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Increased Knowledge About College For Eighth-Grade Students To Raise Ambitions To Attend College: A Guide For Educators

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Abstract

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INTRODUCTION

Middle school students are not well informed about college attendance requirements, how each school system differs, and students may even feel discouraged to apply to college based on misinformation. In my personal experience, as a senior in high school, I volunteered to mentor eighth-grade students about their current grades, what to expect when they transition to high school, and about their future endeavors. One student mentioned that he was interested in playing football in high school but did not plan on attending college because he assumed that his family could not afford it. I asked him if he wanted to attend college and he answered yes, but immediately added that he could not attend because it was too expensive. I sat with him for a while to explain what the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was and how the government could help him pay for tuition and other expenses that would make college attainable. I emphasized that he could even receive more money if his family is considered low-income. I also mentioned that he could be eligible for academic and athletic scholarships if he earned good grades and/or if he played football while in high school. However, I did not have that much time to go into specifics about the different school systems or how he could be a competitive applicant because he had to return to class. Nonetheless, after speaking with him, I was not sure if I overwhelmed him with this information, or if I helped him consider different possibilities for his future. I constantly asked myself if the information I gave him increased his ambition to want to attend college and I questioned if other students in the eighth-grade had the same mindset that impeded their ambitions.

For my capstone, I researched how students and parents are misinformed, or lack information about college related topics that pertain to tuition prices, the different college systems, and financial aid. I examined how the socioeconomic status of students and their

parents play a critical role in their access to knowledge and their college attainment rates. I also explained why I chose to focus on middle school students as opposed to high school students based on their age during this critical transition to help them make better informed decisions at an earlier age. I researched the role of counselors and how their involvement is essential in students' lives, especially if students do not have a point of contact that has been exposed to the college admission process. I researched how a college-going culture at an early adolescence could positively impact students' ambitions and aspirations for their future. I differentiated between an AVID and homeroom classroom, and included research about the effectiveness of the AVID program and comparative data about students who are not enrolled in the program. Another critical part of my research reveals the Latinx educational experience and how students experience hardships that can ultimately impede their educational opportunities. I also included research on the effectiveness of PowerPoint presentations, and the benefits of technology in the classroom to explain why I chose these methods for my intervention program to ensure that students are engaged and could easily follow along.

I intended on incorporating an interactive approach where I would enter two eighth-grade classrooms at a local middle school to deliver PowerPoint presentations, pre-and-post surveys, and student handouts for approximately six weeks. However, due to access issues, I was not able to enter a classroom to conduct my research. Instead, I have transformed my aims and research into a guide for other educators and mentors to utilize if they felt inspired to implement a program that intended to guide and support middle school students.

This guide is organized for the educator to review the literature, follow the weekly unit that includes an introduction of each unit, the corresponding PowerPoint slides, and student

handouts with the hope that students will retain the information, and in turn positively shape their educational trajectory.

**University of California, Riverside's Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved this research proposal June 25, 2018.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review provides a historical context for why this research is important for students and educators, particularly Latinx students to increase college attainment rates by informing eighth-grade students about college-related information. I researched how students are misinformed or lack information about college which could prevent students from considering college as an option. The Literature Review provides a section as to why it is important for eighth-grade students to have a college intervention in their classroom. I include research on why and how the role of counselors are influential in students' lives. I also explained the importance of a college going culture and how a motivational environment can positively affect students' ambition to want to attend college. I include a section about the Latinx educational experience in a historical context and link their educational experience to their college attainment rates. Since my original study wanted to compare the effects of the presentation on an Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) and a homeroom classroom, I researched the impact of the AVID program and the difference it can make on students' academic achievement. I researched the benefits of presentations and technology in the classroom, and the positive effects technology could have on students. The Literature Review concludes with references for other educators to utilize for further research.

Misinformation

It is common for students to overestimate the cost of college and assume that they cannot afford to attend. This line of thinking prevents students from researching their options to try to make college attainable and can discourage students to further their education after completion of high school. Many K-12 students are often misinformed about college related information such as tuition prices, the difference in college systems, and how to be a competitive applicant. For example, Harry Holzer and Sandra Baum suggest that “students can potentially receive more aid from a private nonprofit four-year as opposed to a public four-year” (98). However, students may not know the difference between such intuitions and assume that all colleges or universities request the same price for tuition or that some are automatically more expensive than others. Or some students might believe that some college systems are “better” than others (Ovink 280). For instance, students might rank the University of California (UC) system higher than the California State University (CSU) system based on incorrect assumptions related to tuition and status. This can lead to ruling out institutions without properly researching their resources and benefits. Over time, tuition prices have increased, which causes a pause for concern about being able to afford to attend college (Holzer and Baum 95). This could potentially discourage students and even parents from considering even applying for college (Holzer and Baum 95). With this mindset that college is not plausible for economic reasons, students may later regret not attempting to apply. Several studies revealed that “students with low socioeconomic status are more likely to overestimate college costs, underestimate the availability of financial aid, and exhibit poor knowledge about the academic prerequisites to college attendance” (Belaso 782). Students could be discouraged from speaking to their parents about college because they assume that their parents cannot afford it, especially if they are already struggling to make ends meet. This form of

misinformation is detrimental to students because they are discouraged from applying based on false or misleading information. Many of the “students who do not apply for aid would be eligible and their financial struggles could be ameliorated if they received help through the application process” (Holzer and Baum 105). If students had access to a counselor, mentor, or guardian that was knowledgeable about the college application process, there is a greater possibility that the student learned about their financial resources and options that could have positively impacted their experience and ambition. For example, the FAFSA application can calculate the expected family contribution and determine if the student is eligible for grants, however many “families are misinformed about FAFSA and how this complex application can truly assist the student and their financial needs” (Holzer and Baum 100). The FAFSA application can be intimidating and prevent students from applying because some students and parents may not consider the application user friendly. Another common assumption is that students who attend college will more than likely have an outstanding amount of debt and student loans, but in fact at least sixty-five percent of students who attended a public two-year college came out debt free (Holzer and Baum 105). Students are misinformed about how they can obtain a degree throughout the different college systems. This misinformation about how students can avoid debt or create a negative opinion about debt suggests to the students that college is not worth it. Debt can be an intimidating topic but it needs to be addressed to correct any misinformed information that discourages students from applying. Students should be correctly informed about their different options and how they can make college attainable.

Lack of Information

Not every student is fortunate enough to have someone in their life that is familiar with the college application systems. Harry Holzer and Sandy Baum believe that “students who have parents with little to no experience or knowledge about college systems, or who do not have access to well-trained counselors, making informed decisions can be close to impossible” (121). Many students and their families do not know where to begin and often are overwhelmed. Generally, “low income and first generation students have very little information about the complexity of post-secondary education in the United States” (Holzer and Baum 122). Many potential college students are unaware of the availability of financial aid and believe that the published sticker price of tuition is what they will have to pay if they attend, and as a result, students do not investigate their options (Holzer and Baum 122). A higher education is costly but there are resources that can assist and make college attainable, but only if the student is informed. To improve the availability of information to students, it is more effective to have personalized information and guidance available to students when they apply to college through outreach programs (Holzer and Baum 120). Specifically, in school settings that are considered low-income, have low rates of college attendance, and large caseloads for counselors, requires additional resources and participation to ensure that all students are informed (Holzer and Baum 123). Counselors, mentors, and outreach programs can close the information gap, but even then, these resources cannot reach every student. Andrew Belaso argues that, “social capital gives rise to the information flows that facilitates opportunity and material gain” (783). Social capital is the total value of the resources needed to meet personal and social needs. If a student obtains substantial social capital, then they are in a valuable position where they are able to make informed decisions regarding their future. In the case of postsecondary attainment, information is

paramount, and without information, students cannot navigate and subsequently meet high school graduation requirements let alone college entrance requirements (Belaso 783). Students need to be well informed during early adolescence to ensure that they are knowledgeable about all their opportunities and resources. New information and a variety of resources can potentially persuade students to believe that college is attainable if they are well-informed.

Impact of Socioeconomic Status (SES)

A student's socioeconomic status can impact the courses that they take in high school, the available amount of information and resources, and how their current social environment can impact their future in secondary education. Andrew Belaso claims "the availability of college information is closely tied to a student's socioeconomic environment" (782). If the student lives in a low-income area, their school may not be able to afford enough counselors or resources that can increase college attainment rates. Robert Crosnoe and Chandra Mueller believe that, "students with college-educated parents are knowledgeable about the relative weight of grades, core courses, and electives in college" (602). Parents who are college educated are knowledgeable about college entrance requirements and can better prepare their children as an applicant. Crosnoe and Mueller also correlate parents with low-SES with low levels of knowledge about college, and claim that this correlation can significantly impact their child and their level of knowledge about college (602). If parents are unaware, it makes it harder on the student to understand their opportunities and eligibility. Researchers have also attributed inequities in college access to the lack of financial resources and academic preparation among many students with low socioeconomic status (Belaso 781). Generally, students with low SES assume that they are not eligible or cannot afford a higher education based on their SES, which prevents students from researching their options. Researchers have called attention to the insufficient and/or inaccurate information that many low SES students have with respect to college admissions and financial aid (Belaso 782). It is critical to point out this correlation because it can negatively impact the college attainment rates of students with low-SES. Students with lower socioeconomic status might be able to make up some of these differences when broad social networks expose them to such resources through ties to peers who themselves have parents

with a higher economic status (Crosnoe and Mueller 603). If students visit the home of their friends who have college educated parents, they increase their exposure to new information and resources. Parents can advise students about academic concerns, advocate for them at school, connect them to other advocates, and secure opportunities for them (Crosnoe and Mueller 605). Those students with college educated parents can utilize the resources offered by their parents. Socioeconomic status, particularly the parents' own educational attainment, can affect the access to information that could help students assess their present options and develop plans (Crosnoe and Mueller 602). If students plan for their future during early adolescence, they have a greater chance of success. Andrew Belaso claims that "students with at least one college-educated parent enroll in postsecondary education at nearly twice the rate of students whose parents do not possess a college degree" (781). This may be because their parents begin planning for their child's future at an earlier age. Generally, students with a high-SES have "more opportunities to learn and develop their cognitive skills, and therefore, translates to higher scores on achievement tests and better grades than students with low SES at all levels of schooling in the United States" (Crosnoe and Mueller 603). Students with a higher-SES can afford resources that can better prepare them for exams and offer the student additional opportunities. However, students who associate themselves with other students whose parents are highly educated can then be exposed to information that they would not have received otherwise (Crosnoe and Muller 605). If students cannot associate themselves with these extended points of contact, then they are forced to find this information elsewhere. Many low-SES students are driven to rely on their respective schools for college-related support (Belaso 782). For many students, their school site is their only resource. Students with low-SES or who have non-educated parents, are still able to close the information gap, but will require the students and schools to have more dedication and

commitment to want to learn and share information about potential resources and opportunities regarding their future.

Focus on Eighth Grade Students

Every student needs guidance and support when they are faced with making important decisions throughout their life. Jerry Trusty argues, “An effective education-career planning during middle school can better prepare students in high school” (136). Trusty insists that “middle school counselors are instrumental in designing and implementing these systems of planning” (136). National research data shows that the choices middle school students make—and particularly academic choices—have a strong bearing on their educational and career development for decades to come (Trusty et al. 136). A students’ extracurricular activities, hobbies, civic participation, and cultural experiences should be part of education-career-planning (Trusty et al. 136). Decisions during early adolescence are impactful and should be discussed thoroughly with a mentor, counselor, or guardian. Jerry Trusty also claims that “almost half of those who pursue a bachelor’s degree or associate’s degree after high school do not attain degrees within eight to ten years” (137). More and more students are attending college after high school, but they are not academically prepared, and therefore, struggle to complete their degree. Generally, students are not taking more academically intensive courses in high school that could better prepare them for their college course load (Trusty et al. 137). However, this path starts in middle school when students take standardized tests that places them at a certain level during their first year in high school. If they do not take the tests seriously, they could be placed in a lower level that inhibits their ability to reach the higher levels of the courses that colleges prefer. Another issue is the psychological and emotional changes that middle school students experience. Studies have found that as students’ progress through middle school years, they become significantly more disengaged from school (Trusty et al. 138). Middle school is a critical age that involves emotional, psychological, and developmental changes that can further impact

their academic performance. Carol Midgley and Tim Urdan insist that “negative changes in motivation and performance at early adolescence are not inevitable, but it is related to the quality of the learning environment experienced by children at this stage” (7). Transition from elementary school levels is difficult because students tend to give up more quickly and put forth less effort that subsequently impacts their academic performance (Midgley and Urdan 5). Middle school is an important time to ensure that students stay on the right track so they have a clear path during high school that will positively impact their future. Middle school students tend to value their social standing viewed by their peers rather than their academic standing in the classroom. Students need the imitative that will motivate them to succeed academically. Middle school students become more aware of themselves, of the world, and how they fit into it; if the educational system is not meaningful or interesting to them, they will begin to focus elsewhere (Midgley and Urdan 7). Rather than assuming this is a time when many children are too distracted to learn, we need to design a learning environment that is responsive to those changes (Midgley and Urdan 8). It is important for the school site to understand these changes and adjust their environment that will support middle school students. Carol Midgely and Tim Urdan claim that “at-risk students experience increased problems after the transition to middle school levels not because the work is more complex or challenging, but because the messages of rejection and exclusion intensify” (8). The administrators and teachers at the school site may assume that the students are not interested in their future based on their behavior, and therefore, disregard the student all together. Carol Midgley and Tim Urdan suggest an anchor program or home-base program to develop relationships and hold a great promise for young adolescents who are still developing, but not many schools have implemented this kind of program (Midgley and Urdan 9). It is critical for a student to be well known by at least one adult while in middle school to feel

a connection and that someone cares about them and their future. The topic of college and students' potential plans should be introduced to middle school students in hopes that they will realize that their current actions can impact their future opportunities. It might be overwhelming, but if introduced in the correct way, it could positively impact middle school students' aspirations and attitude about attending college that could encourage students to create goals now and work towards achieving them. By implementing a college intervention program in middle school classrooms, students can build a connection with the educator or mentor in the classroom and feel the support and guidance during this critical transitional period.

Role of Counselors

Counselors can offer guidance and support to students relative to their emotional state, academic standing, and future endeavors. Andrew Belaso believes that “visiting a counselor for college entrance information can have a positive and significant influence on students’ likelihood of postsecondary enrollment, and that counseling-related effects are greatest for students with low socioeconomic status” (781). School site counselors are a great source of information because they have experienced and obtained a higher education themselves. School counselors can facilitate college participation by encouraging aspirations, aiding students’ academic preparation, including parents in college planning, and ensuring that schools possess and pursue a college mission (Belaso 783). Counselors play a huge role in students’ lives and can significantly impact students’ emotions and attitudes about their future opportunities. Counselors can close the information gap for students with lower socioeconomic status with the human and social capital needed to prepare for, and transition into postsecondary education (Belaso 784). Counselors can provide insight on how to be a competitive applicant and correct any misinformed information that the student may have previously received. However, the national student-to-counselor ratio is 457 to 1, which impacts a counselor’s effectiveness by not being able to reach every student (Belaso 782). Unfortunately, the ratios are often highest in schools where students are facing the greatest economic challenges (Belaso 782). Large caseloads are a downfall at school sites, but counselors can negate this factor by offering a broader venue to relay information and offer guidance about college to make it accessible to all students. For example, counselors can enter classrooms throughout the school year to reach a larger audience of students, offer after-school workshops, and post flyers around campus with valuable information. Counselors can be an effective resource despite their large caseloads, and students

should utilize every resource to ensure that they can attend college if they do decide to pursue a higher education.

College Going Culture

A college going culture informs every student that they are college material despite their background and sends the message that higher education is the expectation rather than the exception. Richard Radcliffe and Liz Stephens state “a college going culture encourages all students to consider college by introducing information during early adolescence about higher education opportunities” (21). It can make a significant impact on the students attitude and actions if they feel that their school site encourages and supports them. Richard Radcliffe and Liz Stephens also claim that “preparation needs to start as early as middle school to compound the challenge of preparing today’s adolescents for college” (20). It is critical to introduce college as an option at an earlier age to encourage students to succeed and create a path with less barriers. Richard Radcliffe and Beth Bos agree that “by creating a college going culture in schools, it encourages all students to consider college by introducing information about higher education opportunities during early adolescence and in high school (88). There are various ways to implement a college going culture, and further research is needed to determine which efforts are most effective. Richard Radcliffe and Liz Stephens claim that many students are poorly prepared for higher education, especially in their literacy skills and insist that the “efforts to build a college going culture emphasize strengthening students’ writing skills by using preservice teachers to lead writing marathons for at-risk middle school students on university visits” (20). In their study, Radcliffe and Stephens used writing marathons to build a college going culture and improve students’ writing skills for at-risk students to determine if these marathons had a positive impact on these students’ academic achievements. Their college going culture begin in middle school and included writing projects, campus visits, mentoring, tutoring, and parent involvement (Radcliffe and Stephens 21). Richard Radcliffe and Beth Bos also believe that “as

students became more with the nature of college by going on campus tours, they developed interests and concerns in some of the challenging aspects such as admission procedures, financial aid needs, and residential hall life-styles” (101). It is beneficial for middle school students to visit college campuses and learn more about the opportunities that a college education could offer. Radcliffe and Stephens’ study also found that mentoring was a key component in encouraging middle school students to pursue a higher education (104). A college going culture through mentoring can be associated with students’ growth in positive perceptions and aspirations about college (Radcliffe and Bos 105). A mentor can significantly improve students’ attitude and confidence in themselves if they feel supported and encouraged to achieve their goals. Mentoring is a key strategy to support at risk students during their middle school and high school years (Radcliffe and Bos 88). Mentoring and campus visits are only two examples of how to create a college going culture. The school site should assess the needs of their students and determine which efforts will work best to create a college going culture that are most effective and beneficial for their students.

The Latinx Educational Experience

The majority of students at the middle school where I intended on conducting my research identify as Hispanic or Latinx so it is essential to understand their educational experience. Previous authors used the lens of critical race theory (CRT) to examine Latinx schooling and family education. CRT emphasize that race, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is socially constructed and that race, as a socially constructed concept, and functions to maintain the interests of the dominant population that constructed it. Sofia Villenas and Donna Deyhle believe that “CRT is needed to understand how the subordination and marginalization of people of color is created and maintained in the United States” (414). CRT can better explain how today, Latino/a indigenous people who find themselves in the United States, sixty percent of whom are of Mexican origin, suffer disproportionately from poverty and from low educational attainment (Villenas and Deyhle 418). We must consider students racial/ethnic background to assess their educational opportunities. Sofia Villenas and Donna Deyhle insist that “raced” children are overwhelmingly the recipients of low teacher expectations and are consequently tracked, placed in low-level classes, and receive “dull and boring” curriculum (414). “Raced” children are therefore prohibited from succeeding academically. By using the CRT lens, the official school curriculum reveals how it is culturally designed to maintain a “white supremacist script” (Villenas and Deyhle 421). The authors are describing how the social hierarchy translates into the education system. In many cases, the standardized public education system only portrays one side of history. Maria Ayala confirms that “Latino students tend to be underrepresented in advanced placement and college track classes and overrepresented in classes designated for low ability students” (1041). It is common for teachers to assume a students’ learning ability based on their social and economic background. The embeddedness of

racism and the entrenchment of white privilege lead to “colorblind” policies and explanations for Latinx school underachievement (Villenas and Deyhle 414). Colorblind policies prevent the education system from providing equitable opportunities for those that are generally marginalized as opposed in insisting that everything is “equal” in the education system. Critical Race Theory then allows us to view the Latinx education experience in its true form and to uncover the disadvantages that students face.

Latinx students and their families are stereotyped to not believe in education or have a support system at home that encourages them to pursue a higher education. Sofia Villenas and Donna Deyhle assert that “teacher after teacher report that student failure is rooted in youth’s culture and language, their parents who “didn’t care,” and homes that were somewhat “unfit” to provide what youth needed for school success” (428). Villenas and Deyhle insist that teachers correlate the students’ behavior with their social background and create assumptions that create a barrier between the student and the teacher. Locating the problem outside of the school context gave comfort to the teachers but little hope for any institutional critique of either their expectations, pedagogy, or the limited school curriculum (Villenas and Deyhle 429). It is common for society to blame the family dynamic for the “failure” of the student in the education system, especially for Latinx students. In order to negate this negative stereotype, families must empower themselves not only to learn about how the United States education system operates, but also to learn how to make schools adjust to meet their needs without compromising the students’ language and culture (Villenas and Deyhle 442). Basically, the student and their family need to accommodate their situation by learning how to work the system in their favor. Latinx students and their families must recognize the social climate that they are in. Sofia Villenas and Donna Deyhle claim that “the goal of Latino educational success is linked to goals of self-

determination, linguistic and cultural human rights, and the right to history and education based on community-identified terms” (441). The education system is standardized based on tests and rarely addresses the cultural impact. It is critical to understand how the education system operates, the student’s place in this system that is often dictated by societal norms, and then transforming the system to ensure that it is functioning to benefit the student.

The racial tensions in America significantly impact institutions and how they function and interact with different ethnicities. Maria Ayala argues that “the racially driven hierarchical structural arrangements are highly responsible for students’ educational attainment” (1037). College attainment rates are based on the students’ availability of resources, social capital, and educational achievement. The low secondary and postsecondary educational attainment of Latinos explains not only their low mobility patterns but their entrapment in a cycle of poverty (Ayala 1037). The racial hierarchical structure is static and has not changed throughout history. Maria Ayala also argues that “the racial foundation of the United States is a critical factor in explaining socioeconomic differentials, particularly because race--as a social construction--influences the level and type of access that people have to resources and ascertains their position in the United States stratification system” (1038). America was founded on a racial hierarchical construction that has yet to be dismantled and still has an effect in our current society. The reality is that racial/ethnic groups continue to be geographically segregated, which shapes the form and level of racial/ethnic interaction that exists in schools (Ayala 1040). Economic disparities dictate where certain ethnic groups live, what they can afford, and the available opportunities around them. Segregation negatively effects the education system as it prevents minority students from gaining social capital that may improve their educational attainment rates (Ayala 1040). The inability of Latino students in segregated schools and neighborhoods to acquire “positive” social

capital may further promote the stratification of individual and community resources, thus impairing the quality of education for low income Latino students (Ayala 1041). It is a continuous cycle that Latinx students are trapped in based on their economic and social standing that is often difficult to improve. School administrators and policy makers previously utilized residential segregation as a technique to ensure that Latinx students did not attend the “white” schools that were better equipped. Maria Ayala insists that “cultural and structural explanations have been developed to explain the educational attainment of Latinos, but further research needs to examine the role of race and the hierarchical structures it produces to understand the factors that influence academic experience and attainment of Latinos” (1043). It is not enough to conclude the explanations; factors, such as race and cultural barriers, need to be further examined. The examination of the educational experience of Latinx students is essential to analyze their college attainment rates, and to determine the most effective strategies on how the education system can encourage Latinx students to pursue a higher education.

When it comes to the topic Latinx students’ success, parent engagement is vital. According to Edward Olivos’ statistics, Latino/a parents are generally underrepresented in their children’s schools (26). It is crucial to recognize the meaning of parental involvement in regards to the student’s motivation. Edward Olivos corrects society’s assumption and insists that “Latino parents do have an interest and desire to participate in their children’s education--what they lacked was the political consciousness necessary to grasp how the school system implicitly (and explicitly) works to discourage the active, authentic, and meaningful involvement of low-income, bicultural parents and communities” (29). Generally, parents are unaware of the political and social reasoning that influenced the creation and standards of American institutions. School administrators and teachers often assume that the parents are not supporting or encouraging their

child enough to succeed academically. Sofia Villenas and Donna Dehyle argue that “Latino culture(s) is publicly given as the reason for Latino school failure” (421). Society uses culture as an explanation as to why Latinx students have low college attainment rates and avoids the institutional disadvantages that Latinx students face. Edward Olivos claims that “school administrations resisted by: ignoring the parents completely, faulty promises of an “investigation”, and held meetings where Latino/a parents were not allowed to talk” (29). The relationship between Latinx parents and the school system is a “micro-reflection of societal tensions and conflicts in the areas of economic exploitation and institutional racism” (Olivos 31). Latinx parents were not accepted nor encouraged to be a part of their children’s education, yet were still blamed for their child’s “failures.” Sofia Villenas and Donna Deyhle expose how the stories of Latino/a parents “reveal how they were kept out of schools by the negative ways in which they are treated, by insensitive bureaucratic requirements” (415). The explicit and implicit actions of administrators and teachers complicates the situation and prevents parents from confronting these biased actions. The education system is therefore presented as an historically, materially, and economically influenced mechanism which functions as a tool of the dominant group in society (Olivos 31). Administrators, teachers, and various other personnel in the education system strongly influences students’ education attainment and significantly impact their future opportunities. Edward Olivos argues that the education system “is an institution that idealistically promotes itself as meritocratic, in which all the participants are treated equally and judged solely on merit, yet realistically reproduces the inequalities and inequities of society, based on class, race, gender, and more recently sexuality” (Olivos 32). The education system follows societal norms and racial climate. Sofia Villenas and Donna Deyhle agree and claim that “parental caring is not enough when schools are structured to fail children of color and when

institutional racism and anti-immigrant xenophobia grows rampant” (422). Parents can only do so much for their children in a system that does not encourage their participation and ignores their complaints. Edward Olivos insists that “parents need to challenge the institution of public education, which has historically resisted low-income bicultural parents, denying them a voice in their children’s education” (Olivos 27). It is a tedious, overwhelming battle to try to change the operations of the education system, but in the meantime Latinx students and parents need to strategically engage with the system to retrieve the benefits and resources that can enhance their social standing.

Latinx students must also take gendered familialism into account when they consider plans for their future. Familialism is an ideology that puts family values first by making the family an individual’s priority. Sarah Ovink considers familialism an “important concept for understanding the Latino/a college choice process because its gendered dimension has yet to be explicitly examined” (268). The gendered dimension of familialism often creates barriers and stigmas for Latinx students. Familialism alone has been found to be significant for Latina/o’s academic motivation (Ayala 1039). Familialism can have a positive impact on students’ ambitions but it also has the potential to discourage students as well. Sarah Ovink argues that “family and collective needs are privileged above individual ambitions” (266). This aspect can negatively affect students’ ambitions if their goals do not align with their family’s expectations or needs. Gendered familialism influences divergent interpretations of the value and meaning of college, leading to gendered college pathways (Ovink 269). Latinas mentioned feeling pressure from parents to succeed both educationally and financially at a much higher rate than Latinos/as (Ovink 274). However, Latinos/as related the necessity of higher learning through college completion almost exclusively to the need to provide for their future families (Ovink 275). It is

important to critically examine the complex effects of gendered familialism for Latinos' college pathways that assume women are more focused and decide on career paths early, while men have lower aspirations and attainment because they have more independence (Ovink 281). It affects every student differently, but it is a major factor in deciding a students' future. Gendered familialism represents a set of strategies employed as a response to Latinos/as' ongoing struggle for socioeconomic mobility and acceptance in U.S. society (Ovink 269). It assumes that the student must decide between their family and choosing to pursue a higher education, when in reality the Latinx students white counterpart generally do not have to deal with this predicament. This ideology shaped respondents' recognition that college was a new resource their generation could access to lift family fortunes (Ovink 274). Latinx students feed into the American Dream and believe education can benefit their future. Gendered college pathways may discourage Latinx students from pursuing a higher education by "choosing" their family's needs over their own and the society views this decision as a barrier rather than a cultural value.

The Latinx educational experience is critical to examine to assess the students' needs and to ensure that there is a focus and direct intention to increase their college attainment rates. Despite historical discrimination, Latinx students should be encouraged and supported in their early adolescence to pursue a higher education despite their social and economic background.

How AVID Plays a Role

Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) was established in 1980 to support and enhance the learning of underserved, low-socioeconomic background, and underrepresented students. Aliber Lozano claims that “statistics show that AVID students outperformed their non-AVID classmate on various standardized tests and attended school more often (96). Aliber Lozano argues that “when students have access to rigorous curriculum via intervention programs at the secondary level, Hispanic students can be prepared for college and attain the necessary academic resources that may increase their likelihood to enter, and succeed in post-secondary curriculum” (107). AVID provides support while challenging students to achieve academically. Anne Black insists that “rigorous coursework during high school has been cited as the single most important predictor of college success” (112). By challenging the student in high school, it prepares the student for the rigorous college course load. Current tracking practices tend to place minority students in academic tracks that do not permit entrance into four-year colleges and universities (Black 112). Historically, minority students are placed in vocational programs that do not always require a college degree. Anne Black also reveals how the AVID program “selects students for participation who are: of ethnic, linguistic, or economic backgrounds that are historically underrepresented in 4-year colleges, who face obstacles to college enrollment, or who would be the first in their families to attend college” (113). AVID targets students who need the utmost support and resources. Early interventions and sustained support systems, such as AVID, increases the likelihood of enrolling and completing a post-secondary degree (Lozano 108). It is critical that AVID, and other outreach programs remain funded to continue to support students. The public education system needs to support intervention programs that target non-traditional college goers like Hispanic students (Lozano 108). The AVID program attempts to

close the education gap and should be supported and funded to reach out to an extended number of students. Anne Black argues that the “positive program effects have been reported in enrollment in advanced courses and college enrollment and acceptance rates” (113). Students learn organizational and note taking skills that can positively impact their academic achievements. Anne Black also uncovers “when asked, students believe that the AVID program influenced their lives in a positive way” (121). AVID is a resourceful program that targets students who are often marginalized and are not considered typical “college goers.” It could be even more impactful if the AVID program emphasized the topic of college in middle school as opposed to just in high school.

The AVID program can only do so much and cannot reach every student in need of extra support. Albier Lozano claims that the “enrollment of Hispanics in college represent is the highest growth of all ethnic groups, but they still remain the ethnic group least likely to go to college” (93). This could suggest that Hispanic students may not be enrolled in the AVID program, or do not have access, or are not aware of the outreach programs that can assist them with their academic goals. Lozano suggests that “we can improve enrollment rates by: setting new and higher expectations for Hispanic students by helping parents navigate the educational system, developing educational partnerships, and by implementing nationwide awareness on college preparation” (93). Parental involvement and an emphasis on awareness can significantly affect students’ decisions about their future. Generally, students enrolled in intervention programs have had higher aspirations than students not enrolled in such programs (Lozano 94). Mentors and educators can be role models and inspire students, but only if the student has access to this connection. Plans and aspirations accounted for much of the variation in the post-high school success of seniors (Lozano 94). It is not easy to make decisions at a young age about the

future, but to have the support and guidance from counselors and mentors can simplify the process. However, aspirations alone are not sufficient to overcome poor academic preparation, so we need to include post-secondary plans (Lozano 94). It is not enough to feel inspired to attend college, students need to have a plan on how to achieve their goals and anticipate how their current actions will affect their plans. Anticipation of college enrollment has tended to decline as students progress throughout their high school careers (Lozano 94). To increase college enrollment for Hispanic students, we need academic preparation, increased educational aspirations, and financial assistance (Lozano 95). Latinx students need mentors and early exposure to college related information to increase their college attainment rates. Middle school students who are enrolled in AVID are better prepared to achieve academically, but all students should also learn about how to be a competitive applicant during early adolescence to enhance their future opportunities.

Benefits to Presentations and Technology

PowerPoint Presentations are user friendly and are a common tool utilized to share information. The PowerPoint slides are main component in my research because it contains the information that the students' will receive and attempt to increase their knowledge about college. Patrick Akos reveals that "classroom guidance lessons are an efficient way for school counselors to inform students about school wide opportunities, distribute information, address students' needs, and is an effective way to impact student development" (455). As previously mentioned, counselors are usually unable to meet with students individually to discuss their future opportunities, so a presentation can gather many students in one are to share valuable information. Richard Radcliffe and Beth Bos proclaim that "there is a positive effect on student's college perceptions when students: investigate their careers, have role models, are given presentations, and specifically presentations about college preparation and life" (88). The information in the slides is generalized, but the handouts are personalized for the students' own interests. Patrick Akos argues that "classroom guidance is an effective way to impact student development by utilizing the use of questioning, discussion techniques, and classroom management strategies" (456). Presentations in the classroom allows students to ask questions and create an interactive environment. It is also essential for counselors and teachers to collaborate to ensure that the guidance and curriculum complements regular instruction (Akos, et al. 456). This intervention program should change the pace of the classroom but it will need to be supported by the teacher to demonstrate a positive environment to the students. David Slykhuis suggests that "by embedding technology into instruction, it can ultimately improve student learning (510). Technology is being used more competently by more people from all nationalities, age-groups, and socioeconomic levels and PowerPoint is debatably the most

universally known technology (Slykhuis et al. 510). Majority of students are exposed to some form of technology at home, so it will be beneficial to have it in the classroom as well. In PowerPoint, you will not get confused between the caption and the main text (Slykhuis et al. 510). Yen Shou agrees that “this method of simply projecting a lecture onto a screen in front of a classroom has shown to provide excellent results” (43). PowerPoint presentations will engage students and keep them focused throughout the program. The use of PowerPoint in a lecture has shown that it can improve the note-taking ability of students while they study the teaching materials (Lai, et al. 43). This will assist students with retaining the information when they complete the post-survey handout after the completion of the six-week intervention program. PowerPoint presentations can be effective for students’ self-efficacy and attitude towards learning (Lai, et al. 43). I attempted to keep the PowerPoint slides as concise and informative as possible to prevent it from becoming overwhelming, but provide just the right amount of information. However, simply showing students a PowerPoint slide is not enough, the presenter needs to include annotations, or additional data, to explain the specific part of the content (Lai, et al. 44). I included images to illustrate the discussion topic and its importance, and created handouts for students to complete afterwards. Yen Shou Lai insists that “multimedia presentations, words and pictures, with annotations may be most effective for students because then the students can select the annotations that best fit their needs and preferences” (54). It is important to ensure that the students are attentive and absorbing the information in the presentations. Studies have shown that when active learning occurs, this information is stored in long term memory” (Slykhuis 511). Students need to be actively engaged not just so the students can complete the post-survey, but so they can retain this information throughout high school as well. These studies also demonstrate how student’s achievement improved with the benefit of

technology” (Tiene and Luft 23). The information in the PowerPoint slides is meant to inform students about the value and benefits of college so the use of technology can enhance their memory of the information. Technology can shift classroom dynamics which can lead to increased motivation and enhanced levels of cooperation (Tiene and Luft 23). For a duration of six weeks, students will have a visitor in their classroom that presents information that they may not receive in another class. Drew Tiene and Pamela Luft also suggest that when “technology is offered in the classroom, teachers spend more time with their students learning than “teaching” them” (Tiene and Luft 28). When laptops are involved, students spent more time discovering what they need to know rather than by sitting and listening to the teacher lecture (Tiene and Luft 28). The students’ handouts are essential to allow the students to research their own interests. Technology can transform the classroom into an interactive learning environment that can positively benefit the student. Specifically, PowerPoint presentations are useful to address a larger body of students and to inform them about their future opportunities.

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MAP FOR GUIDE

This section focuses on the interactive aspects of the project and further explains the details of the six-week intervention program. After receiving signed parent consent forms and student assent forms, the students should complete the pre-survey before beginning the PowerPoint presentations to assess their current levels of knowledge and ambition. A new topic will be introduced weekly to provide students with a variety of information pertaining to college. After each discussion prompt, the students will be asked to complete a handout, a take-home assignment, or an in-class activity. After the completion of the presentations, the students will be asked to complete a post-survey to assess if their levels of knowledge and ambitions increased or altered in any way.

PRE-SURVEY

The Pre-Survey is designed to understand the students' level of knowledge about college, their personal background, and if they have been pre-exposed to the relevant information in the presentations by a relative or mentor. The survey asks if the students believe they will graduate from high school, what their plans are after high school, their parents' level of education, and it explores the students' level of ambition to want to attend college.

Pre-Survey

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and check off the appropriate square.

1. Gender: ☐ male ☐ female

2. Do you agree with the following statement: "I will graduate from High School."

☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree

3. What do you plan to do after high school? (mark all that apply)

☐ work full-time ☐ attend college full-time ☐ work part-time ☐ undecided
☐ join military ☐ attend college part-time ☐ other _____ (specify)

4. What language(s) is spoken at home? (Mark all that apply)

☐ English ☐ other _____ (specify)

5. Were you born in: (Mark one) ☐ the United States ☐ another country ☐ Do not wish to answer

6. What is the highest level of education obtained by each of your parents (or guardians)?
(Mark one in each column)

	Mother	Father	Other Parent/Guardian
Less than high school			
High School graduate			
Education after high school			
Some college (community, 4-year)			
College graduate (Bachelor's degree)			
Graduate/ Professional Degree (Master's, Doctorate, Law, Medicine)			
Not sure			

7. How many of your siblings attend college or are college graduates? (Mark one)

☐ none ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 or more ☐ does not apply (only child)

8. Your race/ethnicity: (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ African American/Black ☐ Mexican American ☐ Filipino American
☐ East Indian/Pakistani ☐ American Indian ☐ Other Latino(a)
☐ Japanese American ☐ Caucasian/White ☐ Chinese American
☐ Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian) ☐ Puerto Rican
☐ Korean American ☐ Other _____ (specify) ☐ Do not wish to answer

9. How many honors courses have you taken in middle school?

- ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 or more

10. Do you agree with the following statement: "I want to go to college."

- ☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree

11. Do you agree with the following statement: "I think I want to go to college."

- ☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree

12. Do you agree with the following statement: "It is important for me to go to college."

- ☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree

13. Do you agree with the following statement: "I will most likely attend college."

- ☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree

14. Do you think you will enroll in AVID while in High School?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

15. Would you be the first one in your family to attend college?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

16. Have your parents talked to you about college?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

17. Has your counselor brought up the topic about college?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

18. Have any of your siblings spoken to you about college?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ only child ☐ Sometimes

19. Are you familiar with what AVID is?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

20. Are you familiar with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

21. Do you know about how many different college systems there are to choose from?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

22. Do you know the admission requirements for a Community College?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

23. Do you know the admission requirements for a California State University college?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

24. Do you know the admission requirements for the University of California (UC) system?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

25. Do you know the different types of financial aid that are offered?

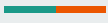
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

26. Do you know what the "A-G" Requirements are?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

UNITS 1-6

Each unit should be presented by introducing the topic, a brief explanation of the goals, a presentation of the corresponding slides for the prompt, and asking the students to complete the student handout afterwards. I included the title slide and list of prompts from the main PowerPoint presentation. It is up to the educators' discretion and the school site to determine the exact timeline of the program and how often classroom visits are allowed.



University Honors Capstone Research Project

Prompts and Presentations

Presented by Sabrina Garcia
Fourth Year, Liberal Studies Major at University of California, Riverside (UCR)

Prompt Questions:

- #1: What does your future look like?
- #2: The Value of College
- #3: College Systems
- #4: Demystifying FAFSA
- #5: How to be prepared in High School
- #6: Reflection

Unit 1: “What does your future look like?”

This topic intends to have students think critically about their future and to set goals for themselves. The worksheet will ask students to make a list of short and long term goals to give them motivation to accomplish one in the near future. It will also help them think realistically about their future when they are asked to write down the requirements needed to achieve their goals. The take-home handout asks students to visualize their future at three different ages in their life to determine if their current levels of ambition match their goals.

Handout: “Goals Worksheet” (in-class); “Draw Out Your Future” (take-home)

Prompt #1:

What does your future look like?

GOALS

- Make a list of short term goals and long term goals that you have for yourself
- What are the requirements needed in order to achieve those goals?

Short Term and Long Term Goals

Your goals can be about or related to your academics, personal, social, financially, learning ability, and health.

Short Term Goals: (Next week, month, within the year, or next couple of years- High School related)

Long Term Goals: (After High School, the next five to ten years)

What needs to be done first?

-Short term:

-Long Term:

Draw Out Your Future

- ☐ Take home a piece of construction paper from class
- ☐ Total of three different times you will draw your future:
 - 14/15 years old, Freshmen year of high school (in 1 year)
 - 17/18 years old, Senior Year/Graduation (in 4 years)
 - 25 years old
- ☐ You can use a pencil, markers, or crayons to draw this
- ☐ It does not have to be colorful, just make sure you draw your future for each age
- ☐ Turn in next week: _____ (insert date later)

Unit 2: “The Value of College”

This topic aims to ask the students why they should want to attend college. It informs the students of the benefits they can receive if they attend college and how it could positively enhance the amount of future opportunities. The presentation includes statistics about the professions that require at least a bachelor’s degree. The discussion prompt asks students to think about the educational requirements and salary amounts based on education levels. The career research handout asks students to choose three career choices and research the tasks/responsibilities, the educational requirements, the average salary, and answer why they chose to research this career.

Handout: “Career Research”

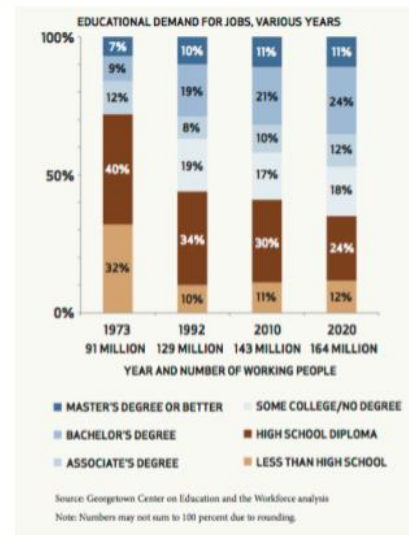
Prompt #2

The Value of College

Why should I go to college?

A need for a degree

- 35% of jobs need at least a bachelor's degree
- Can barely get a job if you do not graduate from High School
- Ask yourself how much money do you want to make?
- It is more important to love what you do everyday rather than the dollar amount you earn

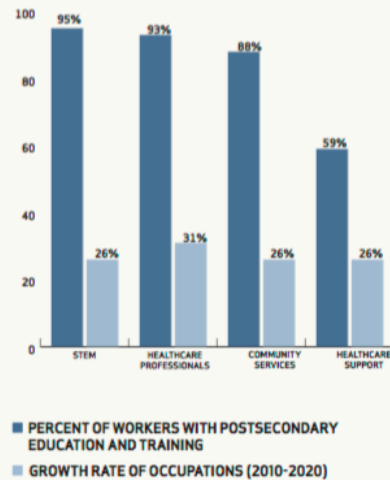


Carnevale, et. al., "Recovery Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020" *Center on Education and the Workforce*.

Types of Jobs

- Be realistic about your career choice
- You can't be a dog walker for your entire life but if you love animals look into veterinary school and jobs related to that field

THE FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS REQUIRE HIGH LEVELS OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION



Carnevale, et. al., "Recovery Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020" Center on Education and the Workforce.

Examples of Careers

Mechanic= 2-year college

FBI Agent=4-year college

College Professor= More than 4 years

Career School	Two-year College	Four-year College	More Than Four Years
Barber or hairstylist	Bookkeeper	Accountant	Archaeologist
Carpenter	Childcare worker	Athletic trainer	Architect
Disc jockey (deejay)	Computer and office equipment repairer	Computer programmer	Astronaut or aerospace engineer
Electrician	Dental hygienist*	Conservation scientist	College professor
Plumber	Firefighter*	Engineer	Dentist
	Mechanic	FBI agent	Doctor
	Nurse*	Graphic designer	Judge
	Paralegal	High school coach	Lawyer
	Physical therapist assistant	Industrial designer	Minister, priest, or rabbi
	Restaurant manager†	Pilot	Pharmacist
	Web developer	Probation officer	Principal
	Zookeeper*	Reporter	Psychologist
		Social worker	Scientist
		Sportscaster/news reporter	Urban planner
		Teacher**	Veterinarian
		Writer	

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/my-future-my-way.pdf>



Career Searching

- Look up a career choice that you might be interested in
 - Try to research at least 3 different careers
- Fill out the “Career Research Worksheet” by answering:
 - What the tasks are, the national average salary, and why you chose this specific career

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Career Research Worksheet

(1) Career Choice:

Describe what people in this career field do (tasks and responsibilities):

What are the educational requirements?

What is the national average salary?

Why did you choose this career choice?

(2) Career Choice:

Describe what people in this career field do (tasks and responsibilities):

What are the educational requirements?

What is the national average salary?

Why did you choose this career choice?

(3) Career Choice:

Describe what people in this career field do (tasks and responsibilities):

What are the educational requirements?

What is the national average salary?

Why did you choose this career choice?

Unit 3: “College Systems”

This topic discusses the different types of college systems that exist. Each slide gives a detailed description of the University of California System (UC), California State University System (CSU), California Community College System (CCC), and Private and Independent Colleges/Universities. The presentation informs students about the difference in entrance requirements for each system and emphasizes that the college systems are not ranked. The handout provides an opportunity for the student to research a school of their choice. The handout asks if the institution is public or private, student population size, the student to teacher ratio, the diversity percentage, popular majors, and it asks the students to answer if they would attend and why. Researching schools could motivate students to want to succeed academically to attend their dream school.

Handout: “College Profile”

Prompt #3

College Systems

General Info

- Total of 4 systems
- They are not ranked accordingly
- Everyone receives general education courses in the beginning
- It is up to you where you want to go

*Californiacolleges.edu

*College search tool: <https://www.californiacolleges.edu/#/search>

University of California System (UC)

- Founded in 1868, designated as the state's primary institution for academic research
- Develop academic and scientific research skills
- Emphasis on theoretical and analytical learning
- Assumes graduates will pursue a higher degree
- Total of 9 UC Campuses
- Must have a minimum 3.0 GPA
- Most important factors= A-G GPA, quality of courses (AP, honors), SAT/ACT scores, extracurricular involvement
- Tuition= \$ 13,500

Popular Programs:

Biological & Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Engineering and Computer Sciences, Ethnic Studies, Social Sciences, Language and Literature, Humanities, Math & Physical Sciences



<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu>

California State University System (CSU)

- Founded in 1857, the institution's primary purpose was for teacher education
- Practical based instruction with career orientation
- Theory and research included but not emphasized
- Assumes graduates will enter workforce in non-research oriented careers
- Total of 23 campuses
- Applicants must have a minimum 2.0 GPA, and need SAT/ACT scores
- Cost of tuition= \$5,472

Popular Programs: Journalism, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Kinesiology, Speech-Pathology, Music/Audio Recording, Animation/Game Development, Interior/ Fashion Design, Social Work, Business/ Accounting



calstate.edu

California Community College System (CCC)

- Established in 1967, with the goal of fulfilling the need for post-secondary education
- Educates California's first-responders, provides job training and industrial skills, and is a pathway to bachelor's degrees
- Students enter the workforce or transfer to any bachelor's degree granting institution
- Total of 113 colleges
- Any high school graduate or student aged 18 or over are eligible to attend any community college campus
- Complete your general education and then transfer to a four-year university
- Tuition = \$46 per unit

Unique Programs: Automotive/Aircraft Technology, Cosmetology & Barbering, Fire Technology, Culinary Arts, Dental Assisting, and Nursing Assisting

www.cccco.edu

Private and Independent Colleges/Universities

- California has 79 accredited, non-profit campuses that grant Bachelor's Master's, and Doctoral degrees
- Application process varies by campus, and A-G coursework may not satisfy their admission requirements
- Can find most of the campuses and requirements through the common application
- Attractive features: prestige, low staff to student ratio, financial aid awards, religious affiliation, and small campus size
- Average tuition is \$45,000 a year

**Stanford, USC, Pepperdine, University of La Verne, University of Redlands, Cal Baptist University*

<https://college.lattc.edu/utc/choose-the-right-college-or-university/california-private-independent-colleges-and-universities/>



College Profile Worksheet

- Decide on one school to research (CCC, CSU, UC, or Private)
 - Google the school's name
 - Figure out:
 - If it is public or private
 - Location
 - Size (how many students)
 - Tuition
 - Student/teacher ratio
 - Diversity
 - Popular Majors
 - Pros/ Cons about the campus
 - Decide why you would want to attend
-

College Profile Worksheet

College Name Public or Private

Location (City & State)

Size

Year Founded

Tuition & Fees

Student/
Teacher Ratio

Diversity

_____ % Female
_____ % Male
_____ % White
_____ % African American
_____ % Hispanic
_____ % Asian
_____ % Other

Would you attend? Why?

Popular Majors

Campus Pro

Campus Con

Unit 4: “Demystifying the FAFSA”

This topic aims to inform students about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), their eligibility, and enlighten students of other resources to cover the tuition costs. The presentation explains the different types of funding opportunities such as: Scholarships, Work-Study, Loans, Grants, and specifically, the Cal Grant. There is a short activity included in the presentation for students to complete a word puzzle to distinguish between the different funding opportunities. There is also a slide focusing on the California Dream Act application to inform students that they are still eligible to attend college even if they are not considered a U.S. citizen or fulfill all the requirements for the FAFSA application. At the end, there is a reminder slide to emphasize that there are different types of funding that can be used to pay tuition.

Handout: In-class activity

Prompt #4

Demystifying FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- Financial aid is money to help pay for college or career school
- This money can come from the U.S. government, the state where you live, or the college you attend
- But you have to APPLY for it
- Complete the application your senior year of high school
 - Should complete the application to find out if you qualify for student aid
- Different types: scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans
 - Grants and scholarships do not have to be paid back
 - Work-study is a job that helps you earn money to pay for your education
 - A loan is money that must be paid back
- Needs to be completed so schools can create your financial aid package

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/my-future-my-way.pdf>

Scholarships

- May pay for all or part of your education
- They are not “need based”
- Can be based on:
 - Good grades
 - Certain religious, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds
 - Athletic, artistic, or creative abilities
- Businesses and community organizations offer some
- Some colleges offer some for incoming, transfer, and continuing students
 - UCR offers a grant for living on campus

Grants

- Usually need to demonstrate a financial need
 - If you go to school in California, you are eligible for the *Cal Grant*
 - Cal Grant: it is money for college you DO NOT have to pay back
 - Your eligibility is based on your responses on the FAFSA so you need to apply for FAFSA FIRST
 - 3 different types (A,B,C)
 - Cal Grant A
 - Will help pay for tuition and fees at four-year colleges
 - Award amounts vary by college-- UC= 12, 240; CSU=5, 472; Independent college= 9,084
 - High School GPA Requirement of a 3.0
 - Requires that your course of study leads directly to an associate or bachelor’s degree
-

Cal Grant

- Cal Grant B
 - Provides a living allowance plus tuition and fee assistance after the first year at a two-year or four-year college
 - Requires a 2.0 GPA
- Cal Grant C
 - Assists with the cost of a technical or career education
 - \$500 for books, \$2,500 for tuition and fees (that is not a community college, they don't charge "tuition" only charge by unit)
 - Is available for up to 2 years

Activity

Complete this wordsearch together

1. Job that helps you earn money to pay for college

k w o r - u t y s d

2. Financial aid award that you don't have to repay; usually based on need

n a r g t

3. Form you must complete to be eligible for federal student aid

A F S A F

4. Financial aid award that you must pay back, typically with interest

n o i a

5. Financial aid award that you don't have to repay; usually based on good grades, talents, or skills

p i c l o r h a s s h

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/my-future-my-way.pdf>

California Dream Act Application

- If you are not a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident you still may qualify for financial aid due to recent changes in California Law

If you are undocumented:

- And have social security number, you are eligible to apply
 - your parents do not need a social security number; their status does not affect your ability to complete the FAFSA
- Are not eligible for federal aid

*Currently, California, Minnesota, New Mexico, Texas, Washington provide financial aid to undocumented students

<http://www.csac.ca.gov/california-dream-act>

Reminder:

3 Types of Federal Student Aid

1	2	3
GRANTS	LOANS	WORK-STUDY
Free money.	Borrowed money.	Earned money.
Grants are usually based on financial need and don't have to be repaid.	Loans are an investment in your future. But remember, they must be repaid with interest.	A work-study job lets you earn money while you're in school.

Federal Student Aid
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Learn more at StudentAid.gov/types. Apply at www.fafsa.gov.

Unit 5: “How to be Prepared in High School”

This topic informs students of the high school graduation requirements and suggests ways to become a competitive applicant. The presentation includes a chart that lists the A-G requirements, emphasizes the importance of a GPA and participation in extra-curricular activities, and encourages students to join AVID while they are in high school. The students will be asked to reflect on the previous presentation slides and write down two questions that they may have or list two interesting facts that they did not know before.

Handout: “Reflection”

Prompt #5

How to be prepared in High School

A-G Requirements

High School Subject Area	State Mandated Requirements	UC Requirements	CSU Requirements
English	3 years	4 years	4 years
Mathematics	2 Years	3 years (4 years)	3 years
Social Studies/Science	3 years	2 years	2 years
Science	2 years	2 years (3 years)	2 years
Foreign Language	1 year	2 years (3 years)	2 years (same)
Visual Performing Arts	1 year	1 year	1 year
Physical Education	2 years	Not applicable	Not applicable
Electives	Not applicable	1 year	1 year



Importance of GPA

- A-G GPA= 10-12 grade
- First year of HS grades do not count towards your GPA that you will apply with
- HOWEVER
 - If you fail any of your classes your first year, then you will have to take summer school, repeat the class, or fall behind in the subject
- AP and Honors courses can give you an extra point to help you boost your GPA

Example: What happens if you fail english your first year of High School?



Extra-Curricular Activities

- Admissions is not solely based on GPA
 - Schools look for what else you are involved in
 - Join as many clubs as you can take on, or get involved in sports
-



AVID

- It becomes more college focused in High School
 - Still have tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are still required to turn in AVID Notes
 - Help you write personal statements, research schools, take you on tours during your junior and senior year
-



Assignment:

- Reflect on the previous presentations and write down 2 questions about what you are still unsure of or about something I did not cover
 - If you cannot come up with a question, write down two facts that you found interesting or a topic that helped you the most
 - We will discuss these next week
-

Reflections

Complete this activity and I will use your responses to answer your questions next week:

- Write down at least 2 questions that you still have related to the presentations or related to a topic that I did not cover
- If you do not have any questions, please state at least two interesting facts or list topics that you found most helpful:

Unit 6: “Reflection”

This topic aims to reflect on the previous presentations and to answer the questions from the reflection handout, or point out the interesting facts that the students wrote down. The presentation ties up any loose ends and allows the students a platform to ask more questions that may not have been covered in the PowerPoint. The presentation is left open-ended and is based on the needs of the students.

Prompt #6 Reflection

Questions/ Interesting Facts

POST-SURVEY

The post-survey asks similar questions from the pre-survey handout but asks less about their personal background. The post-survey responses will be compared to the pre-survey responses to determine if the presentations influenced their beliefs and ambitions, and it assesses their knowledge of the information covered in the presentations. The post-survey also includes a response section for the students to write the answer to the questions about logistical information to ensure that the student correctly retained the material from the presentations.

Post-Survey

1. **Gender:** ☐ male ☐ female
2. **Your race/ethnicity:** (Mark all that apply)
☐ African American/Black ☐ Mexican American ☐ Filipino American
☐ East Indian/Pakistani ☐ American Indian ☐ Other Latino(a)
☐ Japanese American ☐ Caucasian/White ☐ Chinese American
☐ Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian) ☐ Puerto Rican
☐ Korean American ☐ Other _____ (specify) ☐ Do not wish to answer
3. **Do you agree with the following statement:** "I will graduate from High School."
☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree
4. **What do you plan to do after high school? (mark all that apply)**
☐ work full-time ☐ attend college full-time ☐ work part-time ☐ undecided
☐ join military ☐ attend college part-time ☐ Other _____ (specify)
5. **Do you agree with the following statement:** "I want to go to college."
☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree
6. **Do you agree with the following statement:** "I think I want to go to college."
☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree
7. **Do you agree with the following statement:** "It is important for me to go to college."
☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree
8. **Do you agree with the following statement:** "I will most likely attend college."
☐ Don't Agree ☐ Agree a little ☐ Agree a lot ☐ Completely Agree
9. **Do you think you will enroll in AVID while in High School?**
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

10. Are you familiar with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please describe it _____

11. Do you know how many different college systems there are to choose from?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please list them _____

12. Do you know the admission requirements for a Community College?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please list them _____

13. Do you know the admission requirements for a California State University college?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please list them _____

14. Do you know the admission requirements for the University of California (UC) system?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please list them _____

15. Do you know the different types of financial aid that are offered?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please list them _____

16. Do you know what the "A-G" Requirements are?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ A little bit ☐ Not sure

If yes, please list them _____

CONCLUSION

I transformed my original aims and research into a guide for other educators and mentors to utilize if they felt motivated to work with middle school students and inform them about their future opportunities. The goal of this intervention program is not to enforce the idea that college is the only way to be successful in life. However, students should be a part of a college going culture at an early adolescence to ensure that they are aware of all their opportunities. If students believe that they can achieve further than their previous expectations, I hope that this proposed intervention will inspire and motivate students to make better informed decisions about their future. This college intervention program is just one way to create a college going culture and a motivational environment for students during early adolescence. Future educators could even take it a step further to follow some of the middle school students who were part of the intervention program throughout their high school education to analyze their educational outcome. Or possibly implementing this program in a University setting that allows college students to volunteer to become a mentor and present the program at local middle schools. There are various implications to broaden the program to reach a vast number of students. The content from this program could be distributed in a variety of ways to negate accessibility issues. Although there are already a variety of outreach programs accessible to students, it is critical to emphasize that this intervention program targets middle school students. I would like to think that I positively influenced the eighth-grade student that I met during my visit at my local middle school to want to attend college or that I at least motivated him to research his options. Whether the student decides that college is in their future or not, students should feel confident about their decisions. There are many cases where students are discouraged at an early age that hinder their

ambitions. Middle school students need to be well-informed and supported to make better informed decisions about their future.