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Increasing Parents' Awareness on College Readiness

Jennifer Diaz

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

Increasing Parents' Awareness on College Readiness

Introduction

Attaining higher education can lead to more opportunities that result in a more stable life. However, individuals who are minorities or first generation may not understand the processes to attend college and may not be aware of the assistance available to make it possible to attend. In order to address the issue of the lack of knowledge about the college system, I will be delivering 2 day 40 minute information session regarding college to parents of the after school program LIFE, who serves children from K-8th grade in Salinas, California.

Need Statement

First generation American students face significant disadvantages in attending college. In addition, students who are first generation often times come from low income and ethnic minority families, which may not have a history of attending college (Engle, 2007). A major disadvantage for these students is that parents lack knowledge on navigating the education system (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005). Parents of first generation students may not have the resources to guide their children to pursue higher education or understand strategies for success in college (Engle, 2007). Engle (2007) noted that there is a range of challenges that first generation student face from lack of preparation to insufficient financial aid to absence of family involvement. These risk factors make it tough for a first generation student to get into college and successfully complete their educational goals.

There are multiple challenges being faced by individuals who are ethnic minorities or who are first generation college students. First generation students and individuals who come from a minority background typically attend high schools with fewer academic demands, which

may leave them unprepared for college (Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, Leonard, 2007). In addition, first generation students are less likely to take examinations needed to be accepted into a 4-year college (Inkelas et al., 2007). Another barrier for first generation students and ethnic minorities is the financial burden of attending college. College costs can be a determining factor for students who come from a low socioeconomic class when deciding to attend college. In order to pay for college, many individuals may have to work full time and or depend on exorbitant loans (Zarate & Fabienke, 2007). Zarate and Fabienke (2007) interviewed 1,210 Latino youth and their parents and found that 38% of youth were not aware of financial aid resources for college, and 51% of parents were not aware of financial aid resources for college. A significant number of parents and youth lack basic information on financial aid resources, presenting a barrier to educational attainment. Evidence suggests that parent knowledge as well as involvement has a greater influence than family income when pursuing higher education (McCarron et al., 2006). Parent involvement typically correlates with social capital. Social capital may be understood as resources accessible by individuals, that are available through social networks in order to accomplish specific goals (Hill, Bregman & Andrade, 2015). According to Furstenberg (2010), parents have different "amounts of social capital" that they pass on to their children (p. 281). If parents are more knowledgeable on how the education system works and have more resources available to them, it is more likely that their children will have greater support when pursuing higher education. In contrast, parents who lack resources and knowledge will not be able to provide this for their children. It is important to make college readiness skills available to parents of first generation students so they can guide their children.

Increasing parent awareness of college opportunities may be key to ethnic minority and first generation students successful entrance into college. For example, GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), a program that centers on providing skills needed to prepare for college to students from low socioeconomic neighborhoods, was found to benefit students by being more likely to attend college than their non-GEAR UP counterparts (Knaggs et al., 2015). Intervention programs that focus on parents can serve as resources for students who are minorities or who come from a low socioeconomic background. Many studies show parent involvement is a major component to a child's success. Perna and Titus (2005) stated that parent involvement serves as social capital for college enrollment in spite of resources available. Through providing basic information on college and financial aid, it can expand parent's knowledge resulting in better preparation and additional support for future first generation college students.

Ethnic minority families may benefit the most from interventions that inform them of the benefits of attaining higher education and the resources available for first generation students. The proposed project intends to target parents of students in an eastside Salinas after school program called LIFE (Life is For Everyone), which serves children ranging from TK through 8th grade. In an effort to increase awareness, it is essential to connect with parents about the importance of higher education, as this will create a supportive environment at home. Secondly, the project will inform parents of first generation students of the financial resources available as many times they do not see higher education as an option due to cost.

Theory Application

Vygotsky proposed that competent individuals serve a major role in assisting others through tasks they can not complete without guidance. Vygotsky asserted that the zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the distance between an individual's independent developmental abilities and an individual's developmental abilities with assistance of a more competent individual (Bodrova & Leong, 1998). Vygotsky's notion of a ZPD also influenced the idea of scaffolding. Scaffolding in the context of teaching and learning refers to guidance given to an individual by a peer until the individual no longer needs the help and can accomplish the task independently (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Vygotsky's notion of a ZPD and scaffolding apply to my project because by scaffolding parents they will better understand the college system and the financial resources available. Parents who have not attended college themselves are aware that the opportunity of receiving higher education is available, however they may not be familiar with the processes needed to get into college. In other words, parents who have not attended college can be said to be in the zone of proximal development because they need extra guidance on navigating the system. After receiving information on the college system, parents can then be more informed and seek further information if desired. As reported by the Latino Eligibility study, Auerbach (2004) points out that the most important obstacle to college access amongst Latinos in California is the lack of knowledge of the steps to go to college. Parents who have not attended college, often may only be able to offer indirect support for college (e.g., moral support) (Auerbach, 2004). By providing this information to parents it can get them to begin thinking about the steps for assisting their children to get into college. If they become familiar with the processes they can eventually offer direct support for college (e.g., assist with

college applications). I am creating a series of lessons with the intent of providing fundamental information on college to parents.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be implemented at an after school program in Salinas, California called Life is For Everyone. Life is For Everyone is an after school program that serves students ranging from 1st to 8th grade from the surrounding area in east Salinas. According to the California Health Interview Survey by the California Endowment (2011), 96% of the population in East Salinas is Latino. Because I have been part of the program, I am aware that most if not all of the students and families in the program are from a Latino descent. The participants reflect children from families who are socioeconomically disadvantaged because one of the program's goal is to provide academic support as well as a safe environment, specifically to at risk students. As a result, it is possible that students and their families may not be looking to pursue higher education because their focus is on earning an income immediately and not thinking about future job possibilities. Since the lessons will be in Spanish, the participants will have to be Spanish proficient in order to understand the presentation and to complete the survey at the end of the lesson. This project will include the participants of the after school program Life is For Everyone. Therefore the presentation on college and the discussions on college will not be available to other families who would also benefit from the content.

Learning Outcomes

I intend to provide two, 40 minute informational sessions to parents of students who attend the after school program LIFE (Life is for Everyone) in Salinas, California.

By the end of the program participants will:

1. Participants identify two advantages of achieving a higher education.
2. Participants identify two ways of paying for college.
3. Participants identify two different type of educational institutions.

Method

Day 1

I began by introducing myself and told the group of parents why I was there. I continued with a group activity called step into the circle. Step into the circle is an activity that focuses on highlighting similarities between individuals. I wanted parents to be aware of how similar or different their beliefs and experiences are to one another. I asked parents to position themselves in a circle, then I read five statements associated with education, one at a time. See Appendix A. I instructed parents to step into the circle if the statement was true for them and if it was not true to remain standing still. After the activity, I pointed out the similarities between the parents based on the statements. After about 8 minutes, I began a PowerPoint presentation on the benefits of college and the types of colleges. See Appendix B. I answered questions as they came up. At the end of the PowerPoint, I again asked if they were any questions. At the conclusion, I had a group discussion with the parents and I asked them to tell me the benefits of attending higher education. As parents responded, I wrote their answers down on a whiteboard. When parents were done naming the benefits of attending college, I asked if they agreed with what was on the whiteboard. After a short discussion, I thanked them for coming to the presentation and asked if they could fill out a survey based on the information presented to them. See Appendix C.

Day 2

On day 2, I gave parents a raffle ticket for CSUMB merchandise as they were walking in. Then, I started by reminding parents of my name and why I was there. I continued from where I left off the first day. I told parents the cost of attending different institutions per year. After revealing the costs, I emphasized that there is financial help available for students. I shared my personal story on how I paid for college using financial resources available. Then, I presented a PowerPoint on financial resources available to pay for college. See Appendix D. At the end of the PowerPoint, I asked if there were questions or comments. After the PowerPoint I instructed parents to share one thing they learned with another parent. After about 3 minutes, I asked if anyone wanted to share what they had discussed. I then, thanked parents for coming and giving up time to be there and I began the CSUMB merchandise raffle. I concluded the session by giving out a survey. See Appendix E.

Results

Learning outcome 1 was that participants would identify two advantages of attending higher education. This learning outcome was met. After the presentation on the advantages of achieving higher education, we proceeded to having a group discussion and recording the participants responses. They were able to name more than two advantages. Altogether, they were able to name 11 advantages of attending higher education. The participants stated that some advantages of achieving higher education were stability, more employment and better communication. The participants were aware of the importance of education and the advantages of completing higher schooling from the presentation and from their own experiences. See table 1 for what they said and for the translation of their responses.

Learning outcome 2 was that participants would identify two educational institutions. After my presentation on the types of colleges in California, the participants were given a survey

based on the information presented to them. The survey included two short answers and six true or false questions. All of the participants answered the short questions correctly, meaning they were able to identify two different types of educational institutions. The average score was a 95%. Although some participants did not answer all the true or false questions correctly, they were able to name two types of colleges, and therefore, demonstrate meeting the learning outcome. However, after discussing the questions they had missed with them, I realized it was clarification that they needed. For example, one of the participants believed the Spanish word used in the survey for bachelor degree was master degree; therefore, she answered the question incorrectly. In conclusion, these results support that learning outcome 2 was met. See table 2.

Learning outcome 3 was that participants would identify two ways to pay for college. The learning outcome was met because all the participants answered all the questions on the survey correctly. The participants were given a survey based on my presentation on financial aid resources for college. The survey included two short answer questions and six true or false questions. The two short questions asked the participants to name two ways to pay for college. The six true or false questions focused on the differences between the ways of paying for college. The surveys demonstrated that the participants were able to identify ways of paying for college and understood the differences between the various forms of paying for college available. After telling parents that scholarships were available for diverse reasons. Parents were shocked that so much money was available. One parent stated that it is important to look for different resources such as scholarships because she did not know scholarships and grants were available, she believed college had to be paid out of pocket or with loans. See table 3.

Discussion

I feel this project was successful. The participants demonstrated that they value education through their participation and eagerness to learn about the topic. The results of the project showed that the participants were able to understand the college system with extra guidance. Parents answered most of the survey questions correctly which focused on the different types of colleges and financial aid resources. Through the results I was able to see that parents understood the information even though most of the information was new to them. One of the parents asked what I meant when I said that transferring to a university after going to a community college was an option. I explained what transferring to a university meant, she was then able to answer the survey question regarding this information correctly. As stated by Lev Vygotsky, scaffolding is the support given when an individual cannot accomplish a task independently and can be used to help an individual accomplish a task. In this case, I am scaffolding parents to help them understand the processes of attending higher education. I believe the most significant information for the participants was the presentation on the different educational institutions. Many of the participants believed every college was the same. They presented interest when I spoke about the differences in degrees and requirements for different careers and even asked questions. The participants also asked questions about the cost of different colleges; therefore, when I presented information on the different ways of paying for college they were attentive.

In regards to diversity, the project focused on working with parents of first generation students who spoke Spanish; therefore, it was limited to a specific group. I also presumed that the participants saw higher education as priority for their children. It could be that some participants were interested in working instead of attending college or were simply not interested in continuing their education.

In the future, I would want to give a pretest and posttest to see how much the participants learned from my presentation. I would also want to incorporate hands on activities related to college that would allow the parents to engage more. For example, I believe playing a game such as college term bingo would allow participants to learn through an interactive activity. I would also want to do more sessions in shorter increments because it was quite a lot of information for the participants to comprehend and retain. The participants demonstrated they understood the information but I am not sure if they would be able to retain the information. By having more sessions, the information would be reinforced every session and it would be more likely that they would retain the information. Overall, I believe the participants learned information that was new to them. It was rewarding to be able to introduce such important information to the parents of future first generation students.

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Table 1

Results of the discussion on the advantages of attending higher education

Advantages of achieving higher education	Responses in spanish
Better retirement plans	Mejores planes de retiro
More open to diversity	Más abierto a la diversidad
Better life	Mejor vida
Better health benefits	Mejor beneficios de salud
Better income	Mejor salario
More employment	Mas empleo
More opportunities	Mas oportunidades
Better communication	Mejor comunicación
stability	estabilidad
Lower employment rate	Desempleo es más bajo
Professional relationships	Relaciones profesionales

Table 2

Table of results for post-test

Questions #1 & #2 Indicate two types of educational institutions	% correct
	100%
True or false questions	
Questions #3 Community colleges offer lower tuition rates.	87%
Question #4 Community colleges offer bachelor, master and doctorate degrees.	100%
Question #5 You can transfer to a university after receiving an associate degree from a community college.	87%
Question #6 To obtain a bachelor degree, it takes approximately four years at a university.	87%
Question #7 Hartnell college is a community college.	100%
Question #8	100%

California State University Monterey Bay is a community college.	
Average score	95%

Table 3

Table of results for posttest

Questions #1 & #2 Indicate two ways to pay for college.	% correct
	100%
True or False questions	
Question #3 FAFSA is an application for students to receive financial help from the federal government.	100%
Question #4 Loans are money that does not need to be paid back.	100%
Question #5 Scholarships are money that does not need to be paid back.	100%
Question #6 Fafsa basis their amount of money offered on each family's income.	100%
Question #7 It is not necessary to apply for scholarships in order to	100%

receive them.	
Question #8 October 1st is the first day FAFSA can be completed.	100%
Average score	100%

Appendix A

Step into the circle statements

1. Step into the circle if you think education is important.

   Entra al círculo si crees que la educación es importante.

2. Step into the circle if you think everyone should have the opportunity to go to college.

   Entra al círculo si crees que todos deben tener la oportunidad de ir al colegio.

3. Step into the circle if you want your child to have more of an education than you did.

   Entra al círculo si usted quiere que su hijo o hija obtenga más educación de la que usted obtuvo.

4. Step into the circle if you worry about how you and your family will pay for college.

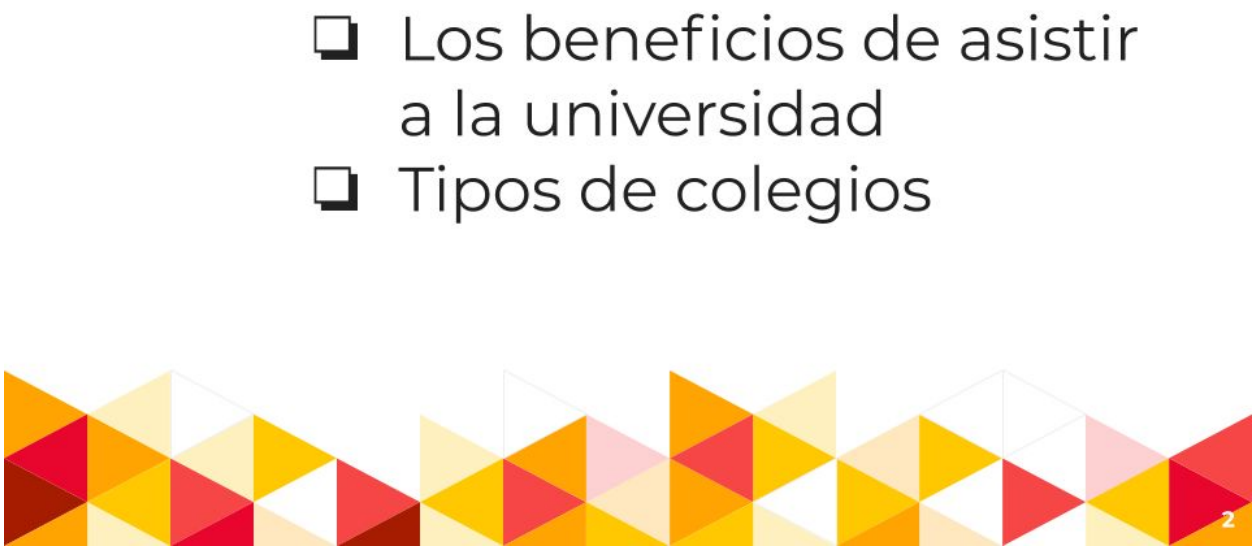
   Entra al círculo si usted se preocupa de cómo va a pagar el colegio de su hijo o hija.

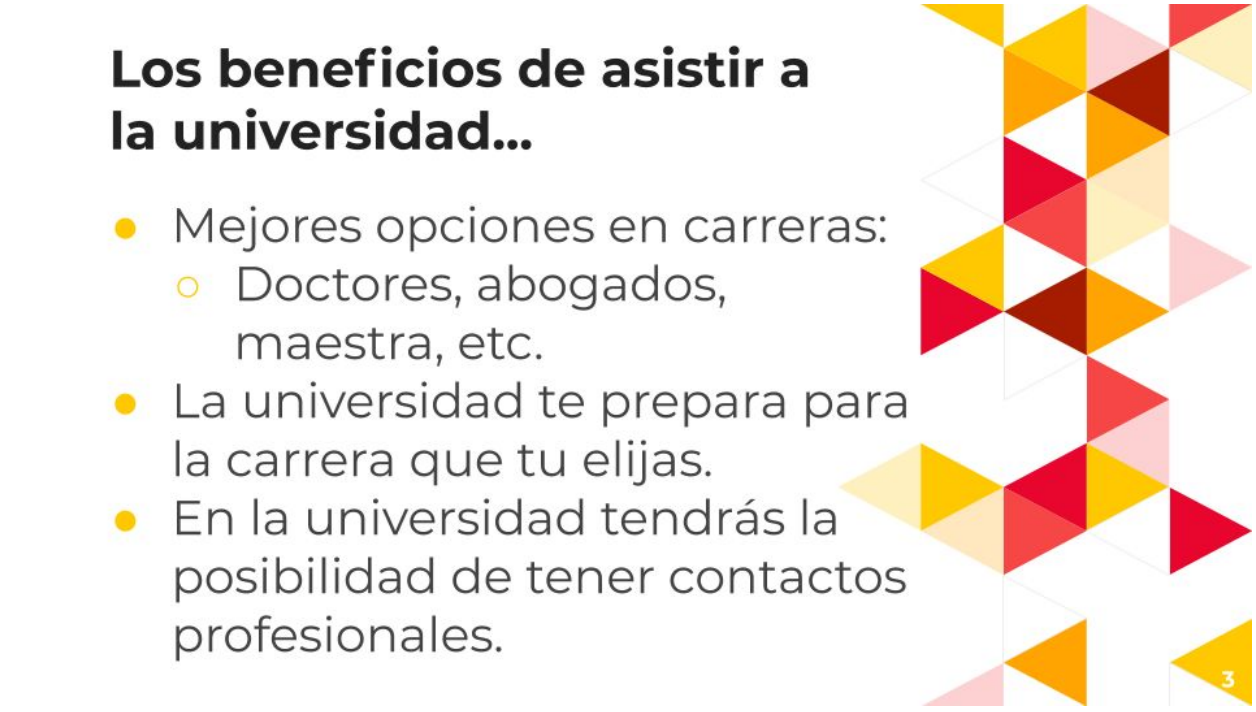
5. Step into the circle if you want to help your children get into college.

   Entra al círculo si usted quiere ayudar a su hijo o hija atender la universidad.

Appendix B

Presentation on benefits of college and types of college


❑ Los beneficios de asistir a la universidad
❑ Tipos de colegios
2


Los beneficios de asistir a la universidad...
Mejores opciones en carreras:
Doctores, abogados, maestra, etc.
La universidad te prepara para la carrera que tu elijas.
En la universidad tendrás la posibilidad de tener contactos profesionales.
3

Los beneficios de asistir a la universidad...

- Las personas que se gradúan de la universidad consiguen trabajos con mejores salarios.
- Desempleo es más bajo

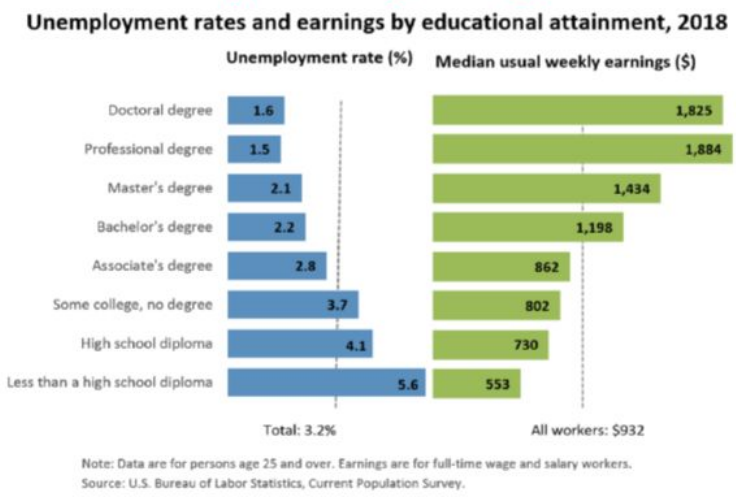
4

Los graduados universitarios reciben mejores beneficios

- Las carreras que pagan más requieren un título universitario.
- Los trabajos para graduados universitarios incluyen mejores beneficios (seguro de salud y planes de retiro).
- La universidad ayuda a formar a las personas para que sean más sociables y abiertos a la diversidad.

5

Porcentajes de desempleo y ingreso



Tipos de colegios

- Colegio Comunitario
- Universidad Estatal de California
- Universidad de California
- Universidades Privadas

7

Colegios comunitario

- También ofrecen títulos y certificados que se enfocan en preparación para una carrera específica. Ejemplos de colegios comunitarios:
  - ➢ Hartnell college.
  - ➢ Monterey Peninsula College.

9

Universidad Estatal de California

10

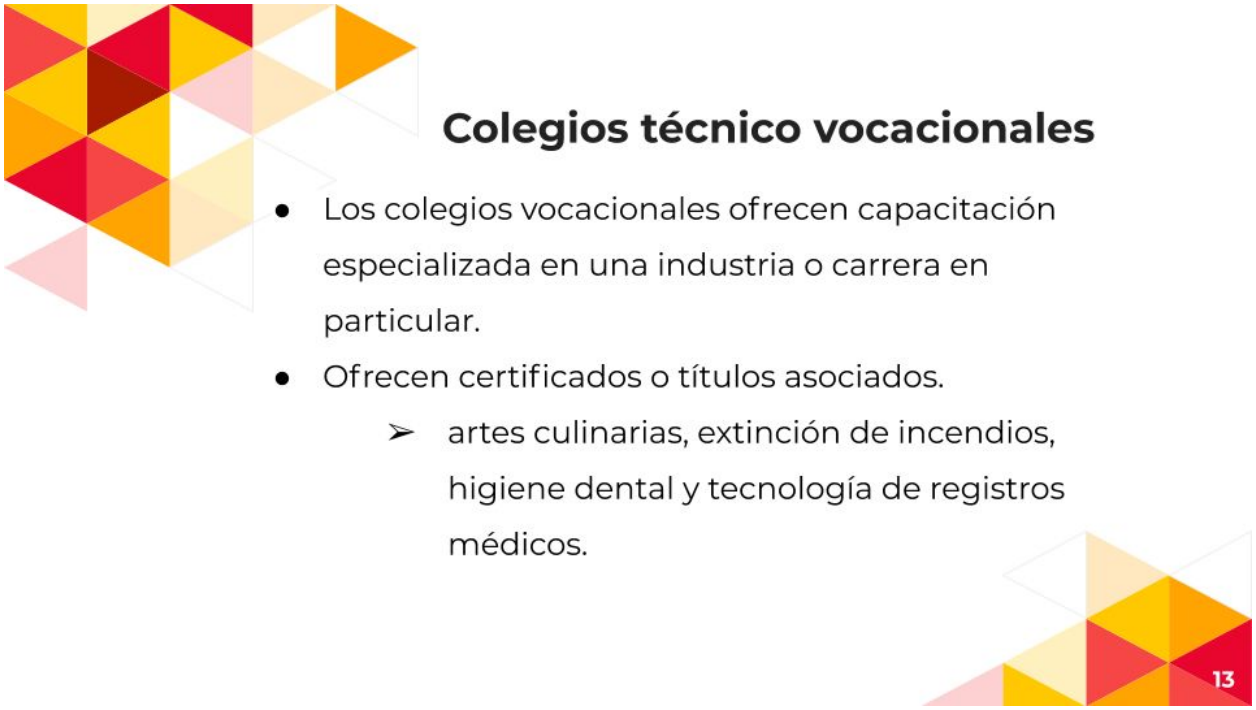
Universidad de California

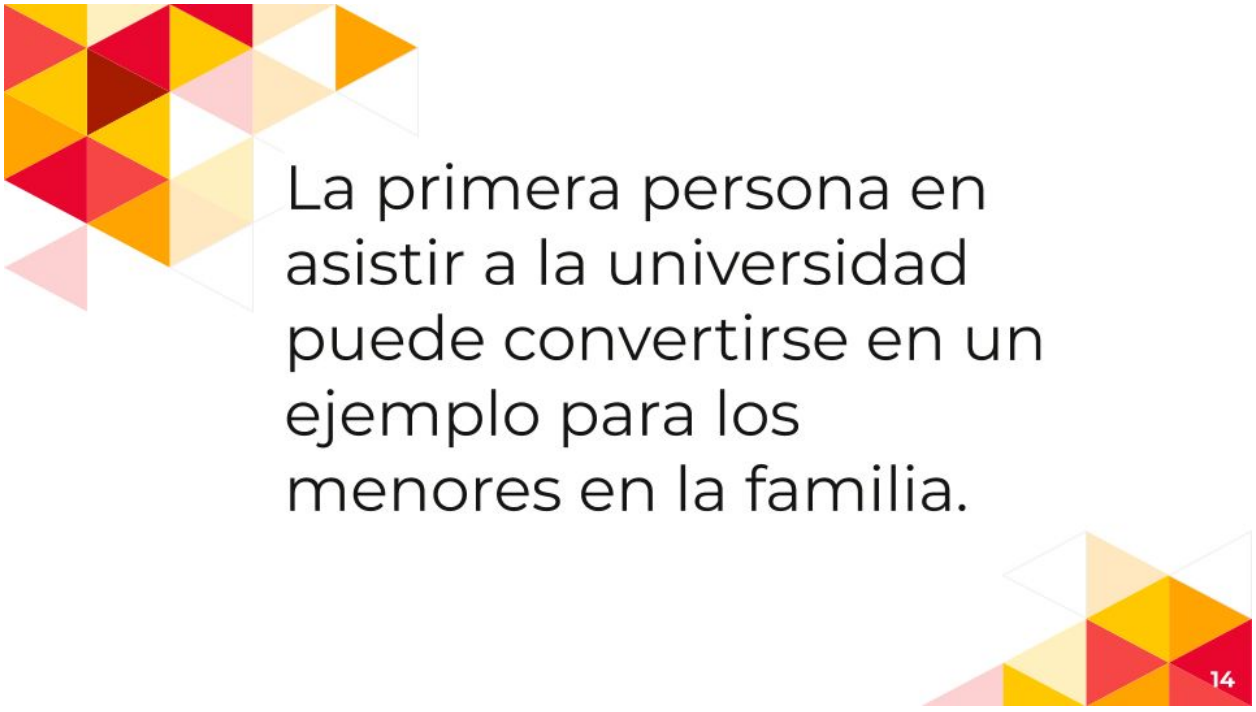
11

Colegios Privados

- Dependen principalmente de la matrícula, las tarifas y las fuentes privadas de financiamiento, por lo general son más caros que las universidades públicas. Ejemplos de colegios privados:
  - ➢ Stanford University
  - ➢ Santa Clara University

12


Colegios técnico vocacionales
Los colegios vocacionales ofrecen capacitación especializada en una industria o carrera en particular.
Ofrecen certificados o títulos asociados.
artes culinarias, extinción de incendios, higiene dental y tecnología de registros médicos.
13


La primera persona en asistir a la universidad puede convertirse en un ejemplo para los menores en la familia.
14

Appendix C

Survey for learning outcome 2

Tipos de colegios

Por favor, indique dos tipos de instituciones educativas

1._____

2._____

Direcciones:

Por favor, circule verdadero (V) o falso (F) para las siguientes oraciones.

3. **V / F** Los colegios públicos ofrecen las tarifas de matrículas más bajas.

4. **V / F** Los colegios comunitarios ofrecen licenciaturas, maestrías, y doctorados.

5. **V / F** Se puede transferir a una universidad después de recibir un título de asociado de un colegio comunitario.

6. **V / F** Para obtener una licenciatura, aproximadamente se requiere cuatro años de estudios en una universidad.

7. **V / F** Hartnell College es un colegio comunitario.

8. **V / F** California State University Monterey Bay es un colegio comunitario.

Appendix D

Presentation on financial aid resources

Ayuda federal para estudiantes

Completar FAFSA o Dream Act es el primer paso para obtener ayuda federal para la universidad, la escuela profesional o la escuela de posgrado.

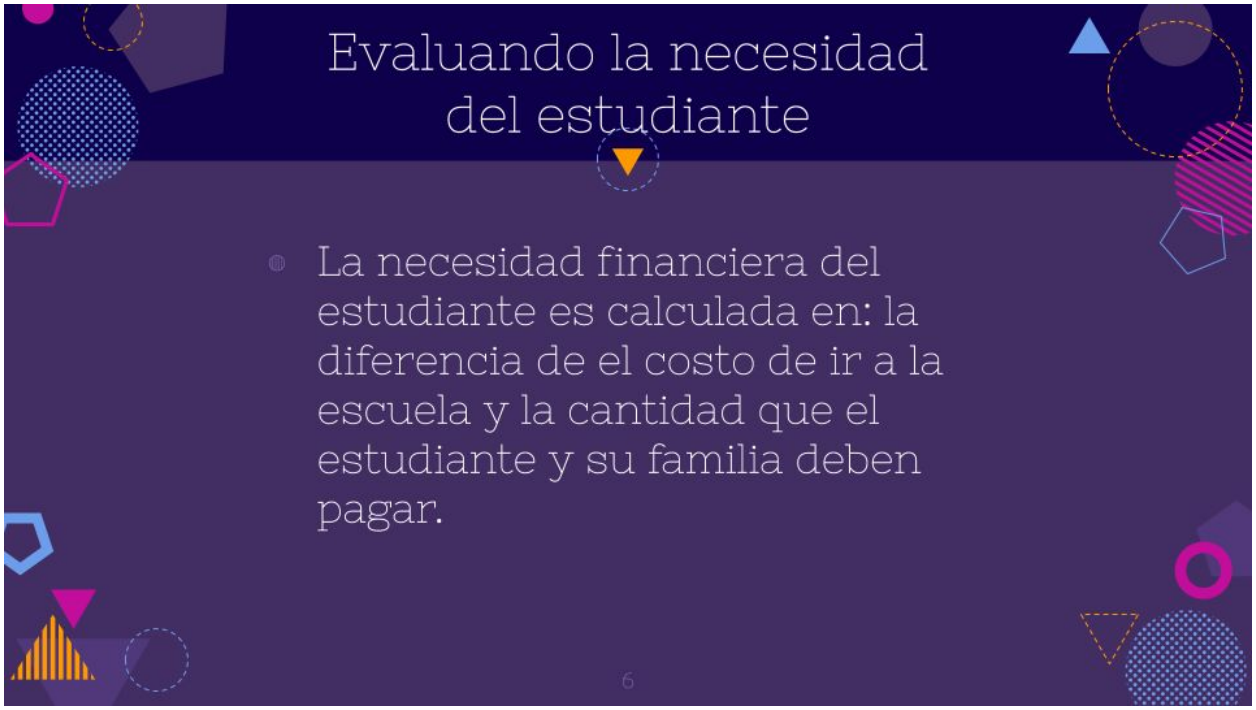
FAF$A

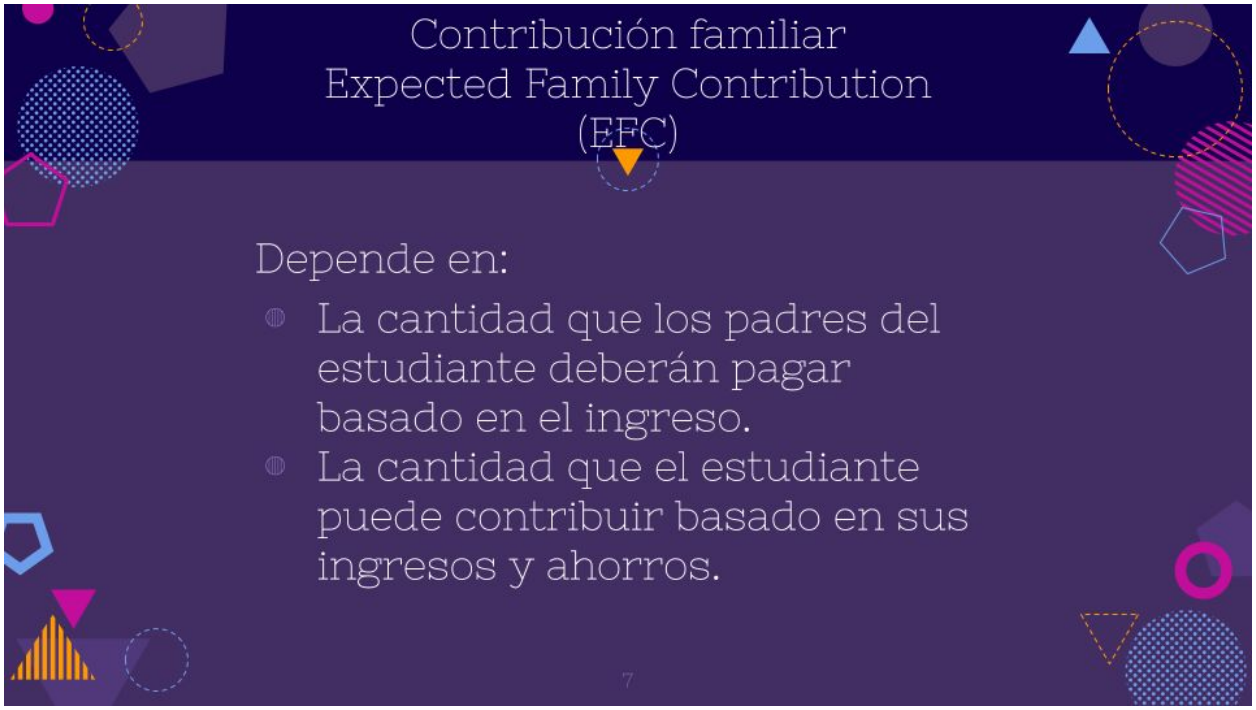
4

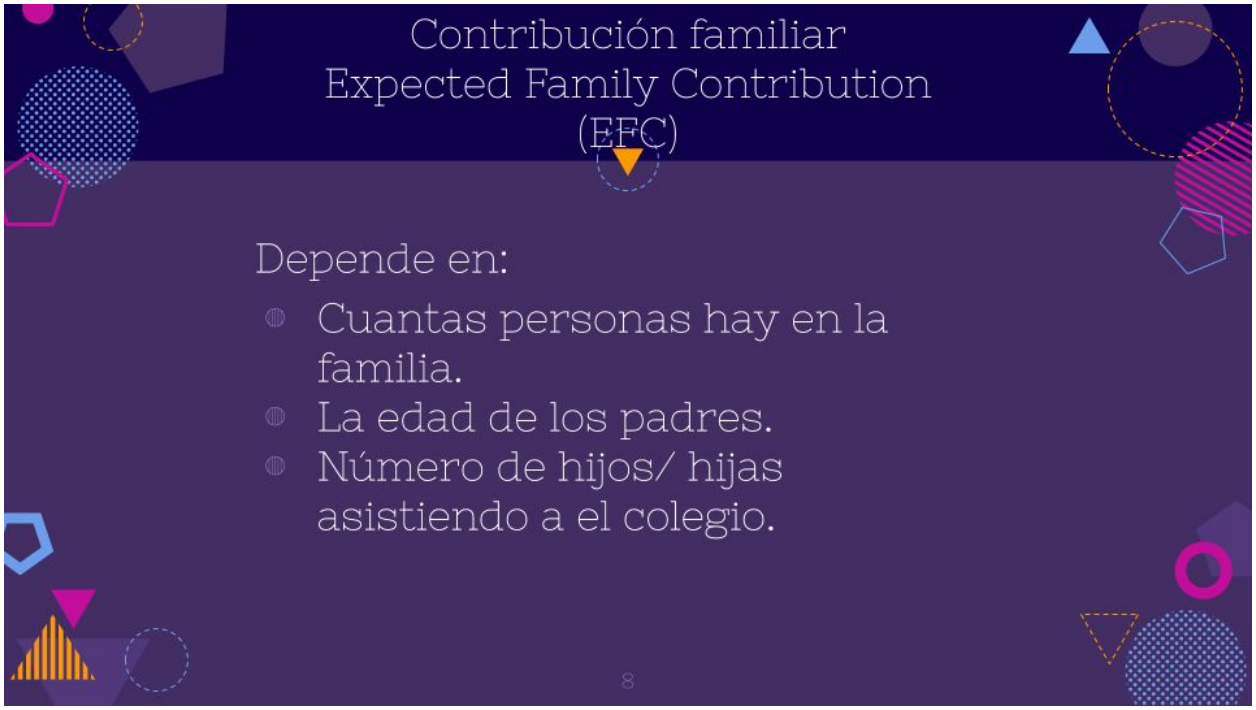
Un dia importante

- El primero de octubre es el primer día que FAFSA o Dream Act se puede completar!

5


Evaluando la necesidad del estudiante
La necesidad financiera del estudiante es calculada en: la diferencia de el costo de ir a la escuela y la cantidad que el estudiante y su familia deben pagar.
6


Contribución familiar
Expected Family Contribution
(EFC)
Depende en:
La cantidad que los padres del estudiante deberán pagar basado en el ingreso.
La cantidad que el estudiante puede contribuir basado en sus ingresos y ahorros.
7


Contribución familiar
Expected Family Contribution
(EFC)
Depende en:
Cuantas personas hay en la familia.
La edad de los padres.
Número de hijos/ hijas asistiendo a el colegio.
8

Cuatro Tipos de
Ayuda Financiera
1. Premios
2. Trabajo y Estudio
3. Becas
4. Prestamos
9

Premios

- Ayuda económica que no tiene que pagarse.
- Basadas en necesidad económica
- Basada en merito académico.

10

Trabajo y estudio

- Al estudiante se le proporciona un trabajo parcial en el plantel para cubrir los estudios.
- Basado en la necesidad del estudiante.
- Funciona como un trabajo regular.

11

Becas

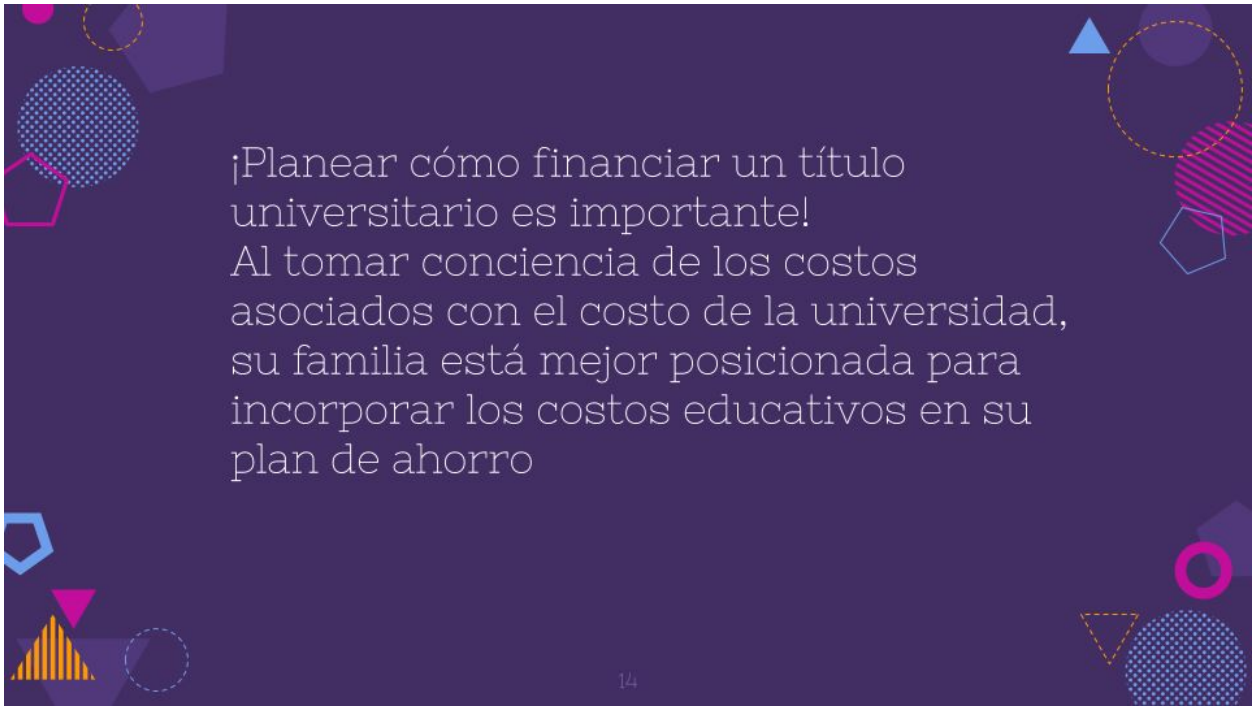
- Hay miles de becas disponibles!
- Becas requieren aplicaciones especiales
- Son a través de colegios y fuentes privadas (aparte de FAFSA).

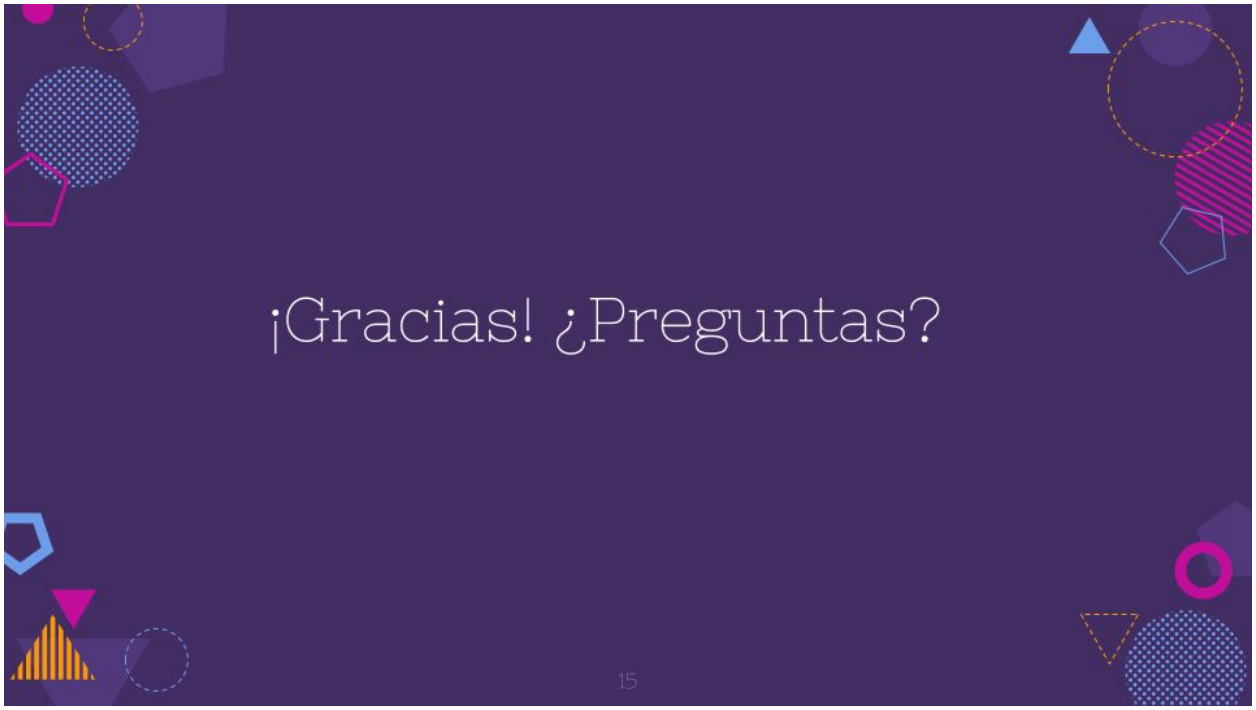
12

Prestamos

Un préstamo es dinero federal que se debe pagar con intereses.

13

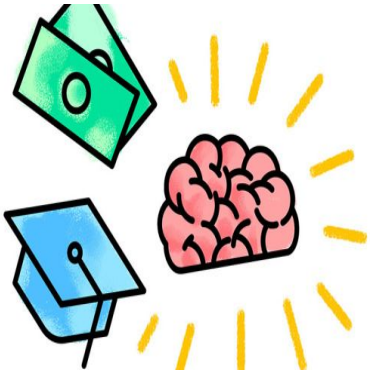

¡Planear cómo financiar un título universitario es importante!
Al tomar conciencia de los costos asociados con el costo de la universidad, su familia está mejor posicionada para incorporar los costos educativos en su plan de ahorro
14


¡Gracias! ¿Preguntas?
15

Appendix E

Survey for learning outcome 3

Recursos financieros para la universidad



Por favor, indique dos formas de pagar la matrícula universitaria.

1._____

2._____

Direcciones:

Por favor, circule verdadero (V) o falso (F) para las siguientes oraciones.

3. **V / F** FAFSA es una aplicación federal para ayuda financiera para estudiantes.

4. **V / F** Los préstamos son dinero que no tiene que ser devuelto.

5. **V / F** Las becas son dinero que no tiene que ser devuelto.

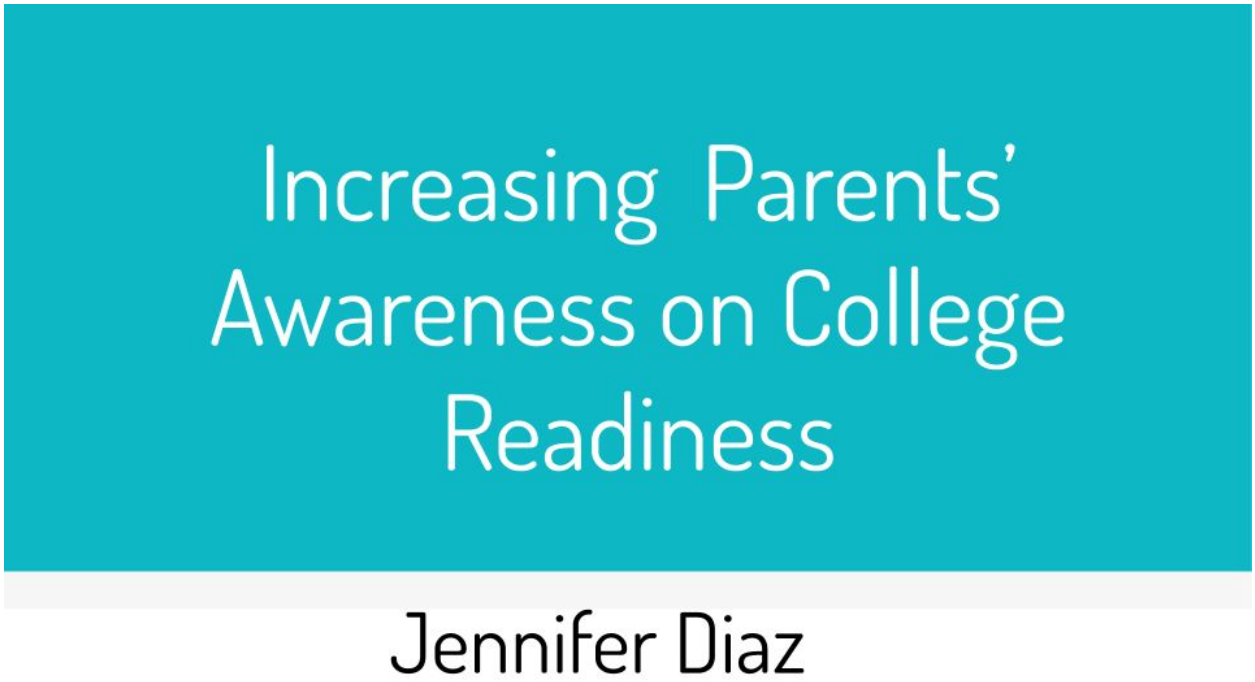
6. **V / F** La ayuda ofrecido por FAFSA depende en el ingreso de la familia.

7. **V / F** No es necesario solicitar para recibir becas.

8. **V / F** El primero de octubre es el primer día que FAFSA se puede completar.

Appendix F

PowerPoint on Capstone project



2

Need

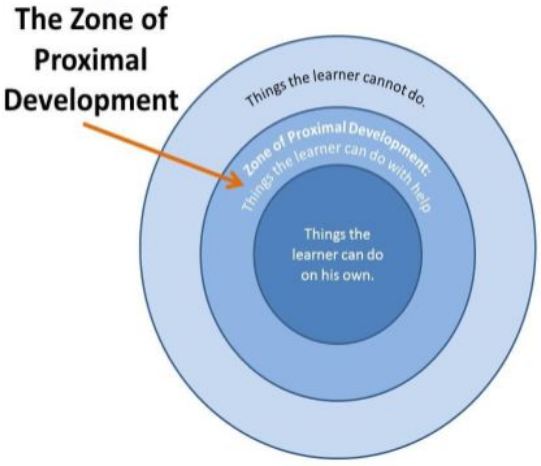
- Individuals who are minorities or first generation may not understand the processes to attend college and may not be aware of the assistance available to make it possible to attend.

3

Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Zone of Proximal Development

- Scaffolding

-By scaffolding parents they will better understand how the college system functions.



4

Learning outcomes

By the end of the project participants will,

1. identify two advantages of achieving a higher education.
2. identify two different type of educational institutions.
3. identify two ways of paying for college.

5

Method

College Readiness Presentation

- LIFE after school program-Salinas, CA
- Parents of children between 1st and 8th grade

6

Day 1

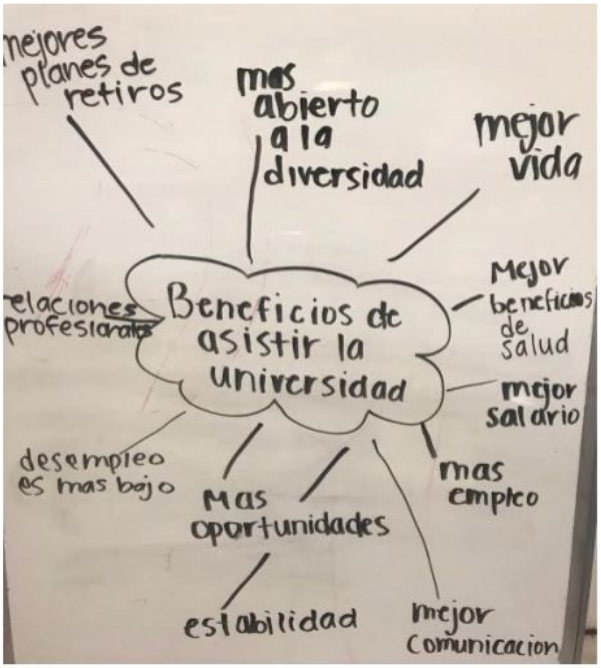
- Presentation on advantages of attending college and on the types of colleges.

8

Results

- Learning outcome 1 was measured by a discussion and group responses were recorded.
- Learning outcome 1 was met.

9

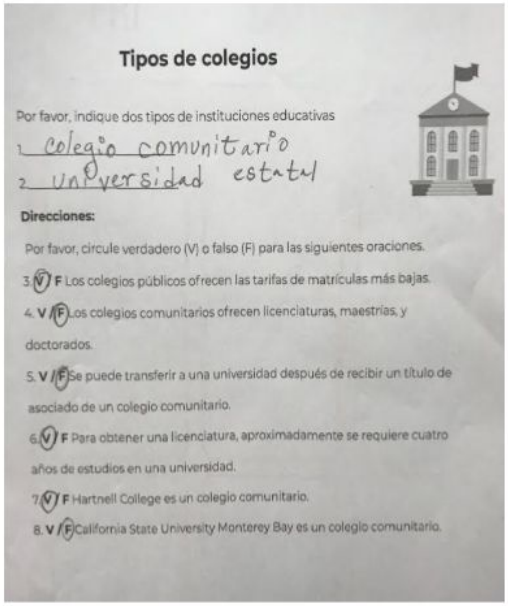


10

Results

- Learning outcome 2 was measured with a survey.
  Learning outcome 2 was met.
- 3 out 10 parents answered questions 100% correct.
- 7 out of 10 parents answered 87% correct.

11



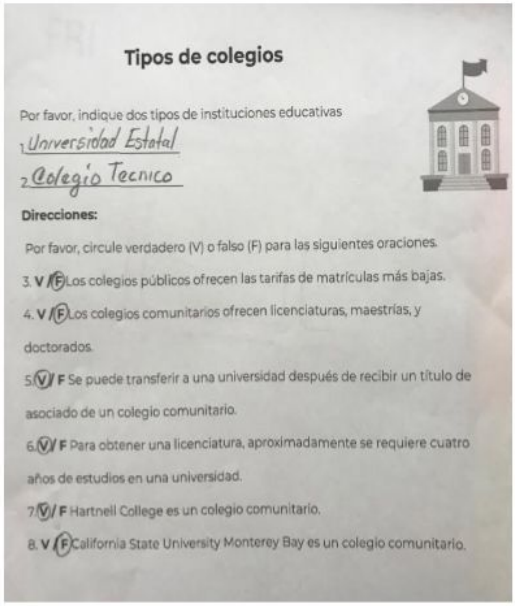
Tipos de colegios

Por favor, indique dos tipos de instituciones educativas
1. colegio comunitario
2. universidad estatal

Direcciones:

Por favor, circule verdadero (V) o falso (F) para las siguientes oraciones.

3. (V) F Los colegios públicos ofrecen las tarifas de matrículas más bajas.
4. V / (F) Los colegios comunitarios ofrecen licenciaturas, maestrías, y doctorados.
5. V / (F) Se puede transferir a una universidad después de recibir un título de asociado de un colegio comunitario.
6. (V) F Para obtener una licenciatura, aproximadamente se requiere cuatro años de estudios en una universidad.
7. (V) F Hartnell College es un colegio comunitario.
8. V / (F) California State University Monterey Bay es un colegio comunitario.



Tipos de colegios

Por favor, indique dos tipos de instituciones educativas
1. Universidad Estatal
2. Colegio Tecnico

Direcciones:

Por favor, circule verdadero (V) o falso (F) para las siguientes oraciones.

3. V / (F) Los colegios públicos ofrecen las tarifas de matrículas más bajas.
4. V / (F) Los colegios comunitarios ofrecen licenciaturas, maestrías, y doctorados.
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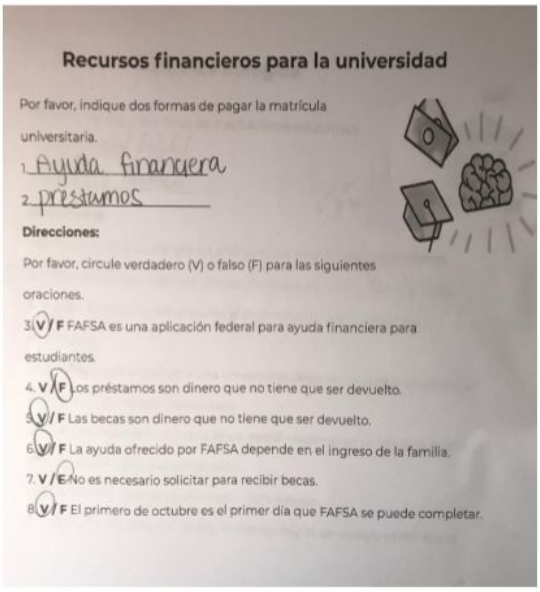


Recursos financieros para la universidad

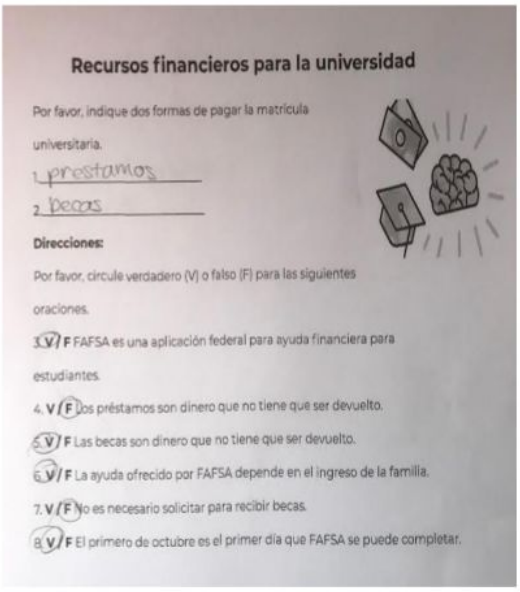
Por favor, indique dos formas de pagar la matrícula universitaria.

1. Ayuda financiera
2. préstamos

Direcciones:

Por favor, circule verdadero (V) o falso (F) para las siguientes oraciones.

3. (V) / F FAFSA es una aplicación federal para ayuda financiera para estudiantes.
4. V / (F) Los préstamos son dinero que no tiene que ser devuelto.
5. (V) / F Las becas son dinero que no tiene que ser devuelto.
6. (V) / F La ayuda ofrecido por FAFSA depende en el ingreso de la familia.
7. V / (F) No es necesario solicitar para recibir becas.
8. (V) / F El primero de octubre es el primer día que FAFSA se puede completar.



Recursos financieros para la universidad

Por favor, indique dos formas de pagar la matrícula universitaria.

1. préstamos
2. becas

Direcciones:

Por favor, circule verdadero (V) o falso (F) para las siguientes oraciones.

3. (V) / F FAFSA es una aplicación federal para ayuda financiera para estudiantes.
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7. V / (F) No es necesario solicitar para recibir becas.
8. (V) / F El primero de octubre es el primer día que FAFSA se puede completar.

14

Discussion

- In conclusion, the project was successful.
- More sessions, but shorter sessions
- More hands on activities
- Participants learned important information that is extremely relevant if they and their families decide to pursue a higher education in the future.