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## Increasing First Generation Hispanic students awareness of going to College

Zusett Godinez  
*California State University, Monterey Bay*

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INCREASING FIRST GENERATION HISPANIC STUDENTS GOING TO COLLEGE

Increasing First Generation Hispanic students awareness of going to College

Zusett Godinez

California State University Monterey Bay

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

## INCREASING FIRST GENERATION HISPANIC STUDENTS GOING TO COLLEGE

Increasing first-generation, Hispanic high school students' knowledge about college resources.

### Introduction

Many first-generation are interested in going to college, However they are not well informed about the resources they can use to go to college. Hispanic students do not know how to pay for college, the resources they can use to prepare for college, or what resources there are in college. As a result, some do not attend, leave without a degree, or have low academic performance. To address the lack of knowledge that first-generation, Hispanic high school students may have, I created a three-day presentation about financial aid, the importance of being involved in college, and the benefits of going to college. The information will be delivered to sophomores and juniors that are part of the migrant program at Salinas High School in Salinas, California.

### Needs Statement

First generation Hispanic students often find it difficult to stay in college or even get into college because they have many factors that make their time in college more difficult one of them is financial concerns ( Garcia, Quiroz, Bobby, 2012). Is also important for students to have a strong sense of belonging, so they can perform well in school. Yet Latinx students including Hispanic students have lower sense of belonging than white students (Garcia, 2017). Lastly, often parents and students choose to stay out of college because they are not interested in pursuing a major or graduate from college (Garcia, Quiroz, Bobby, 2012) Instead they focus on working and . Even if parents want their students to attend college they do not know how to support them because parents of hispanic students lack knowledge on how to support their students to go to college (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012).

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For Hispanic students the lack of financial aid is another factor that contributes for them struggling when going to college. Since the majority of first-generation, Hispanic students are low income students, it is really difficult for them to pay for college. In the article *Hispanic Origin, Socio-Economic Status, and Community College Enrollment* it was found that Mexican-American students lack knowledge about financial aid (O'Connor, 2009). Hispanic students enrolled into college might be unaware of the types of financial aid that is offered, and that might be the reason why they do not apply for financial aid (Fischer, 2005). Even though First generation Hispanic students are unaware of financial support it was found that students with intensive financial support doubled their performance in college and have a higher graduation rate (Mangan, 2015). In another study it was found that, Latino parents and students lacked significant information about financial aid for college and often received information much later and they were not able to consider attending college (Zarate & Fabienke, 2002).

According to the Latino Eligibility Study, The biggest barrier for Hispanic students is that they lack knowledge about the steps they need in order to apply to college. (Auerbach, 2004). First-generation, Hispanic students are less academically prepared for college, and they tend to have less knowledge of how to apply for college (Tym, & McMillion, 2004). Also Latina/o students often cannot rely on their families for information needed throughout their educational tenure in higher education (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). "In a nationally representative survey of Latino parents of high school students, more than two thirds lacked basic information about college eligibility and within immigrant parents the gap was even higher because they are not fluent in English nor are informed about college requirements" (Auerbach, 2004).

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Another reason why First-generation Hispanic students find it difficult to go to college is because they lack a sense of belonging. Hispanic students might not feel comfortable with their mentors and because of that they don't seek out support (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). In a different study it was found that students who fail to stay in school or have trouble getting along with their teacher which causes them to have a poor academic record (Martinez & Craston). Cultural stereotypes and different campus hospitality are some of the reasons why Hispanic students lack a sense of belonging, they often feel like they have difficulties to integrate themselves to their college culture (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012). First-generation, Hispanic students get a sense of not belonging because they had to move to many schools when they were little, because their parents work in seasonal jobs (Martinez, Scott Jr, Gingras, & Platt 2002). Also students who feel like they do not belong in college have weak relationships with their professors, in comparison with other students. This causes their performance in college to be lower (Mitchell, 2006).

Given that First generation Hispanic students struggle to get into college because they struggle financially, lack a sense of belonging and also that they are not being academically prepared to go to college. In order to increase awareness I have created a three-day workshop for sophomores and juniors at Salinas High School in Salinas, California.

### Theory

Erick Erickson theory focuses on personality development, he developed 8 stages of psychosocial theory (Guarino), in stage 5 Erikson's theory focus on identity vs. role confusion this stage emphasizes the period when adolescents ages 12 to 18 years old go through a transition where they try to find their own self identity. Adolescents start being more independent and start looking at their future regarding their college, career, etc. (McLeod, 2018). During the identity vs. role confusion stage, adolescents look for a personal

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identity. Adolescents start exploring things that they find interesting, this helps them to start creating their own beliefs and goals in life (Oliveira, Mendonça, Coimbra, & Fontaine, 2014). When students struggle to find their own personal identity, it can be more difficult for them when making decisions about their future (Block, 2011). Having a strong self-identity will benefit First generation Hispanic students because they will do better at school, they will be more engaged, and their academic achievement will increase (Malott, Paone, & humphreys, 2010). This theory applies to my content because First- generation, Hispanic students often struggle to fit in in college (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012) this is due because when First generation Hispanic student enter college they are still developing their own identity which cause them to feel missfit. When adolescents have a strong self identity, it is easier for them to keep up with their goals of staying in college, even though their surroundings may not have the same goals as them (Malott, Paone, Humphreys, 2010). If students have a strong identity they will have a better academic achievement and engage in school (Rodriguez, 2018) having a strong self identity has a positive outcome when college enroll into college.

This theory applies to my contact because the audience I will focus on are adolescents ages 15 to 17 years old. Since adolescents might still be confused about their personal identity and how this will pay off later in college, it will be helpful to provide support for them on what they can do while they are in college. This will benefit first generation Hispanic students if they encounter themselves isolated from other groups or if they have trouble finding their own identity. Students will learn and capture the importance of what will be taught during the presentations to apply it later on in college.

Consideration of Diversity

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My project will be delivered at Salinas High School in Salinas, California to students who are part of the migrant program. The ethnic composition of the participants is a reflection of the Salinas High school student population. According to the school demographic data, 71.3 % of the students are Hispanic, 21.7 % of the students are White, 1.4% Black or African American, 1.8% Filipino, 0.3% Native Hawaiian or Pacific islander, 2.0% asian, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native (School Data). Since 71.3% of the total student population is Hispanic, it is likely that all the students in the migrant program are Hispanic, Also because the migrants focus on supporting low income students who are migrants. given the families who work in the agricultural fields and who migrate regularly. In addition 49.50% of the student population are socioeconomically disadvantaged (School Data) . I would expect that the participants would reflect the socioeconomically disadvantaged because they are part of the migrant program which is designed for migrant students whose parents have seasonal jobs, and most of the time, parents earn a low wage. According to the national farm work ministry, 30% of all farm workers had total family incomes below the poverty line (Low Wages). As a result, students may be struggling financially to go to college. Also, since migrant students are Latino, they may have self identity issues that do not allow them to see themselves going to college. Because I will be conducting the lessons in English, the participants will have to be English proficient enough to complete the tasks and understand the content that I will be delivering. This project is geared towards Hispanic students in highschool who are part of the migrant program, but it can be modified to present it to other ethnicities groups that might struggle with the same issues when they go to college.

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### Learning Outcomes

I intend to do three 45 min presentations to sophomores and juniors that are part of the migrant program at Salinas Highschool.

By the end of the project students will be able to:

List three benefits of going to college

List three benefits of being involved in college

Identify the difference among grants, loans, and scholarships

### Method

#### Day 1

The first day I will introduce myself to the students and explain to them why I am there. Then, I will talk about my experience transitioning from high school to college. After that, I will go around and ask the students their name and what college they want to go to or what they want to do after high school. This discussion will take about 7 minutes. Then I will give them a pre worksheet (see appendix D) to record their knowledge about the topic before the presentations, that I will be giving in the next three days. This segment will take about 7 minutes. Then, I will give my presentation for 20 minutes about the benefits of going to college (See appendix A). After that I will ask verbally to the students to mention some benefits from going to college. To conclude I will ask the students if they have any questions or comments. To finalize I will thank them and let them know that we will meet again.

#### Day 2

The second day I will remind the students what they talked about last meeting and then I will introduce my new topic which was a sense of belonging. I will ask them a question which is: how many of you are involved in a club right now? Then they will talk about their experience of being involved in a club. This segment is going to take about 5 minutes. Then I



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will give them the presentation of the importance of being involved in college ( see appendix B ) I will tell them why it is important for students to be involved in clubs or programs that they feel welcomed and comfortable with. Also, I will talk about how feeling like they do not belong in college can affect their performance. To conclude, I will ask them if after the presentation they would want to become part of a program or club in college. To conclude I will go around and ask them verbally the benefits of being in college and also the consequences of not being involved.

### Day 3

The last day I will remind the students about the sense of belonging, then I will introduce my topic which is financial aid. Then I will give my presentation about financial aid (see appendix E), and explain to them the different types of financial aid. This will take about 25 minutes. After the presentation I will deliver a true or false worksheet (appendix C) this will take about 7 minutes. Then, I will deliver the same Worksheet that I gave them on the first day (see appendix D) about the three presentations to record their knowledge of the topics after the presentations, and see if they gain any information. I will give them about 7 minutes to fill it out. After they are done, we will go over the answer together for 5 minutes. Finally, I will end by thanking them and letting them know that is our final meeting.

### Results

Learning outcome 1 was that students will list three benefits of going to college. Students went to the presentation knowing little information about the benefits of going to college according to their responses captured on the pre-worksheet .See Table 1 to see their answer for pre pre-worksheet given on the first day. It is uncertain if the outcome was met due to COVID- 19 Since I was not able to deliver the post-worksheet.

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Learning outcome 2 was to identify three benefits of being involved in college. See Table 1 for their answer. They also had to grade themselves from a scale 1 to 5 on how important they thought it was to be involved in school. See table 1 for their answer. Overall, they thought that it was important to be involved in college, but they had little information as to why it is important to be involved, or the benefit of being involved in college. It is uncertain if the outcome was met due to COVID-19.

Learning outcome 3 was not delivered due to COVID-19 but I intended to give a presentation about financial aid. I was going to talk about differences among grants, loans, and scholarships methods. At the end, I would have given out the post worksheet to check if they gained knowledge about the three topics I talked about on the last day of presentation.

### Discussion

I believe this project was successful. The participants were engaged during the presentation and anxious to learn about the topics presented especially. But I can not say if the outcomes were met since I was not able to give the post-worksheet to see if the presentations made an impact on the students. Since the participants are in the Erickson's stage of identity versus role confusion I think that the presentations helped the students understand and clarify their goals after highschool. Some of the students shared that they are still confused about what they want to do after highschool because they have not found something they like. I think that the presentation about the importance of being involved in college made the biggest impact on the students. Given that some students are not involved in highschool it is important that they have the opportunity to see why it is important and how it will benefit them to be involved in college. During these presentations, students asked a lot of questions of how it affects them negatively and how they can be more involved in school.

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In terms of diversity, I think that my project can be open to include more students from other ethnicities because it can be modified to accommodate the targeted audience. Also students do not have to be first generations, Since it targets students who struggle financially, and students who might struggle to fit in college. Also the presentation can be changed to a different language that works better for the participants.

If I had to do this project again something I would do differently is giving my presentation in Spanish since my participants are more fluent in Spanish. Another thing that I would have done differently is giving the participants a worksheet before and after every meeting to record their information gain after every presentation. Even Though I only got to deliver two presentations and the pre-worksheet, I believe that my project was successful because the students were enthusiastic to learn about the topics I presented and. I believe that I accomplish my goal of raising awareness to First generation hispanic students going to college.

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Table 1

What is your career plan after highschool ?	8 students said Go to a 4 year college	4 students said Community college And transfer		
What are some obstacles that might stop you from being successful in college ?	6 students said money	2 students said time	4 students said language	
Name three benefits of going to college	12 students said Better income/payment	12 students said Better jobs	6 students said Better health	3 student said independence
How important is it to be involved in school?	9 students said Very important	3 students said Somewhat important		
Name three benefits of being involved in school	4 students said socialize	4 said better communication skills	2 students said go to meetings	2 students said to be in a club
How informed are you about financial aid for college?	6 students said not inform	3 students said somewhat inform	2 students said inform	1 student said Very inform
Name three different type of financial aid offered in college	10 student said scholarships	1 student said Dream act and fafsa	1 student Did not answer the question	

Appendix A



First- Generation  
Hispanic Students  
going to college



Zusett Godinez

CSUMB Student

First- Generation



## Benefits of going to college



## Benefits of going to college

- Better paying jobs
- Raise your job satisfaction
- Improve Your Work and Life-skills



## INCREASING FIRST GENERATION HISPANIC STUDENTS GOING TO COLLEGE

- Grow Your Professional Network
- Better Health
- Improve Your Work and Life-skills



**Thank You**

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## Appendix B



# The importance of Being Involved in College

## Why Students feel Isolated in college

- cultural stereotypes
- inhospitable campus
- language

## How it affects you negative

- Lower performance
- Feeling isolated
- No connections with peers or mentors



## What can I do?

- Become part of your school
- Join a club
- Join a program



## Programs I could possibly join

- Camp
- EOP
- TRIO
- Go to school events
- Sorority
- Study group

## How is this going to help me?

- Feeling connected with peers and mentors
- Better performance
- Being part of something



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## Appendix C

## True or False worksheet:

## 1. True or False

If a student's family makes too much money, the student no longer qualifies for financial aid.

## 2. True or False

Students have to complete the FAFSA every years

## 3. True or False

Students can not take out a loan if they do not have a cosigner

## 4. True or False

Students have to pay a 40 dollar fee to complete the FAFSA application

## 5. Parent without SSNS can not complete the FAFSA application

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## Appendix D

Answer the following questions.

1. What is your career plan after highschool ?

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2. What are some obstacles that might stop you from being successful in college ?

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3. Name three benefits of going to college

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Please rate yourself on scale from 1 to 5 on the following questions.

4. How important is it to be involved in school?

1 not important at all 2 not important 3 important 4 Somewhat important 5 very important

Name three benefits of being involved in school

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5. How informed are you about financial aid for college?

1 completely uninformed 2 not inform 3 inform 4 somewhat inform 5 very inform

Name three different type of financial aid offered in college

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Appendix E







## What is financial Aid

Financial comes in different forms it includes grants, scholarships, work-study jobs, and loans. And is offered to students to help them pay for their college education



## Who can get financial aid

Non US citizens

US residents

Student in foster care

Students who are homeless

Military family members



## Grants

Financial aid that's typically based on need  
and typically doesn't have to be repaid



## Scholarships

Free money that is based on academic performance or other achievements like Sports, or can be offered based on your financial need, to help pay for school.



## Loans

Money you borrow to pay for college or career school and you must repay your loans and the interest that accrues while you are in school or after you graduate

