

First Year Experience: How Lack of Support Affects Educational Motivation in First Generation Students

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Abstract: *In our ethnography we researched first year, first generation students in hopes to address those who lack crucial support needed to fuel an educational drive. Student support programs specific to this group have the potential of benefiting those in need or enhancing the drive already there. Through interviews, it has been uncovered that not every student is fortunate enough to feel the support from their family. As a group we are hoping to provide solutions to these students who are engulfed with feelings of being lost when stepping onto a university campus as a first year, first generation student. In the end it was concluded that support has a positive effect on student's academic motivation. Student support programs proved to serve their purpose.*

Research Question:

How much of an effect does motivation (personal motivation, family support, etc...) have on the transition into a university for first year, first generation students? Do student support programs have the capabilities to fill potential voids/break barriers?

We researched...

- First generation students (18+ years of age)
- Support program enrollees, friends

Important Because...

- University can better tend to support deprived students
- Filling voids leads to enhancement of crucial motivation

Methods:

Interviews

- In person and over video chat, with one interviewer and two note takers
- TRIO and REACH students and friends
- Annotated to identify themes and created a table to track themes

Auto-ethnography

- Self-reflection based on the research gathered
- Used it to discuss our own stories and barriers because we are first generation students
 - Axiriz's personal story (no family motivation)

Results:

Result 1: Not all students have family support

- Leads to higher levels of self motivation
- More inclined to attend a university because of seeing parent(s) struggle
- More likely to join a student program because lack of support from home

Result 2: Student support programs helped

- Filled voids
- Provided “community”
- Guidance

Recommendations:

- Chico State can help benefit students if more support programs are encouraged.
 - Chico State has a few programs designed to alleviate this added stress but most of these programs are strongly directed towards those who derive from a more disadvantaged background:, they aren't inclusive to any and all students
- Stronger advertising would allow more students to become aware of rewarding programs.
 - Throughout our interviews, those students who were not aware of student support programs had a stronger inclination to join after having received a rundown of its purpose.

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