I asked about her experience with the DE program she stated, "I was never told about DE, my counselors and teachers only told me about AP courses. If I would have known about DE and its benefits, I definitely would have participated in the program over AP." Riley is one example of how the concepts of social reproduction and hidden curricula are shaping the educational landscape for the students of Wonderwood High School. As Nunn (2014) outlined, social reproduction is the idea that a person will continue in the same social environment they were born into as they advance through their lives. Additionally, Nunn (2014) speaks of "hidden curricula" as additional rules and morals taught within the educational courses and geared towards a specific group of students (p. 18). The decision makers, whether knowingly or unknowingly, are perpetuating the societal stereotypes and producing graduates that are positioned to fulfill the lives those in power believe they should lead.

The Theoretical Connection

Figure 2 Linkage of Theoretical Context

Theories	
Critical Theory, Curriculum Design/Development and Positive Knowledge	Power, Social Reproduction and Hidden Curriculum

Factors	
Academic Focus, Inaccurate Information, Curriculum Perception and Control	Educational Influences, Self-Advocacy and Educational Purpose

Themes	
Graduates' Awareness of CTE Curriculum's Value and Purpose	Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE

In Figure 2 above I have developed an outline to highlight the linkage between the themes and the theories that guided their inception. Regarding Theme 1. Graduates' Awareness of CTE Curriculum's Value and Purpose the theories of Critical Theory, Curriculum Design/Development and Positive Knowledge were the main influences. As mentioned previously, critical theory has many definitions, but the main commonality is that of change and assisting individuals in the process of becoming self-aware despite the influences of those in power (Horkheimer, 1937; Kincheloe, 2005). At Wonderwood High School, change is not taking place. The educational leaders are stifling the students' ability to become self-aware by withholding vital curriculum knowledge that would allow the students the ability to make curriculum decisions that could positively impact their post-secondary trajectory and future career path. In addition to critical theory, lies the

idea of curriculum design/development, specifically that of CTE. From its beginning, CTE has fought the stigma of being the simpler, optional form of education developed to appease the masses and provide an education to the working class. In reviewing CTE's educational history, there is a constant effort to discount the value of CTE and utilize it for those students demeaned as not possessing the educational aptitude to participate in the socially accepted college preparatory program-of-study. At Wonderwood, the CTE programs such as WBL and DE are withheld from students in an effort to promote the academic programs such as AP. In fact, the only reason why two of the graduates participated in the DE program was from the advice they received from their peers who had completed a DE course. Lastly, the theory of "Positive Knowledge" was a factor into the development of the theme. Cusick (1983) views "Positive Knowledge" as the agreed upon curriculum structure that those in power believe is what the students need to learn in order to succeed in society. At Wonderwood, the curriculum focus is on academics thus CTE is eliminated from most programs-of-study unless actively pursued by the students and/or parents. This can be confirmed by reviewing the data where countless times the participants indicated that they either were never told of a CTE program or were automatically assigned to a course by their counselors.

In the development of Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE the following theories were employed: Power, Social Reproduction and Hidden Curriculum. The idea of power has been applied in the educational arena in numerous ways to include maintaining the class system to creating a compliant workforce (Saul, 1992; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Kincheloe, 2005). However, Apple (1995) concluded one of the greatest notions of power and that is the ability to

make it invisible if you simply incorporate into the effort. This concept is prevalent at Wonderwood with 10 out of the 13 respondents stating that the counselors selected the courses for them without any input from the students. The students relinquished their power without even knowing that it happened simply because they knew that course scheduling was handled by the counselors. A process/procedure that was put in place by the educational leaders at Wonderwood. Once the students graduate and become self-aware of the opportunities, they missed by allowing the counselors to dictate their course/program selections they have regret and share with their siblings to advocate for themselves regarding course selection and not simply take what is assigned to them. Aligned to the idea of power lies social reproduction and the use of "hidden curricula," which one could say are the results of the power dynamics found in education (Nunn, 2014). These theories were explored previously and are engrained into the development of this theme. What was so revealing from this study and my exploration into the history of education was the idea that at its very purpose education is nothing more than a tool to be used to either better society or control it. Furthermore, who is the judge to determine which method is being applied. I want to believe that the educational leaders at Wonderwood High School are doing what they feel is best for their students, however upon reviewing the data it does not seem that this is the case. As was mentioned previously, knowledge is power and it might be time for the educational leaders at Wonderwood to gain knowledge regarding the benefits of CTE, so that they can produce students who are truly college and career ready as well as possess the ability to advocate for themselves by exercising their own power to become productive, knowledgeable, and independent citizens.

Recommendation for Action

From the results of the study, it is clear that the graduates of Wonderwood High School believe CTE is an integral part of a student's education as well as a necessity for preparing them for their future plan(s). However, the opinion is not formed until a student graduates and is thrusted into the post-secondary arena where they quickly determine how inadequately prepared, they are. In addition, they identify the CTE opportunities that were kept from them and would have provided the tools necessary to navigate in the "real world." I hope this study will elevate the value of CTE at Wonderwood in the eyes of the students, teachers, administrators, counselors, parents…etc. in the following ways.

Regarding the students and parents of Wonderwood High School, you must become an active/self-aware participant in the education process. Dymnicki et al. (2013) stated that "self-awareness…involves the ability to make accurate self-judgements." (p. 2) Many of the interviewees in the study stated that they allowed their courses to be selected for them and never questioned the recommendations provided by their counselors/teachers. Thus consenting, as defined by Cusick (1983), to allowing those in power to apply the curriculum to maintain order instead of using it to provide students with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in society. Furthermore, Saul (1992) spoke on the idea of knowledge being viewed as a possession that can be used or controlled. Unfortunately, at Wonderwood High School knowledge is being both exploited and managed by those in power due to the students and parents not advocating for themselves thus failing to possess and employ knowledge to create an educational program-of-study that aligns to their post-secondary options. In addition to the students and parents becoming active participants in the educational process lies the

responsibilities of the counselors, teachers, and administrators to gain specific education on how they can assist all students in discovering their post-secondary path. This will require professional development on topics of internal bias, student equity and CTE curriculum/programs to offset the negative ramifications of social reproduction and hidden curriculum. For example, in Georgia there are incentives for schools to have students participate in AP courses over DE thus leading counselors, administrators and teachers to push students into this path. In conjunction to those in power obtaining this education will be the process of the decision makers listening to what the students' want/need and not simply falling back on their old way of thinking and merely placing the students into a preconceived educational plan that society states that the student should be placed into. The role they play as an educator is vital to the success of every student. In fact, the level of student interaction with their teacher plays a fundamental part in their achievement and social competence (Thijs et. al., 2008). In fact, "teachers who serve as adult mentors…can impact youths' personal, academic, and social development through strong relationships." (Loera et. al., 2013, p. 175) Furthermore, students are much more likely to lower their level of engagement in both school and post-secondary planning when they lack a connection to the adult mentors (Counselors, Teachers, Administrators…etc.) found within their school environment (Appleton et. al., 2008 and 2006). What ultimately seems to be the true call to action derived from the study aligns back to John Dewey's (1902) educational philosophy of designing a curriculum that develops a desire for learning and allowing students the ability to build a connection to both their educators and the curriculum they are studying. One way it can be accomplished is by those in power removing their preconceived notions of what they

believe is best for the student and instead presenting all of the curriculum opportunities available and working with the students through each option. It will also entail listening to the students and allowing them make decisions for themselves when it comes to their program-of-study. No matter how many times the selected path leads to a dead end. An individual can learn just as much from a mistake as from a success. We need to grant students the ability to use their time in school to find the path that will permit them to be successful in their post-secondary selections.

Implications

Looking at a broader view of the findings in terms of the preparation level the graduates felt as they enter a four-year institution signifies the larger change that needs to take place regarding Georgia's curriculum design. Legislatures eliminated what they felt was a segregated graduation plan to provide educational equity to the masses. However, what they failed to consider, when forming the college-for-all focus, was the realization that all students are different in terms of interests, abilities and both internal and external motivational factors which are outlined in the Model for Career Choice (Dick & Rallis, 1991). As a result, many students are graduating from secondary institutions, much like Wonderwood High School, without any real understanding or direction regarding the path to take once then enter their next educational institution. Which is why only 39 percent of Georgia students who enter a post-secondary institution will complete a degree program and the percentages are even lower for minority students with 22 percent of Latino and 32 percent of Black earning their degrees (Lee, 2019). It is clear from the findings of my study that the sole focus on the academic curriculum is not preparing all students to be successful upon graduation, thus the Georgia Department of Education

needs to reexamine their diploma track. Resulting in a variety of educational pathways that will allow for the exploration and the ultimate selection of a graduation strategy that will align to their future plan(s). Whether the student's blueprint includes going straight into the workforce (Employ), attending either a two-year or four-year institution (Enroll) or joining our military forces (Enlist). All tracks will still include a set of core academic standards, but the difference will be that the CTE programs, pathways and objectives will be aligned therefore allowing the students the opportunity to gain the academic knowledge in terms of how it relates to their possible career path. As a result, you will see the disparities between students of all races start to diminish as they graduate with the tools/skills required to be competitive citizens prepared to enter the next phase of their lives.

Additionally, if students and parents become active participants in their education the likelihood of graduating students who are college and career ready will increase. The growth will come from the students gaining the knowledge needed to make their own decisions regarding their post-secondary plan. Once they obtain the knowledge and find their voice it will allow them to break free from the idea of social reproduction and limit the influence and dependency of the dominant educational decision makers. Education at Wonderwood High School will then be able to align to John Dewey's (1916) concept of educational development where the educators do what is best for the child.

The results of the study mirrors CTE's historical progression as a curriculum that can provide guidance to all students but has been targeted to a specific group, such as the lower socio-economic or minority students who are viewed as not possessing the academic ability to participate in the more rigorous scholastic courses. As a result,

students are being denied the vital part of their education that provides the purpose

behind why they need to learn the curriculum. Thus, perpetuating the idea of critical

theorists that knowledge equates to power and the ability of those in power to influence

society as a whole. Resulting in the idea of "positive knowledge" as defined by Cusick

(1983) where the 2008 diploma restructuring legislation, spearheaded by educational law

makers (those in power), ignored the individual needs of the students, and instead

developed a curriculum designed to maintain order. The graduates of Wonderwood High

School exemplify a larger deficiency in our educational system, where we are ignoring

the needs/voices of students in favor of maintaining an educational structure that we

believe is best for them. Students enter the school building everyday carrying the

pressures and labels placed upon them by society, educators, and their families. We then

push upon them the idea that they must do their best in every course, participate in extra-

curricular activities, complete community service projects all with the expectation that it

will grant them acceptance into a four-year institution and lead to a "successful" life.

However, this is the issue at hand, we are telling the students what they will do instead of

asking them what they would like to do. Hence the 10 out of 13 Wonderwood

graduates/participants who were automatically placed into the next course within their

sequence by their counselors without any input from them.

Recommendations for Further Research

A few suggestions are proposed for future studies. First, I believe it would be

beneficial to conduct an ethnographic study with a current CTE and Non-CTE minority

student at Wonderwood High School. Ethnographic qualitative studies "…focus on

human society and culture." (Merriam, 2009, p. 27) The results revealed how

societal/cultural influences were impacting the students' participation in CTE programs and this form of qualitative research will allow a research the ability to immerse themselves into the lives of these students as they progress through Wonderwood. Thus, identifying the beliefs, values and attitudes towards CTE curriculum/programs as well as where these factors are originating. Second, from the data collected during the interviews, it is apparent how the Non-CTE faculty and staff perceive CTE at Wonderwood, however, I think it would be significant to determine if the perception is held by the majority or only a select few. As a result, I would suggest conducting the study utilizing focus groups divided by departments to include English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Counselors…etc. Patton (2002) stated, "the object is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others." (p. 386) The results could identify the misconceptions each department possesses regarding CTE and provide the administrators the ability to demonstrate the commonalities between the various departments and CTE to begin to form the curriculum partnership (CTE and Academics).

Research Experience

In performing research on the history of CTE as well as the foundations of education, critical theory, and Georgia Department of Education Legislation, I am enlightened to the idea and purpose of education. There has been obvious manipulation to control the masses. As an educator I am disheartened to learn this fact, but at the same time also grateful for the knowledge I have gained. The study has taught me more about myself and my preconceived notions about both CTE and the academic/liberal arts. As well as how my passion for CTE could cause me to discourage a student from taking AP

course in favor of DE much like many of the counselors and teachers of Wonderwood High.

When I began my career as an CTE educator I immediately saw the benefits the various programs and pathways could have on students who were trying to construct their future. However, what I also quickly understood was the fact that my opinions about the CTE curriculum were not shared by the students in my classroom nor my academic co-workers. I was teaching the elective courses that were viewed as non-essential and less rigorous or "easy" as the students would describe them. I made it my mission to change this way of thinking in my students and show them the true impact CTE can have on preparing them for their adult lives. As a result, my pathway and CTSO turned into the largest at my school with one of my students even earning a state office. I really thought that I was making a difference and instilling in my students the skills that they could apply to all aspects of their lives. To a certain degree, I know I positively impacted many of my students, but what about those students that I missed. Did they discover their future plan(s)? Are they still looking for their path to success? These are questions that never occurred to me until I conducted this study.

Earlier in my work I mentioned the adage of "you can't know where you're going until you know where you've been." I would also offer the same advice to future researchers. To implement real change in your school, district, county, state…etc. you must first understand the historical implications that have led to the current issue, which has never been more relevant than in today's climate. Groups that have been historically marginalized are finding their voices and using our nation's history as examples of the change that needs to occur. After conducting my research, I realized how our educational

system mirrors and contributes to the injustices plaguing our society. The study was formed out of my simple desire to instill the importance of CTE to the students of Hope County, however the final product identified so much more.

Discussion Summary: What Does it all Mean?

The devaluation of Career Technical Education (CTE) by the graduates of Wonderwood High School is the title for my study and aligns to the historical view of CTE by both the past and current educational decision makers. Through the implementation of various educational legislative changes, like those that took place in Georgia in 2008, CTE has garnished a perceived value as a lesser path for students to pursue. The focus is on preparing students for a four-year degree with the option of having students enroll in CTE programs/pathways or what some educators might call "filler courses." Meaning the "elective" courses that you took in-between your core academics and do not impact either your graduation status or your college entrance GPA. However, the graduates of Wonderwood High School actually have a rather positive view of CTE that is formed after entering their post-secondary institutions and having the opportunity to reflect back on their secondary educational experience, specifically nineth through twelfth grade. The lack of awareness, while the graduates were attending Wonderwood, was examined through the two themes identified from the data analysis: Theme 1. Graduates' awareness of CTE curriculum's value and purpose; and Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE. Additionally, the curriculum studies' theories of critical theory, curriculum design/development, positive knowledge, power, social reproduction, and hidden curricula influenced the development of the themes.

In reviewing the data for each theme, I was able to identify the various factors that were hindering the students of Wonderwood from understanding the value of CTE while they are currently enrolled. The factors included: academic focus, inaccurate information, curriculum perception, control, educational influences, self-advocacy, and educational purpose. Which then led me to make the following recommendations to the students, parents, teachers, administrators and counselors of Wonderwood High School in an attempt to lift up the perceived value of CTE.

Teachers, administrators, and counselors the relationship you form with the students of Wonderwood are fashioned under the umbrella of trusting that you are doing what is best for them, which can only come from listening to the students and ensuring that your expectations of what their future will entail aligns to what they themselves are picturing. It is our job to provide students with the knowledge required to make decisions regarding the education they need to be successful in their future. It begins with providing each student with all available options and not only those that fit your preconceived ideas of valuable to their post-secondary preparation. Next, to the students and parents of Wonderwood, utilize your voice to create the educational path you or your student will lead. The process will entail asking questions of the teachers, counselors, administrators, district personnel…etc. to ensure that you are aware of all the opportunities afforded, so that you can make the decision that is best for your future. It is ok to make a mistake, you will learn from it and the knowledge will lead you to make an even more informed decision.

Upon completing my study, I identified additional questions left unanswered and determined that there were further studies that could be conducted. These include

revealing how current students and parents of Wonderwood High School perceive the value of CTE and its influence on their future. Also, I believe one could conduct a study to determine the perception of CTE from the Non-CTE faculty and staff of Wonderwood High School. However, the advice I would give to any researcher who would like to continue the work is to know the historical implications of the issue you are attempting to study. By understanding the history that led to your research topic you will then be able to start to foster the change our students need.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In 2008 Georgia educational leaders removed the option for students to pursue a

CTE diploma in an effort to provide equity and job market competitiveness to all students

regardless of their socio-economic status. All Georgia students would now be required to

complete the same program-of-study focused primarily on the academic core subjects with CTE

becoming a pathway option alongside Fine Arts, AP and World Languages. The transition was

not a surprise for CTE leaders as historically CTE has been viewed as an alternative education

formed to provide financial stability to minority students. Throughout its inception, educational

theorists such as: Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, John Dewey, David Snedden and

Charles Prosser saw the implementation of CTE as beneficial. However, all viewed it as separate

from the Academic/Liberal curriculum whereas its true advantages are produced when it is

partnered with academics and provides students with both the theory and practical application of

the concepts they learn throughout secondary education.

As a former CTE instructor and now administrator I was interested in how current graduates

view the perceived value of completing a CTE pathway as well as how they would describe

 the curriculum objectives and their relationship to their future plans. In order to determine the previously mentioned information, I conducted a critical qualitative study of 13 graduates from Wonderwood High School in South Heights, Georgia. Prior to conducting the study, I did have a perception of what the results would produce. I believed that the graduates would not see any value in the CTE curriculum and view it as an elective course that they could contribute minimal effort and earn a passing grade. Additionally, they would fail to see a connection between the CTE objectives and programs and their impact on their future plans.

I conducted in-depth phone interviews that were then transcribed by applying Reid's (1992) three phases of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). From the transcriptions I was able to identify two overarching themes: Theme 1. Graduates' awareness of CTE curriculum's value and purpose; and Theme 2. Cultural/Societal influences impacting the graduates' participation in CTE. The results indicated that 100% of graduates did see value in CTE and 77% believed one of greatest benefits of the CTE curriculum was that it allowed for career exploration. However, the perception was not formed until after the interviewees graduated and entered their post-secondary institutions. The factors that led to the graduates devaluing CTE while they attended Wonderwood were skills attainment, AP vs. DE, misinformation from the Non-CTE faculty and staff as well as the GaDOE school evaluation measures. The results for how the graduates viewed the CTE objectives and programs was based on whether the participant was a CTE or Non-CTE completer. A 100% of the CTE completers believed that CTE impacted their post-secondary readiness while only 33% of the Non-CTE completers felt this way. Cultural/societal implications of predetermined course selection,

lack of the student's voice, power dynamics, unintentional racial bias, social reproduction and the use of hidden curricula were identified as the influences that led the Non-CTE completers from connecting CTE and post-secondary readiness. Upon analyzing the data and identifying the factors that led to the students' perceptions of the value of CTE, it is imperative that the teachers, administrators and counselors utilize their roles as educators to truly inform the students and parents of Wonderwood of all curriculum options available and not simply those that they believe will be beneficial. However, education is a two-way exchange in which the students and parents of Wonderwood must also become active participants in their educational process. The practice includes asking questions, fighting for the classes they would like to take and trying something new even if it requires some hard work. As the results of the study identified how graduates of Wonderwood High School view the value of CTE and its impact on their post-secondary plan additional studies were identified to include detecting how current students, parents and Non-CTE faculty and staff of Wonderwood interpret CTE. Nevertheless, I hope my study has provided an insight into the benefits of CTE and how we as educators must be champions of all curricula, so that we can produce graduates who are college and career ready.

REFERENCES

2012 College and Career Performance Index (CCRPI). (2015, June). Retrieved on June 1, 2015 from http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/2012/ccrpi2012.aspx

2014 College and Career Performance Index (CCRPI). (2015, June). Retrieved on June 1, 2015 from http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/2014/

Aldrich, R. (1996). History of education. *in Education and cultural transmission*, ed. J. Sturm, J. Dekker, R. Aldrich, and F. Simon, 47–64. Gent: CSHP.

Aldrich, R. (2006). *Lessons from history of education*. London: Routledge.

Apple, Michael W. 1979. *Ideology and Curriculum.* London: Routledge. pp. 63–64.

Apple, M. W. (1995). *Education and Power.* New York: NY: Routledge.

Apple, M. W. (2001). Educating the "right" way: Markets, standards. *God and inequality*.

Appleton, J. J., Christenson, L. S., & Furlong, J. L. (2008). Student engagement with school: Critical conceptual and methodological issues of the construct. *Psychology in the Schools*, *45*(5), 369-386. DOI: 10.1002/pits.2030

Appleton, J. J., Christenson, L. S., Kim, D., & Reschly, L. A. (2006). Measuring cognitive and psychological engagement: Validity of the student engagement instrument. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44*, 427-445. DOI: 10.1016/j.jsp.2006.04.002

Association for Career and Technical Education. (2012, March). *Georgia CTE State Profile.* Retrieved from http://www.acteonline.org/profile_ga.aspx.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (2013, April). A Nation At Risk?. Retrieved from

http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/policypoints/policypoints-a-nation-at-risk.pdf

Barton, P. E., & Coley, R. J. (2011). The Mission of the High School: A New Consensus of the Purposes of Public Education? Policy Information Perspective. *Educational Testing Service*.

Bell Jr, D. A. (1979). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harv. L. Rev.*, *93*, 518.

Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. *Pathfinder International Tool Series.* Retrieved October 29, 2012, from http://www.esf-agentschap.be/uploadedFiles/Voor_ESF_promotoren/Zelfevaluatie_ESF-project/m_e_tool_series_indepth_interviews.pdf

Brancaleone, D., & O'Brien, S. (2011). Educational commodification and the (economic) sign value of learning outcomes. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *32*(4), 501-519.

Clare Boothe Luce Policy Institute. (2012, March). *A Brief History of Education in America*. Retrieved from

https://www.cblpi.org/sites/default/files/EdHistory_0.pdf

Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, Cardinal principles of secondary education Bulletin, 1918, No. 35, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office

Cope, D. G. (2014). Methods and meanings: Credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research. In *Oncology nursing forum* (Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 89-91).

Cresswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

De Castell, S. (1996). On finding one's place in the text: literacy as a technology of self-formation. *JCT: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, *12 (4),* 27-31.

deMarrais, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. deMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), Foundations for research (pp. 51-68). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Denzin, N. K. (2017). Critical qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 8–16.

Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dewey, J. (1914). On industrial education. *Curriculum Inquiry. 7*(1) Spring, 53-60.

Dewey, J. (1915). Education vs. trade-training. *Curriculum Inquiry, 7*(1). Spring, p. 53-60.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education.* New York, NY: Macmillian.

Dick, T.P., Rallis, S.F. (1991). Factors and influences on high school students' career choices. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 22*(4), pp.281-292.

Dounay, J. (2007). *High School Graduation Requirements: Technology, Career/Tech, Oral Communications, Life Management Skills, Community Service and Others.* Retrieved April 1, 2012 from Education Commission of the States: http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=907

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903a). *The Souls of Black Folks.* Chicago, IL: A. C. McClurg & Co.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903b). *The Talented Tenth.* Unpublished Manuscript. Retrieved from

http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=174

Dymnicki, A., Sambolt, M., & Kidron, Y. (2013). Improving college and career readiness

by incorporating social and emotional learning. *College and Career Readiness*

and Success Center.

European Commission (2020, May). *Key features of the Education System.* Retrieved

from https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/finland_en

Federal Education Budget Project. (2014, April). Retrieved from New America

Foundation: http://febp.newamerica.net/background-analysis/no-child-left-

behind-overview

Fine, M., Burns, A., Payne, Y., & Torre, M. (2004). Civic Lessons: The color and class of

betrayal. *Teachers College Record, 106*, 2193-2223.

Firestone, W. A. (1987). Meaning in method: the rhetoric of quantitative and qualitative

research. *Educational Researcher*, 16(7), 16-21.

Georgia Department of Education (2012a, March). *Foundation Skills.* Retrieved from

http://gadoe.georgiastandards.org/DMGetDocument.aspx/Phase%20II%20Founda

tion%20Skills.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F6B8E34AFE685E8730546DC100C96C

D0E0A64E03C20FB11D42&Type=D

Georgia Department of Education, (2012b, April). *160-4-2-.48 High school graduation*

requirements for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in the

2008-09 school year and subsequent years. Retrieved from

http://www.gsfc.org/main/publishing/pdf/2009/Grad_Guidance.pdf

Georgia Department of Education. (2014, October). Marketing. Retrieved on October 18,

    2014 from http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-

    Assessment/CTAE/Pages/cluster-marketing.aspx

Georgia Department of Education. (2015, May). College and Career Ready Performance

    Index. Retrieved on May 4, 2015 from

    http://www.gadoe.org/CCRPI/Pages/default.aspx

Georgia Department of Education. (2018). Annual Report 2018. Retrieved from

    https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-

    Assessment/CTAE/Documents/CTAE-Annual-Report-2018.pdf

Georgia Department of Education. (2019). Central High School College and Career

    Ready Performance Index. Retrieved on November 15, 2019 from

    http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/Reports/Views/Shared/_Layout.html

Georgia Department of Education. (2020, May). College and Career Ready Performance

    Index. Retrieved on May 20, 2020 from

    https://www.gadoe.org/CCRPI/Pages/default.aspx

Georgia Student Finance Commission. (2013, November). Georgia's Hope Program.

    Retrieved on November 3, 2013 from

    https://www.gsfc.org/gsfcnew/HopeProgramm.cfm

Giroux, H. (1988). *Teachers as Intellectuals*. New York, NY; Bergin & Garvey

    Publishers, Inc.

Gordon, H. R. D. (2008). *The history and growth of Career and Technical Education in*

    America (3rd Ed.). Long Grove, IL; Waveland.

Governor's Office of Students Achievement. (2020). *Georgia School Grades Reports.*

Retrieved from https://schoolgrades.georgia.gov/bibb-county

Graduating from a Georgia Public High School. (2009). Retrieved on April 1, 2012 from

Georgia Career Information Center:

http://www.gcic.peachnet.edu/IPCU/gradfromhs2011MAIN.htm

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1981). *Effective evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hainmüller, B. (2003). The Educational Structure of the German School System.

Teachers Training College, Offenburg, Germany.

Hall, G. S. (1904) *Adolescence: its psychology and its relations to physiology,*

anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education, New York: D.

Appleton.

Hill, D. (2012). Fighting neoliberalism with education and activism. *Philosophers for*

Change, *1*.

Hodges, T. (2015). *Career and Technical Education Should Be the Rule, Not the*

Exception. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/181922/career-

technical-education-rule-not-exception.aspx

Honigmann, J.J. (1982). Sampling in ethnographic fieldwork. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.),

Field research: A sourcebook and field manual (pp. 79-90). London: Allen &

Unwin.

Hope, E. C., Skoog, A. B., & Jagers, R. J. (2015). "It'll never be the white kids, it'll

always be us" black high school students' evolving critical analysis of racial

discrimination and inequity in schools. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *30*(1),

83-112.

Horkheimer, M. (1937). *Traditional and Critical Theory*. New York: Herder & Herder.

Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: Seabury Press.

Hughes, K. L., Rodriguez, O., Edwards, L., & Belfield, C. (2012). *Broadening the benefits of dual enrollment: Reaching underachieving and underrepresented students with career- focused programs.* New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Hursh, D. (2005). Neo-liberalism, markets and accountability: Transforming education and undermining democracy in the United States and England. *Policy Futures in Education*, *3*(1), 3-15.

Kamm, B., & Lerman, R. (2015) *The skills initiative: Expanding apprenticeships in the U.S. – Lessons from the German dual education system.* Washington, DC: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Retrieved from https://www.germany.info/blob/649542/35e0d1e2c95155704105b9013dd279bb/skills-whitepaper-data.pdf

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). *Critical Constructivism Primer.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Kliebard, H. M. (1995). The Cardinal Principles Report as Archeological Deposit. *Curriculum Studies*, *3*(2), 197-208.

Lanford, M., Maruco, T., & Tierney, W. G. (2015). Prospects for Vocational Education in the United States: Lessons from Germany. *Pullias Center for Higher Education*.

LeCompte, M.D., & Preissle, J., & Tesch, R. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research.* (2nd ed.). Orlando, FL. Academic Press.

Lee, J. (2019). *2019 Georgia Higher Education Data Book.* Retrieved from The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute website: https://gbpi.org/georgia-higher-education-data-book-2019/

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 163-188). Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.

Loera, G., Nakamoto, J., Oh, Y. J., & Rueda, R. (2013). Factors that promote motivation and academic engagement in a career technical education context. *Career and Technical Education Research*, *38*(3), 173-190.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCulloch, G. & Richardson, W. (2000). *Historical research in educational settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

McLaren, P. (2016). *Pedagogy of Insurrection: From Resurrection to Revolution*. New York: Peter Lang.

Meece, J.L., Parsons, J. E., Kaczala, C. M., Goff, S. B., & Futterman, R. (1982). Sex differences in math achievement: Toward a model of academic choice. *Psychological Bulletin*, 91, 324-348.

Meeder, H. (2006). *Reinventing the American High School for the 21st Century*. Washington D.C., Association for Career and Technical Education. p. 4.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass.

Mertens, D. M., Holmes, H. M., & Harris, R. L. (2009). Transformative research and ethics. In D. M. Mertens & P. E. Ginsberg (Eds.), *The handbook of social research ethics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mirel, J. (2006). The Traditional High School: Historical Debates over Its Nature and Function. *Education Next*, *6*(1), 14-21.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform : a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education.* Washington, D.C.: The Commission.

Newmann, F. M., Wehlage, G. G. & Lamborn, S. D. (1992). The significance and sources of student engagement. In F. M. Newmann (Ed.), *Student engagement and achievement in American secondary schools* (pp.11-39). New York: Teachers College Press.

Nunn, L. M. (2014). *Defining student success: the role of school and culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). (2007). From There to Here: The Road to Reform of American High Schools. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hsinit/papers/index.html?exp=3

Olssen, M., & Peters, M. A. (2005). Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: From the free market to knowledge capitalism. *Journal of Education Policy*, *20*(3), 313-345.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018), *Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/eag-2018-en.

Patrick, F. (2013). Neoliberalism, the knowledge economy, and the learner: Challenging the inevitability of the commodified self as an outcome of education. *International Scholarly Research Notices*, *2013*.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Peters, M. A. (2003). Classical political economy and the role of universities in the new knowledge economy. *Globalisation, societies and education*, *1*(2), 153-168.

Peters, M. A., & Reveley, J. (2014). Retrofitting Drucker: Knowledge work under cognitive capitalism. *Culture and Organization*, *20*(2), 1-17.

Plank, S., DeLuca, S., & Estacion, A. (2005). *Dropping out of high school and the place of career and technical education: A survival analysis of surviving high school.* St. Paul, MN: National Research Center for Career and Technical Education.

Powell, W. W., & Snellman, K. (2004). The knowledge economy. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, *30*, 199-220.

Prosser, C. (1915). The Evolution of the Training of the Worker in Industry. *Proceedings of the National Education Association, Ann Arbor, MI, 53.*

Prosser, C. & Allen, C. (1925). *Vocational Education in a Democracy.* New York, NY: Century Co.

Prosser, C. & Quigley, T. H. (1949). *Vocational Education in a Democracy.* Chicago, IL: American Technical Society.

Reid, A. O., Jr. (1992). Computer management strategies for text data. In B. F. Crabtree & W. L. Miller (Eds.) *Doing qualitative research* (pp. 125-145). Vol. 3 London: Sage.

Rosenbaum, J. E. (2001). *Beyond College for All: Career Paths for the Forgotten Half*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Roulston, K. (2007). *Theorizing the qualitative interview*. Paper presented at the meeting of the 3rd International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL.

Saul, J. R. (1992). *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Schubert, W. H. (2009). Language, legacy, and love in curriculum. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 12*(1&2), 1-23.

Sirkin, H. L. (2013, April 29). What Germany can teach the U.S. about vocational education. *Bloomberg Business.* Retrieved from https://www.chennai.gis.com.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/What-Germany-Can-Teach-the-U.S.pdf

Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. (1998). Retrieved from: Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Retrieved on September 9, 2017. http://inet.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/VocEd/InfoBoard/2.html

Snedden, D. (1910). *The problem of vocational education.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Snedden, D. (1913). P*roblems of Educational Readjustment.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Society for Human Resource Management. *The Global Skills Shortage: Bridging the Talent Gap with Education, Training and Sourcing*. Alexandria, VA. Society for Human Resource Management.

Stetser, M. C., & Stillwell, R. (2014). Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010-11 and 2011-12. First Look. NCES 2014-391. *National Center for Education Statistics*.

Stone, J. R., III, & Alfeld, C. (2006). The neglected majority—Revisited. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, *21*, 61–74.

Stone, J. R., III, & Lewis, M. V. (2012). *College and career ready for the 21st century: Making high school matter*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

The Institute for College Access & Success. (2019). *Student debt and the class of 2018*. Retrieved from https://ticas.org/interactive-map/

Thijs, J., Koomen, H., & Leij, A. (2008). Teacher–child relationships and pedagogical practices: Considering the teacher's perspective. *School Psychology Review*, *37*, 244-260.

Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st Century Skills, Learning for Life in Our Times*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Tsogas, G. (2012). The commodity form in cognitive capitalism. *Culture and Organization*, *18*(5), 377-395.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). *Employment Projections-2018-2028* [USDL-19-1571], retrieved from Department of Labor; https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecopro.pdf

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Local Area Unemployment Statistics.* Retrieved

    from https://www.bls.gov/web/laus/lauhsthl.htm

U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). *2018: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables*. Retrieved from

    https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Georgia%20Education&tid=ACSST1Y201

    8.S1501&vintage=2018&hidePreview=false

U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, U.S. Census of Population: 1960, Vol. I,

    Part 1; J.K. Folger and C.B. Nam, Education of the American Population (1960

    Census Monograph); Current Population Reports, Series P-20, various years; and

    Current Population Survey (CPS), Annual Social and Economic Supplement,

    1970 through 2018.

United States Department of Education (2020a, May). The CTE Data Story. Retrieved on

    May 18, 2020 from https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/cte/index.html

United States Department of Education. (2020b, May). Mission. Retrieved on May 20,

    2020 from https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/mission/mission.html

Van Maanen, J. (1979). Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research: A

    preface. *Administrative Science Quarterly. 24(4)*, 520.

Washington, B. T. (1895). *1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech.* Unpublished manuscript.

    Retrieved from http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/

Washington, B. T. (1903). *Industrial Education for the Negro.* Unpublished manuscript.

    Retrieved from

    http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=62

Washington, B. T. (1904). *Working with the Hands.* New York, New York: Doubleday,

    Page and Company.

Washington, B. T. (1911). *My Larger Education: Being Chapters from my Experience.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company.

Whitten, David. "Depression of 1893″. EH.Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. August 14, 2001. URL http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-depression-of-1893/

Wiggins, G. (2011). A diploma worth having. *Educational Leadership*, *68*(6), 28-33.

APPENDIX

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

<u>Introduction:</u>

I want to thank you for taking the time to speak with me today about your experiences with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways and Programs when you attended Wonderwood High School. The interview should take one hour to complete. As a reminder, I will be taking electronic notes and taping the session to ensure that I capture all information accurately. Your name will not appear on either the notes or the recording. Because we are on tape, please be sure to speak up, so that I do not miss any of your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. In addition, I assure you that any information included in my research reports will not identify you as the respondent. There are eleven interview questions of which a few have multiple parts. If you need me to repeat a question, please let me know. Furthermore, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to, and you may end the interview at any time. Do you have any questions about what I have just explained? Let's begin.

<u>Interview Questions:</u>

1. When you attended Wonderwood High School, tell me about how you chose your courses? Did you feel you had input into your course selections? Why did you feel this way?

2. Wonderwood High School offers the following CTE pathways (Business & Technology, Entrepreneurship, Marketing Management and Web & Digital Design), did you feel that the CTE pathway options were limited? If not, why? If so, what CTE pathways would you have liked to see offered?

3. If you could talk to your high school Self, what would you tell yourself in regard to your course choices?

4. What educational opportunities do you feel you missed out on while attending Wonderwood High School? Why do you feel you missed out on these opportunities?

5. If you had a younger sibling attending Wonderwood High School, what would you do to ensure that your sibling does not miss out on those opportunities?

6. Tell me about your experiences with the Work-Based Learning Program? How did it impact your post-secondary plan? If you did not participate in the program, why not? Do you wish you had participated in the program? Why or why not?

7. Tell me about your experiences with the Dual Enrollment Program? How did it impact your post-secondary plan? If you did not participate in the program, why not? Do you wish you had participated in the program? Why or why not?

8. Do you feel that the CTE Pathways (Business & Technology, Entrepreneurship, Marketing Management and Web & Digital Design) and Programs (Work-Based Learning and Dual Enrollment) offered at Wonderwood High School added value to a student's education? Why or why not?

9. Can you tell me about a time when you were attending Wonderwood High School and questioned your future? What were your questions? Who did you turn to for guidance? How did they help to answer your questions?

10. When you graduated from Wonderwood High School, how prepared did you feel you were for your post-secondary plan? Why did you feel this way?

11. What impact did Wonderwood High School CTE Pathways and Programs have in how prepared you felt you were for your post-secondary plan? Today, are you where you thought you would be based on this level of preparation? Why did you feel this way?

I do not have any additional questions. Is there anything else you would like to add, or do you have any questions for me? This concludes the interview and I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me via email.