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English Language Learners transitioning from high school to college: A case study on the Upward Bound program for ELLs at Rowan University

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TRANSITIONING FROM HIGH SCHOOL
TO COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY ON THE UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM
FOR ELLs AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

by
Margarita Olivencia

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Dedications

To my husband Victor Carstarphen, your support and encouragement goes without saying. From the very beginning you believed in me, even when I doubted myself. Through this academic journey, you were always in my corner, my number one cheerleader, and for that alone I will always be grateful.

To my father Zacarias, I did it Papi! You always told me to be a person of my word. If I say I am going to do it, than do it. You told me I would have my challenges as a woman, but to never let anything or anyone stand in the way of my dreams. As you look down from heaven, I hope you're proud of your little girl.

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Now for the reason why all this matters, to my greatest love of all, My Island - Isla-Mia, you are the reason why I have purpose in my life. From the moment I heard your heartbeat, you were my motivation to finish. When you were born, the sparkle in your eyes was my guiding light. I pray that you put God first in everything that you do and strive for success. Please remember my love, you can do anything you put your mind to. No excuses! You are destined for greatness. Don't ever forget it. I love you always and forever. Now, I pass my baton to you.

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Completing this education journey is a true blessing and to God be the Glory!

Abstract

Margarita Olivencia
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TRANSITIONING FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO
COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY ON THE UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM
FOR ELLs AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY
2016-2017
MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education

The purpose of this study was to examine and document the role the Upward
Bound program played in Upward Bound alumni's transition from high school to Rowan
University applying Maeroff's (1999) four-sense model of effective educational
programs.

This study gave ELL Upward Bound alumni students a voice using a qualitative
study with semi-structured interviews. A total of 10 former Upward Bound alumni were
interviewed, all of who were current Rowan students.

Key findings of the study indicate that the Upward Bound program contributed to
their academic, social development, and motivation to seek institutions of higher learning
and played a significant role during their transition to Rowan University. Although the
Upward Bound program served as a gateway to Rowan University, what fundamentally
drove the participants to enroll and continue to persist at the university was self-efficacy.

Finally this study offers a student's perspective on this topic by using Upward
Bound ELL alumni's rich description of their challenges and experiences faced during
their transition into college and as current college students within the theoretical
framework of social capital.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

 "The support of my family to come to college it was enormous; it was really big because they all were saying okay you have to go to college…you don't want to end up like us."

-HR, English Language Learner[1] (ELL) Former Upward Bound English Language Learner

Growing up in an urban environment plagued with drugs, alcohol, and crime was my parents' motivation to keep me focused on education and use it as a way out of poverty. Education became my ladder to the future. I am the youngest of four sisters and the only one who finished high school and went on to college. Neither of my parents finished high school, but they were very hard workers. All the members of my family made sure I would not make the same mistakes they did. They would constantly acknowledge the fact I would be the one to make them proud. As a first-generation, low-income Latina student, I encountered additional challenges. Although I was viewed as a "savior" to my family or a way out of poverty and less desirable living conditions, I struggled in four areas: (a) academically, (b) financially, (c) psychologically, and (d) professionally; my family was unable to assist me in any of these areas (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Baum & Flores, 2011; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Choy, 2001; Hsiao, 1992).

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[1]**English Language Learners (ELLs).** A K-12 academic term that refers to students who a speak language other than English at home; testing indicates these students have some limitations in their English language abilities, whether it is speaking, listening, reading, writing, or a combination of two or more. Other terms often times used interchangeably with ELLs are *Limited English Proficient* (LEP) and *English as a Second Language* (ESL) student ("Glossary," n.d.). Once matriculated in college, students are identified by race and ethnicity.

Research indicates that low-income, often first-generation, families feel ill-equipped to provide advice to their children (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, 2007; Choy, 2001; Choy, Horn, Nuñez, & Chen, 2000; Conley, 2007, 2008; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Steinberg, Brown, Cider, Kaczmark, & Larro, 1998), are more reliant upon the school to properly prepare their children (Hsiao, 1992; Snell, 2008), and are more likely to have their children enroll in remedial college coursework (Conley, 2007, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2005; Xianglei, 2005). They may even be less optimistic in believing their children have the ability to pursue higher education, which, in turn, may influence parenting behaviors that reduce opportunity (Choy, 2001; Choy et al., 2000; Duncan, Brooks, Gunn, Yeung, & Smith, 1998; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Steinberg et al., 1998). That is not to say the parents are uncaring or do not want their children to succeed. In many cases, parents want to be involved, but they are not sure what level of involvement is appropriate and what advice to provide. Despite this fact, parents' high expectations of their children in becoming the ones to make them proud are key motivators for students to do well in school, go to college, and continue to make positive change in their overall lives (Baum & Flores, 2011; Somers, Woodhouse, & Cofer, 2004; Steinberg et al., 1998).

HR's story is similar to my story. Our parents are Latino immigrants with no formal education who worked in factories to make a living. Both of our parents spent more than half of their lives working in factories, occasionally bringing us with them while they worked to demonstrate a significant lesson that would forever change the course of each of our lives.

As I reflect on HR's story, the similarities between our lives are striking, despite a

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twenty-year difference in age. For us, our way out of working in a factory and of poverty was by attending a four-year college and attaining a degree. Educational attainment was the only answer. The only significant differences between us during our precollege years were the educational programs available in HR's high school. These precollege programs are vehicles for high school students to prepare for college life, discover school programming, and identify colleges that best fit their individual needs (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Kallison & Stader, 2012; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Ishitani, 2003; Ng, Wendell & Lombardi, 2012, 2014; Perna, 2002, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013; Perna & Swail, 2001; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

National College Enrollment

The majority of high school graduates will need a postsecondary education in order to live a financially stable life and be prepared to deal with social, political, and cultural challenges. (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; McCabe, 2000). Overall interest in attending college is nearly universal. In a recent report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BOLS), of the nearly 3 million youth aged 16 to 24 who graduated from high school between January and October 2013, about 2 million (65.9 %) were enrolled in college in October (U.S. Department Of Labor (USDOL), BOLS, 2014). Additionally, the pool of college eligible students has become more racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse than ever. For instance, women now outnumber men and more students from historically underrepresented groups are attending college. In the 2013 graduating class, the college enrollment rate was 72.6% for high school women and 65.8 % for high school men (USDOL, BOLS, 2016). The college enrollment rate of Asians (83%) was higher than the rates for recent White (71.1 %), Black (54.6 %), and

Hispanic (68.9 %) graduates (USDOL, BOLS, 2016).

As is clear from these statistics though, African American and Latino students continue to lag behind White and Asian students (Harvey 2001; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Ng, Wolf-Wendell, & Lombardi, 2012, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2012, Wells & Lynch, 2012). In addition, the United States also suffers from a college enrollment gap based on income. There is a disproportionate gap between college attendance among students from the nation's wealthiest and poorest families, which suggests a lower graduation rate for low-income students. (USDOL, BOLS, 2014). The students least likely to pursue higher education and complete a four-year degree come from urban environments, are first-generation, low-income, and typically are students of color, specifically of African American or Hispanic descent (Ng et al., 2012, 2014). Within the institution of education, there is still an uneven playing field, particularly for high school students of color or students for whom English is their second language.

High School Challenges

Since four out of five high school graduates need a college education to successfully manage life's challenges (Kuh et al., 2006; McCabe, 2000), student support services in high school are essential to prepare them academically and motivate them to achieve success (American Institutes for Research, 2013). Until recently, there has been an overwhelming sense of urgency to implement high school programs and provide services that could support students' successful transition to college. To produce competent graduates, access to quality education is vital (Astin, 1991; Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp, & Tahan, 2011; Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Lerner & Brand, 2006; Warburton, Burgarin, & Nuñez, 2001). Academic success in postsecondary

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education is possible by encouraging the students to develop better academic goals and habits during their high school tenure.

In today's world, education has become an integral part of daily life and an agent of socialization. Students' aspirations for college degrees are highly dependent on various factors, including the personal opinions of their family members, friends, and the financial support they may receive from the post-secondary schools (Baum & Flores, 2011; Choy & Premo, 1996; Cohen, 1983; Gandara, 2001; Miller, 1997; Ryan, 2001; Steinberg, Brown, Cider, Kaczmark, & Laaro, 1988; Zuekle, 2008; Pike & Kuh, 2005). In the majority of cases, negative economic situations hinder the chances of students pursuing a college degree. If students' families can afford to pay the college tuition, there is an increased chance of students entering college (Kim & Sherraden, 2011).

Students of color or students for whom English is their second language often encounter additional challenges when entering college, which can serve as a barrier to higher education (McCoy, 2014; Van Roekel, 2008). These challenges include lack of academic preparation at the high school level, the absence of information concerning the importance of higher education, lack of professional support to assist them during the college admissions process, and cultural differences (McCoy, 2014). Students who are less likely to pursue higher education and complete a four-year degree come from low-income families, whose parents did not attend college, and typically identify as African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, and American Indian families (Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Ng et al., 2012, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2012; Wells & Lynch, 2012). Students whose parents have not earned an undergraduate degree often face challenges in completing college as compared to students who were raised in college

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educated families (Aud et al., 2011; Choy, 2001; Choy et al., 2000; Conley, 2007, 2008; Engle, 2007; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Steinberg et al., 1998).

Recently, there has also been a surge in the English Language Learners (ELLs) population. The concurrent rise in the ELL population, the geographic dispersion of ELLs across the US, and the increased performance accountability pressure from federal educational regulations and state policies have drawn attention to the underachievement of ELLs.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

In recent decades, the United States population has shifted dramatically, becoming more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. These changes have had a direct impact on the demographic make-up of secondary schools. In 1990, only one in twenty students in the US was classified as ELL; by 2008, one in nine was classified as ELL (Goldenberg, 2008). The number of ELL students continues to rise. The percentage of public school students who were classified as ELLs was higher in 2012–13 (9.2%, or an estimated 4.4 million students) than in 2007–08 (8.6%) or in 2011-12 (9.1%). As society becomes increasingly diverse, schools have been prompted by federal legislation to rethink their traditional structures and teaching pedagogy to better focus on the attention on the needs of ELLs.

Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal a large and persistent gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in terms of postsecondary aspirations (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008). It is apparent that ELLs are a unique group of students who are confronted with a number of challenges that have historically hindered them from meeting academic achievement standards in American

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schools. Despite numerous curricular, educational, and policy reforms and interventions aimed at improving education for ELLs, the gap between academic achievement of ELLs and non-ELLs continues to widen (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). One way to increase transition to college for all groups, including ELLs, has been through special initiatives, such as the federal TRiO programs.

Federal TRiO Programs

As a result of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965, Upward Bound (UB), Educational Talent Search (ETS), and Student Support Services (SSS) were implemented. TRiO was the designated termed used to identify these three programs. These three programs were specifically developed to assist first-generation and low-income students in gaining equal opportunities to attain all levels of higher education.

The UB and ETS programs were designed to primarily support first-generation and low-income students in secondary education, with the ultimate goals of improving student academic performance and preparing students for higher education (Mitchem, 1997). The SSS program was created to work solely with first-generation and low-income college students in postsecondary education with the program goals of improved academic performance, retention in higher education, and degree completion (Mitchem, 1997). The TRiO programs have endured to become a vital educational pipeline for first-generation and low-income students. TRiO has increased from three programs in 1965 to eight in 2015. Nationwide, there are 813 UB programs serving 61,361 students, 449 Talent Search programs serving 310,199 students, and 1,081 SSS programs serving 205,263 students, with combined budgets of $695,189,707 (U. S. Department of

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Education, 2015). Since their inception in 1968, the TRiO programs have served a significant number of first-generation and low-income students. Yet, the needs of this student population remain a challenge to institutions of higher learning. To increase the college enrollment and success of first-generation, low-income students, precollege programs, such as the Upward Bound program, can play a significant role in making education possible for ELL students (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Ng, Wendell & Lombardi, 2012, 2014; Pratt & Skaggs, 1989; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

Upward Bound (UB) program. The Upward Bound program is currently being funded by the U.S Department of Education as one of the federal TRiO programs and is designed to address the needs of low-income and first-generation students. The program is designed to prepare them for high school completion, college enrollment, and college graduation (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Harris, Nathan, Marksteiner, 2014; Lederman, 2006; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; Department of Education, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). UB gives high school students the opportunity to succeed in high school and prepare for college. The growing need of these transitional support systems is apparent, particularly at four-year universities located in urban areas where the population demographics consist of low-income and first-generation college students.

Rowan University Upward Bound program for English Language Learners.

The focus for this study is the Upward Bound program for English Language Learners (ELLs) at Rowan University. Rowan University is a four-year institution that has several campuses, one of which is located in Camden, New Jersey (Rowan University, 2015). In 2007, Rowan University received a grant to develop an Upward

Bound program on its campus. The university has maintained continuous funding for the program since that time.

The main goal of the program is to support the advancement of ELL high school students into and through higher education to complete their first baccalaureate degree (Rowan University, 2015). The program serves 50 first-generation and low-income ELL students from Camden city. These ELL students, who are first-generation and low-income, face more challenges than non-ELL students. This is evident in the number of ELL students who enroll, persist, and complete a bachelor's degree at Rowan University. For example, in the 2010 cohort, while 7 out of 12 UB seniors were eligible for Rowan University admission and enrolled, as of 2015, only 1 out of the 7 persisted and has graduated from Rowan University (Rowan University, 2015).

The Rowan University UB program staff implements services that include academic advising, personal and career counseling, academic and financial support services, freshman year and college transitional support, and other services related to the specific needs of first-generation and low-income college students (Rowan University, 2015). UB caters to low-income students in grades 9 through 11 who are able to maintain their GPA at 2.0, who are recommended by their teachers or counselors, and who aspire to higher education (Rowan University, 2015). The Rowan UB Program continuously identifies and recruits ELL students who are interested in learning English as part of their preparation in order to enhance their future academic success and postsecondary attainment.

The Rowan University UB program has maintained an excellent record of student support for first-generation and low-income ELL students. This is evident in the

program's overall high student retention and graduation rates within the UB program (Blumen database, 2015). During the 2014-2015 UB program year, 100% of project participants successfully transitioned from the current academic year into the next. Of those eligible to graduate, 100% of the UB seniors (19 out of 19) graduated and went on to some form of postsecondary education, including two-year and four-year colleges/universities.

The UB program seeks to engage ELLs in a program that helps them focus on preparing for a stable future and provides a welcoming environment where they can receive support from mentors and teachers. Working collaboratively with high school and college staff, the UB program provides new opportunities to motivate more ELL students to pursue higher education at Rowan University and elsewhere.

Since the program's inception, there has not been any formal analysis of the role the UB program plays in ELL participants' transition from high school to Rowan University. This study aimed to explore the ways Rowan's UB program has affected ELL students academically, socially, and emotionally to engage within Rowan University's environment.

The qualitative research findings and recommendations presented in this study can help facilitate the inclusion of ELLs and students with diverse needs within a larger college community. Recommendations from the study can inform high schools and colleges about how to prepare and improve the learning experiences of these students. The information will also aid higher education admissions personnel and college staff members in their efforts to gain a better understanding of all the factors that could influence or create a significant impact on the ELL students' transition from high school

to college.

Theoretical Framework

      Several scholarly studies have tried to create a new conceptual or theoretical framework that could help us better understand the link between social networks and educational attainment among minority and low-income youth. Social capital theory has become a framework often used in past decades (Coleman, 1988; Dike & Singh, 2002, Lin, 2001; Maeroff, 1999; Putman, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). For the purposes of my study, I focused on the perspectives of social capital theory in education as it relates to institutional agents.

What is Social Capital?

      Most definitions of social capital focus on social interaction among individuals. The various definitions are typically very specific to a particular context and how it is conceptualized in practice. The concept of social capital is typically defined in accordance with three primary focuses: 1) interpersonal relationships, 2) structural factors that impact collective relationships, and 3) a combination of the two aforementioned perspectives (Adler & Kwon, 2002). For this reason, there is no set and commonly agreed upon definition of social capital. The definition that a scholar adopts will depend on the discipline and level of investigation (Robison et al. 2002). Dekker and Uslaner (2003) situate their understanding of social capital on the premise of personal interaction. The scholars suggest that social capital mainly refers to an individual's social networks and norms for reciprocity. Whereas, Adler and Kwon (2002) believe that the availability of social capital has to do with how information flows from one party to another and how that influences each individual. Lin (2001) defines social capital as "resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions" (p. 29).

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These resources include economic and institutional resources, and are rooted in relationships.

One of the strengths of social capital theory lies in its ability to assist with analyzing the processes of educational attainment and academic achievement and has been applied to minority students' educational processes. Stanton-Salazar (1997, 2004) highlights the importance of key school personnel, termed institutional agents, who are available to increase the likelihood of minority students' success in school. In the current study of ELL students, institutional agents played a critical role in leading students-in-need to institutional resources.

Institutional agents. A growing body of research affirms the critical role institutional agents play in facilitating college access and success for low-income students from non-dominant racial and ethnic backgrounds (Dike & Singh, 2002; Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Tovar, 2015). Institutional agents can provide a secure base for low-income and first-generation college students to make successful postsecondary transitions. The concept of an institutional agent is central to the link between social networks and academic achievement, and highlights the multiple roles of leadership held by an individual (e.g., school personnel, counselor, community leaders, etc.) (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004). When this individual is situated in an adolescent's social network, he or she establishes his or her potential role as an institutional agent by directly transmitting, or negotiating the transmission of, highly valued resources such as high school course requirements for admission to four-year universities and financial aid assistance (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004). The concept of social capital, as illustrated in the previous

example, addresses how adolescents gain access to vital resources through relationships with institutional agents. Establishing instrumental relationships with these key people is vital, as these relationships will enable the students to gain access to key forms of institutional support (Museus, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004). Building relationships and gaining access to institutional support networks can be established through educational programs.

Precollege programs, such as Upward Bound, create social capital for participating students because the program expands student networks and provides wider opportunities to make personal contacts (Maeroff, 1999). The strength of contacts enables students to transform social networks into key forms of capital that can enhance their learning experiences. These networks serve as a ladder to provide students with access to maneuver through their educational pursuits. Through this network, adolescents benefit from social and institutional support that contributes to their academic and social development in addition to motivation to seek institutions of higher learning, and preparation for adulthood.

Upward Bound Empowering ELL Students

Several studies in the past have noted that social capital can significantly affect students' choices when it comes to attending colleges, the transition from high school to college, and the chances students successfully complete the academic requirements in college (Gonzalez, Stoner, & Jovel, 2003; Plank & Jordan, 2001). With access to social capital, students experience a greater sense of self-efficacy and ambition. This empowerment is about enabling these unique students to develop capacities and strengths and access resources that will lessen the impacts from a negative environment (Ambrosino, Hefferman, Shuttlesworth, & Ambrosino, 2005).

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The goals of the Upward Bound program is to foster trust, provide emotional support, and offer resources that assist ELL students' academic, social, and emotional development as they transition from the Upward Bound program to Rowan University (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; Rowan University, 2015, 2016; Terenzini et al., 1996). Upward Bound works to provide an environment that is positive, trustworthy, and student centered in order to accomplish the aforementioned goals (Rowan University, 2015, 2016). This study utilized a theoretical framework based on the concept of social capital, the capacity of social networks, institutional agents, and participation in the UB program (Coleman, 1988, 1994; Dike & Singh, 2002; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995. Overall, Rowan University's Upward Bound program functions as a vehicle bridging access for ELL students to attend Rowan University and elsewhere.

Statement of the Problem

In addition to academic adjustments, the transition from high school to college can be socially and emotionally stressful for students, particularly for those who belong to low-income families, who are the eldest among the family, and are most likely to be the first to enter college (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). Additionally, students' level of academic preparation before entering college can affect their desire to persist and succeed in college (Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2004). Moreover, ELLs enter college with additional socioeconomic challenges. Furthering ELLs' acquisition of English is perhaps the most essential integration challenge and opportunity confronting our city, state, and federal governments (McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007).

Due to inadequate knowledge about the transition from high school to college,

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both students and their parents need additional support, tools, resources, and guidance that come directly from close relationships between educational staff and the institution (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Many ELL students who enter college are underprepared for the challenges they have to face during the transition and matriculation to college. Consequently, a failure to establish caring and supportive relationships with institutional agents can worsen their experience.

Purpose Statement

The main purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to examine ELL students at Rowan University and gain a better understanding of the role and impact the Upward Bound program had on their experiences. An intrinsic case study focuses on analyzing the case of a person or a specific department, occupation, organization, or group (Grandy, 2010). Maeroff (1999) examined the effects of various educational programs, and explains why and how programs work successfully according to his four-sense theme, which includes: a sense of connectedness, a sense of well-being, a sense of academic initiatives, and a sense of knowing. In this study, I explored how the Upward Bound program empowers the four senses critical to each ELL student who is currently enrolled at Rowan University. The data collected will be used to further inform on-going practices that could improve the program for our ELL population at Rowan University, as well as those students who desire to pursue higher education elsewhere.

The intent of this case study was to contribute to the body of knowledge and understanding of the challenges and motivations of ELL students entering institutions of

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higher education. Given the recent changes in demographics, the population of ELLs in urban environments is increasing at a rapid rate. The percentage of students in ELL programs was generally higher for school districts in urban areas than for those in suburban areas. For example, ELL students in cities made up an average of 14 % public school enrollment with a range of 9.4 % in small cities to 16.7 % in larger cities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Therefore, it was necessary to conduct a study that explored the phenomenon of ELLs in this growing group as it relates to postsecondary education.

Research Questions

This study answered the following research questions:

1. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program played in their academic development?

2. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program had in their socialization for college?

3. How did the Upward Bound program affect ELL program alumni's motivation to successfully enroll in college?

Significance of the Study

This qualitative intrinsic case study was important and needed for several reasons. First, a gap in the literature exists on ELLs in higher education. The perspectives of ELL students are important for understanding the implications of transitioning from high school to a four-year university. The available literature has focused on the experience of ELL students who are born and raised in the United States and are in community colleges, as opposed to immigrants transitioning from high school to four-year

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universities. Furthermore, the presence of immigrant students in higher education is mostly "under examined, inaccurately characterized, and misunderstood" (Kim & Diaz, 2013, p. 1).

Second, the majority of the scholarship has used mixed methods or quantitative methods when evaluating precollege, transitional programs. Thus, the second goal of this study focused on qualitative findings in order to gain an in-depth understanding of ELLs and their experiences in the Upward Bound program. I was interested in examining the program's impact in dealing with the challenges students faced during and while transitioning from high school to college. Understanding the Upward Bound program was significant in examining the complexities of creating long-term relationships and a supportive learning environment that fosters social cohesion, emotional resilience and academic success among the ELL students.

Third, precollege bridge programs are a common phenomenon for low-income, first-generation, underrepresented populations. Recent changes in U.S. demographics highlight the increase of ELLs, as they are the fastest-growing and lowest-performing group living in the U.S (Kindler, 2002). In 2013, there were approximately 5 million ELLs in school, representing nearly 10% of public school enrollment (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.). Although states have taken minor steps towards improving the educational experience of ELLs, the extent of program implementation does not always address the scope of the challenges.

Fourth, this study added to the existing body of knowledge, while providing information to directors and coordinators of precollege programs, community college administrators, four-year institutions, educators, and policy makers. This will enable

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these individuals to better understand the needs of ELLs transitioning from high school to college and integrating into the larger community at a university level. The findings from this study will inform colleges and institutional agents on how to better prepare all students for success in their higher education experience.

Fifth, the Upward Bound programs are designed to operate on a five-year funding cycle and are awarded funds through a specific grant-proposal competition that occurs once every five years. The information generated through this study will be used in future grant proposals to justify the need for the program at Rowan University.

Finally, this study was conducted where large numbers of ELLs reside. This study was conducted in Camden City, where ELLs are increasing in number. According to a Camden City Public School Needs Analysis (2012), approximately one in every 12 students in Camden is an English language learner. Camden's ELL population is 1,084 or 8% of the total enrollment. Most of these students come from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and other Spanish speaking countries. Languages spoken by students in the district include Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, and Urdu. The percentage of ELL students has remained constant over the last three years, hovering at around eight percent.

Limitations of the Study

This research study focused on the challenges and motivations of ELL students transitioning from Upward Bound to Rowan University. It is important to note that there were potential limitations that impacted the outcome of this particular study. Each of the interviewees within this research study represented the most successful Upward Bound students, which is not a true representative sample, and can limit the generalizability of the research. Furthermore, the confines of the location and time frame are also limitations

to this study.

Additional limitations to the study are based on the parameters of qualitative research design. Since the interviewees are the main source of data for the study, how participants feel, think about, and understand the research concepts and interview protocol can directly impact their responses and feedback, which can directly influence the outcome of the study. As the researcher I am the key instrument for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, which in turn can affect my subjectivity (Merriam, 2002). Therefore, I attempted to limit my own potential bias as I share similar academic and cultural experiences as the students who participated in this research study.

Summary

Policy makers at various levels have continued to focus on retention and graduation rates. The voids in scholarly research indicate that we are missing information about how institutions contribute to the college success of ELL students (Andrade, Evans, & Hartshorn, 2014, 2015; Goldenburg, 2008; New Jersey Department of Education, 2014; Olivia & Nora, 2004; Perna, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013; Strayhorn, 2011; Van Roekel, 2008; Warburton et al., 2001). Examining the outcomes of structured and successful college preparation and retention programs, like Upward Bound, will help us to better understand how to positively affect student success, particularly for first-generation, low-income ELL students. It is imperative that educational leaders have a full understanding of the role of institutional investment in higher education and to recognize its correlation to positive student outcomes.

Educational leaders can only address the multiple factors that limit college enrollment, especially for ELL students, with an inclusive approach and the involvement

of various stakeholders (Perna & Jones, 2013). This study may generate useful information related to the development of practical intervention and retention strategies for ELL students at Rowan University and other institutions of higher learning that serve students from groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education. These intervention and retention strategies can help ease the transition from high school to college and provide resources embedded in the social networks that create effective avenues toward college integration, persistence and retention.

In summary, the results from the research: (a) informed institutions about what they can do to address the many challenges ELL students face while transitioning from high school to college, (b) provided useful information to middle and high school college preparation programs dedicated to working with low-income, first-generation and disadvantaged students, and (c) helped create an understanding of how pre-collegiate programs increase students' academic preparation, college enrollment, and degree completion.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one introduced the research, described my interest and background related to the topic, and established a context for the proposed research questions. Chapter two provided a discussion of current literature as it relates to ELLs examining qualitative and quantitative studies. Additionally, the discussion includes literature on the impact of precollege programming on ELL educational attainment. Lastly, I focused on the concepts of social capital and how it relates to education specifically in relation to college choice, access to higher education, transition to and retention in college (Burt, 2009; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Coleman, 1998; DeLuca et al., 2001; Dike & Singh,

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2007; Field, 2000; Forsyth & Adams, 2004; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003; Lin, 2001; Putman, 2000). Chapter three identified and discussed the use of the intrinsic case study. This qualitative case study was implemented in an effort to understand ELL alumni's experience with the Upward Bound program, particularly its role in the academic development, socialization in college and motivation to enroll. This chapter aligns to the purpose of the study I offered in Chapter one as well as demonstrates why the study is important to conduct in the first place. The sample population, setting, methods of data collection, instruments, data analysis applications, trustworthiness, ethical consideration, and my role as the researcher was presented. Chapter four provided responses to my research questions regarding the ELL Upward Bound alumni's experiences. Findings are presented in detail, in sufficient manner and describe the systematic application of the methodology (Simon, 2006). Finally, chapter five summarized my findings to assert research questions have been answered. Emphasis was made on the implications regarding my research, linked between the specific findings in my study, and the literature and conceptual framework discussion of my findings. Also, recommendations were made for future research and on how this qualitative intrinsic case study can inform current institutional policies and practices. I concluded with my final thoughts.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter summarized the current literature on English Language Learners in pre-collegiate programming and the concept of social capital. Specifically, I presented the role and impact precollege programs have on minority students and the need for these programs at the high school level in communities where high concentrations of first-generation, low-income ELL students reside. Furthermore, I focused on the concept of social capital and how it relates to education, particularly in relation to college choice, access to higher education, and transition to college.

There are issues of academic access and retention among students from urban communities. Children who live in poor urban neighborhoods and who are disproportionately ethnic minorities are at greater risk for school failure (Alberta, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005; DeLuca et al., 2001; Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007; Ludwig, Ladd, & Duncan, 2001; Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2008). In urban regions, Hispanic and Black students are half as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to graduate from high school or have high school diplomas (Ludwig et al., 2001; Olivia & Nora, 2004; Ortiz & Heavy-Runner, 2003). Although educational programs have been introduced to address the achievement gap in low-income and urban communities, the educational outputs of these areas remain below the national average (Perna 2002, 2005; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Ng, Wolf-Wendel & Lombardi, 2012, 2014).

In Camden, New Jersey, the percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree is below the state and national average (NJDOE, 2014). The average percentage of people with a bachelor's degree was 29.3% nationally, and 36.4% for the state of New Jersey.

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However, only 8.9% of adults living in Camden have completed a baccalaureate program (NJDOE, 2014). From a public policy perspective, these statistics highlight the need to close the achievement gap in bachelor degree attainment (Chapa & Schink, 2006; Nuñez, Hoover, Pickett, Stuart-Carruthers, & Vazquez, 2013).

The English Language Learner (ELL) population in Camden, New Jersey is also on the rise, comes with specific needs, and is typically underserved (Camden City Public School Analysis, 2012; Van, 2008). The ELL population is 1,084 or 8% of the total enrollment in the city schools (Camden City Public School Analysis, 2012). One in every 12 student in Camden is classified as ELL (Camden City Public School Analysis, 2012). As the district copes with the challenges of keeping highly qualified staff and improving instruction, effective delivery of ELL services is similarly challenged.

As such, precollege programs, particularly Upward Bound, which specifically serves first-generation, low-income, English Language Learners (ELLs) are critical. These programs are not only necessary, they also offer invaluable support systems for those with the most need. The goals of these programs are to empower students to pursue postsecondary education and change their existing conditions by encouraging students to attend college.

English Language Learners

In recent years, there has been an increase in English Language Learners (ELLs) in public schools and they are disproportionately represented in poor and urban districts throughout the state (Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding, & Clewell, 2005). In 2013, the number of ELLs in New Jersey schools was 63,739, which was nearly 1 of every 21 public school students (NJDOE, 2014). Specifically, 83% of New Jersey school districts

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serve ELLs in their schools (NJDOE, 2014). According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2014), the top five languages of the most prominent ELL student groups have been identified as: Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian/Haitian Creole, and Korean. There is no easy or succinct method for educational practitioners to use to address the varied and complex learning needs of ELL students (Alberta et al, 2005; Andrade et al., 2014, 2015; Batalova & McHugh, 2010; Baum & Flores, 2011; Braine, 2013; Goldenberg, 2008; Hedge, 2001).

There is no singular approach for effectively managing the academic and social needs of diverse ELL students because "national data are lacking regarding documenting institutional practices for admitting and testing, supporting, and tracking" ELL students (Andrade et al., 2015, p. 19). Also, there are important cultural and contextual factors that should be considered in order to effectively assess the needs of and educate ELL learners. The visibility of ELL students throughout K-12 public schools has a significant impact on the extent to which students in this population learn, have access to key resources in high school and during their transition to college, and are academically prepared once matriculated into college.

College Preparation

The level of preparation that students have prior to entering college impacts their probability of persistence and success in college (Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Parsad & Lewis, 2003, 2004; Somers et al., 2004; Tierney, 2004). Many students enrolled in college courses are not academically prepared (Cline et al., 2007; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Kallison & Stader, 2012; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). The ability to perform college-level coursework is an important factor in the

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successful completion of college. Students who enter college prepared to do college-level work graduate at twice the rate of students who do not (Kallison & Stader, 2012; Warburton et al., 2001).

When students transition from high school to college, there is an increased expectation and pressure to succeed (Conley, 2007, 2008; Oseguera et al., 2008). However, while completing their coursework, students often encounter a disparity between high school and college expectations. High school courses may have been completed achieving good grades, and can even lead to fulfilling the admissions requirements for college. Unfortunately, the rigor of those courses may not indicate readiness for general education courses such as Biology, Algebra, or Literature that are traditional requirements in higher education institutions during first year in college.

The rigor of a student's high school curriculum may predict the likelihood of their college graduation (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008) and is strongly associated with the extent of remedial coursework, rates of persistence and attainment, and postsecondary GPA at the college level (Conley, 2007, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2005; Somers et al., 2004; Warburton et al., 2001; Xianglei, 2005). Students who completed a more demanding coursework sequence, including four years of English and mathematics beyond Algebra II, graduated from college at very high rates (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008). Yet, only 9% of first-generation college students completed a rigorous high school curriculum, compared with 20% of continuing generation students (Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Engle, 2007). First-generation students were less likely to have access to more advanced courses, which can have a direct and negative impact on their academic performance in the future (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2003).

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Minority and poor students are at a significant disadvantage. Planty, Bozick, and Ingels (2006) found that fewer minority and low socioeconomic status (SES) high school graduates completed advanced and specialized courses, specifically in the subjects of math and science. In the study, only 16% of the lowest socioeconomic quartile completed AP courses, compared to 51% of students from the highest quartile (Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Planty et al., 2006). As a result of weaker precollege academic preparation, 55% of first-generation students' college transcripts reveal that they completed remedial course work while in college, compared with 27% of students whose parents completed college (Conley, 2007, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Planty et al., 2006: Xianglei, 2005). Ultimately, certain high school courses can determine students' educational qualifications for college and students must understand this early in their scholastic years in order to better perform academically and succeed in college (Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Samarge, 2006).

Students who had earned college credits during high school were more likely to enroll in college, perform better in their first year coursework, and graduate than peers who had not earned such credits (Lerner & Brand, 2006). To increase college and workplace readiness, Dougherty, Mellor, and Jian (2006) advocate the strategy of enrolling more students in advanced and college-preparatory courses while in high school. This notion was reinforced by the College Board's findings that students who had participated in its Advanced Placement (AP) courses had greater college success (Conley, 2007, 2008; Oseguera et al., 2008; Samarge, 2006). First-generation students should not be overlooked as potential AP class candidates, but rather should be encouraged to consider these courses if they are capable and motivated (Conley, 2007, 2008; Hoyt &

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Sorensen, 2001; Oseguera et al., 2008; Samarge, 2006). These courses allow for a more seamless transition from high school to postsecondary education, as AP course expectations are very similar to those of professors in college courses (Conley, 2007, 2008; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001, 2008). Currently, all 50 states offer incentives for students to complete dual enrollment courses or Advanced Placement courses (College Board, 2005).

For the first-generation, college bound high school student, parents are dependent on signals from the school administrators regarding readiness for college, since parents may not have the personal gauge for making such assessment on their own (Conley, 2007, 2008; Garg, Melanson, & Levin, 1990; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Miller, 1997; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Oseguera et al., 2008; Spady, 1970; Wells & Lynch, 2012). These signals may include grades, test scores, and comments from guidance counselors and teachers. If these signals are unclear or inaccurate measures of readiness, these students are more likely to end up in remedial coursework, to drop out of college, or to take longer to graduate. Students are often unprepared for what will be expected of them in college and lack an understanding of how colleges operate (Conley, 2007, 2008; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Xianglei, 2005).

For over 150 years, institutions of higher learning have relied on remediation to respond to underprepared students (Astin, 1991; Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Campbell, 2005; Hoy & Sorensen, 2001; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Parsad & Lewis, 2003). Colleges have created complex intervention systems to address the issue of underprepared college students by providing ways for students to master skills they

should have learned before their freshman college year (Attewell et al., 2006; Campbell, 2005; Parsad & Lewis, 2003). Universities often offer more of the same instruction students had already been receiving for several years (Grubb, 2001; Parsad & Lewis, 2003). In a 2005 study in which high school students were exposed to the content and demands of a college course, 30% of those deemed exceptional could not earn at least a grade of "C". All students reported that the course was slightly more difficult or significantly more difficult than their high school classes. These students therefore were generally underprepared for college (Campbell, 2005; Cline et al., 2007; Parsad & Lewis, 2003).

However, preparation for college not only involves the dimensions of academic preparation, but also the dimensions of emotional and cultural support. Without support in these areas, students – particularly first-generation students– are at risk of failing to complete the programs in which they enroll (Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Coles, 2002; Cline et al., 2007; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). Thus, some researchers strongly advocate for academic, emotional, and social support strategies that may help strengthen otherwise poor student achievement and promote continuous enrollment (Cline et al., 2007; Finn, 1989; Hammond et al., 2007, Phillips, Stephens, & Townsend, 2016; Terenzini et al., 1996). These researchers urge colleges to incorporate or maintain dropout prevention services, such as mentoring, tutoring, test preparation, cooperative learning, inquiry-based instruction, summer camps, and bridge programs.

Many of the issues affecting underprepared students can be addressed prior to their enrollment in a college or university. Many students are college-ready, having the

necessary credentials required for enrollment into college, i.e., GPA, SAT scores, high school coursework, interview process, etc. (Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004). However, some of these same students are not emotionally and socially ready for the rigors the college demands, including the level of academic preparations necessary to persist and succeed at the college level (Bedsworth et al., 2006; Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Cline et al., 2007; Coles, 2002; Conley, 2007, 2008; Goldrick-Rab, Carter, & Wagner, 2007; Hoyt & Miskel, 2005; Perna & Swail, 2001; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009; Thomas, 2008). High schools and colleges must partner together to bridge the gaps between what it means to be college eligible versus college-ready (Bui, 2002; Conley, 2007, 2008; Gandara, 2001; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004) and to better align standards, assessments, data systems, and expectations (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Perna & Swail, 2001; Thomas, 2008; Tierney, 2004).

Restructuring current practices between K-12 and higher education would create more fluid learning opportunities that can benefit students, especially those who are traditionally underserved. In a study of school support systems, educators increased the chances for students to graduate from high school, enroll in, and eventually graduate from college by ensuring student preparation for the academic rigors of college (Bedsworth et al., 2006; Cline et al., 2007; Gandara, 2001; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007). Overall, creating a more cohesive system for learning that adequately prepares high schools students to be successful in college requires attention from institutions at both the high school and collegiate levels.

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Precollege Programs

      One solution for preparing students for college is precollege programs. High school precollege programs decrease the need for developmental education and are designed to boost completion rates among underprepared students by supplementing remediation programs at colleges and universities (Kallison & Stader, 2012; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Ishitani, 2003; Ng et al., 2012, 2014; Perna, 2002, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013; Perna & Swail, 2001). Precollege preparation programs, which are designed to inspire, counsel, and assist the future educational aspirations of underrepresented students, can play a crucial role in addressing their disproportionately low college attendance rates (Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Ng et al., 2012; 2014; Perna, 2002, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013; Perna & Swail, 2001; Strayhorn, 2011; Walpole, 2007; Walpole, Simmerman, Mack, Mills, Scales, & Albano, 2008).

      There are five sequential steps when students consider attending college (Choy, Horn, Nuñez, & Chen, 2000):

1. Aspire to attain a bachelor's degree at an early age;
2. Prepare educationally to meet academic qualifications;
3. Undertake admission examinations;
4. Submit applications to a four year college;
5. Receive a response-confirming acceptance.

Students need current information regarding the variety of postsecondary options and a realistic understanding of their individual likelihood for success in particular fields (Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Olson, 2001; Perna, 2002, 2005; Valadez, 1998). Students who are prepared academically, socially, and emotionally in high school have an increased chance

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for a successful transition to college (Conley, 2007, 2008; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Perna & Jones, 2013; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013).

Pre-collegiate academic preparation is an essential focus for first-generation students (Engle, 2007; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Perna, 2002, 2005; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Planty et al., 2006; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). Information about college is recommended by at least grade eight in order for students to make appropriate high school course decisions and to develop solid postsecondary aspirations (Perna, 2002, 2005; McDonough, 2004). Academic habits ingrained before and during the high school years, combined with students' accomplishments, have a major impact on college success, not only for first-generation students, but also for all college students (Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Walpole et al., 2008; Wyer, 2005). However, within academia, there is consensus that most students who advance to college are not fully prepared and have limited knowledge of how colleges operate and how to navigate the demanding expectations (Adelman, 1999; Attewell et al., 2006; Conley, 2007, 2008; Education Resources Institute and the Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1997; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004).

Precollege programs, which typically occur on a college site, provide interventions that help targeted students aspire to, prepare for, and enroll in college. Precollege outreach programs can be successful. Studies indicate that low-income students who are college eligible and receive college preparatory support are more likely to attend college than those who do not (Gandara & Bial, 2001; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; King, 1996; Kallison & Sader, 2012; Perna 2002, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013; Perna & Swail, 2001; Walpole et al., 2008). These pre-college programs provide access to a

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variety of activities that include academic, social, and cultural components. All of these can be contributing factors that aid in a college student's academic achievement and persistence. In providing support for these programs, postsecondary institutions have a responsibility to support minority youth, which is evident in the relationships that colleges and universities develop with public schools. In the Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI) precollege program designed for low-income marginalized youth in the urban regions of California, over 60% of the students who began the NAI program in 7th grade graduated from high school. Of those who graduated, 60% enrolled in a four-year research university and over 90% attended some form of postsecondary institution (Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). This approach to establishing a continuous transition from secondary to higher education enrollment can yield benefits for first-generation students and their access to 2- or 4-year collegiate institutions.

Institutions now realize that students not only need academic and personal support during their first year transition from high school to college but throughout their entire college experience (Braxton, McKinney, & Reynolds, 2006; Phillips et al., 2016; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013; Walpole et al., 2008). Colleges and universities must shift away from just offering traditional orientation programs that are typically only one day to a more purposeful effort to create precollege programs geared to help in the transition to college, to enhance college persistence, and to eventually increase graduation rates (Braxton, McKinney, & Reynolds, 2006; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Hossler, 2006; Perigo & Upcraft, 1990; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Somers et al., 2004; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013).

In precollege programs such as GEARUP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness through Undergraduate Preparation) or other high profile programs such as I have a Dream, MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement), and AVID (Advancement via Individualized Determination) goals are set to promote college enrollment, college awareness, and college access (Perna, 2002, 2005; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). In general, these preparatory programs are designed to supplement school-based learning. These early intervention programs are intended to improve the level of support academically and socially provided to students within students' educational environments to assist them in becoming college-ready (Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). Building student self-esteem and providing role models are also common goals (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2002, 2005; Perna & Swail, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2003; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). An additional goal of precollege programs is to increase support for students across their academic careers (Perna, 2002, 2005; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). To accomplish these objectives, federal TRiO programs were also created to provide resources for marginalized student groups from the precollege level throughout the students' college careers.

TRiO Programs

This study focused on one particular kind of precollege TRiO program. TRiO was the first of three orientation programs implemented through The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. These programs included the Upward Bound program (UB) (Economic Opportunity Act of 1964), the Educational Talent

Search program (ETS) (Higher Education Act of 1965), and the Student Support Services program (SSS) (1968 amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965); all three programs collectively became known as the TRiO Programs.

These three programs were specifically developed to assist first-generation and low-income students in gaining equal opportunities to all levels of higher education. The Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search programs were designed to work primarily with first-generation and low-income students in secondary education. These programs had the twin goals of improving student academic performance in secondary schools and leading students into higher education (American Council on Education (ACE), 2003; Gandara & Bial, 2001; Mitchem, 1997; Thayer, 2000; Tinto, 2004, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The SSS program was created to work with first-generation and low-income college students in postsecondary education. The goals for this program were improved academic performance, retention in higher education, and degree completion (DeLuca et al., 2001; Mitchem, 1997; Thayer, 2000; Tinto, 2004; 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Nationally, the TRiO programs have not only endured, they have become a vital educational pipeline for first-generation and low-income students. Nationally in 2015, there were 813 Upward Bound programs serving 61,361 students, 449 Talent Search programs serving 310,199 students, and 1,081 SSS programs serving 205,263 students. These programs had combined budgets of $695,189,707 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Since implementation in 1968, the TRiO programs have served a significant number of first-generation and low-income students, who often face obstacles that many other students do not (ACE, 2003; McElroy & Armesto, 1998: Mitchem, 1997; Terenzini

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et al., 1996; Thayer, 2000; Tinto, 2004, 2007). Yet, the needs for this student population continue to grow and pose challenges for higher education.

The Upward Bound Program

Upward Bound (UB) is one of the largest and longest-running federal precollege programs for economically disadvantaged students. Upward Bound has been in existence for nearly 50 years. It was launched under President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration as a part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as a part of the war on poverty ("Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; Department of Education, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015) and is funded by the US Department of Education to address the needs of low-income and first-generation students. The program's goal is to increase the students' rates of enrollment and subsequent graduation from postsecondary institutions by offering support services for college admissions and college entrance examinations (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Harris et al., 2014; Lederman, 2006; Department of Education, 2016 "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Scholars believe that many low-income, first-generation students lack fundamental academic and social skills needed to succeed in college courses and, as such, need academic and emotional support (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996; Walpole, 2007). The Upward Bound program is purposefully designed as a support-centered structure so that students can develop the self-efficacy and resilience needed to pursue, matriculate, and graduate from postsecondary programs, fueling their success (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.).

Upward Bound was created to provide underprepared secondary school students from low-income backgrounds with the necessary skills and motivation to persist into postsecondary education (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Harris et al., 2014; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007; Public Law 90-222, Dec. 23, 1967; Renchler, 1992; Ryan, 2001). The UB guidelines and regulations were very specific in the eligibility requirements of students to participate in the program. The participants must be between 13 and 19 years old, and they must have completed 8th grade, and not have entered 12th grade. Federal policy requires that two-thirds of students in each Upward Bound project must be both low-income (family income under 150 percent of the poverty line) and first-generation students (from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree). The remaining one-third of students must qualify either as low-income or first-generation. Additionally, all participants must be US citizens or permanent residents, or must have already notified the Office of Immigration and Naturalization of their intent to become US citizens.

Factors such as family dynamics, socioeconomic status, and community orientation can influence participants to change the course of their educational path. Fashola and Slavin (2001) contend that many academic interventions for African American and Latino students, although well intentioned, have been limited to focusing on academic competencies. These interventions are typically focused on content remediation, behavioral management, whole school reform, curriculum reform, and/or standardized test preparation (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Zeidenberg, 2008). However, the relationship between positive self-concept and academic achievement has been well documented (Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Zulli & Frierson,

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2004). Students who are clear about the significance of education are motivated and more determined to attend and graduate from college (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Zulli & Frierson, 2004).

It was necessary to understand how the Upward Bound program influences students' academic competence and self-conceptualization. According to the Upward Bound program statement, all Upward Bound projects must provide instruction in math, laboratory science, composition, literature, and foreign language. Other activities include mentoring, work-study programs, tutoring, counseling, cultural enrichment, and education or counseling services, all designed to improve the financial and economic realities of program enrollees (Department of Education, 2016; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). During the participants' tenure in the Upward Bound Program, services and programs are provided to the participants according to the participants' academic needs, educational and career goals, and high school grade level. By the time participants graduate from high school, they have engaged in an array of services that not only help them enter college, but also persist in college, which requires perseverance and resilience (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

The documented successes of Upward Bound programs are not without issues. Critics of the program have suggested that because data is not regularly collected in-house, any measure of success is subjective and not quantifiable. Therefore, the answer to the question of "Does Upward Bound have a positive impact on high school students" can only be answered with mixed responses at best (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Harris et al., 2014; Race et al., 1994; Venezia &

Jaeger, 2013; Zulli & Frierson, 2004). Without sufficient evidence of meeting specific goals, securing adequate funding to carry out program activities can and has been a challenge. From 2014-2015, the funding allocation for the Upward Bound program has decreased by approximately $1.2 million (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Additionally, if the government decides not to reapprove the Upward Bound program grant in future years, it directly threatens the existence of this precollege program, as most colleges and universities are not in a position to assume responsibility for the cost. This will leave students who need the assistance and resources the most without them.

Rowan University Upward Bound Program for English Language Learners

In 2007, Rowan University received a grant to develop an Upward Bound (UB) program on its campus. The university has maintained continuous funding for the program since its inception. The program serves 50 first-generation and low-income ELL students. The main goal of the program is to support the advancement of ELL high school students through higher education and toward the completion of their first baccalaureate degree (Rowan University, 2015).

The Rowan University UB staff implements programming services that include: academic and financial support, advising, personal and career counseling, freshman-year and college transition support, and other services related to the specific needs of first-generation and low-income college students (Rowan University, 2015). UB focuses on providing college preparatory activities and supportive services to low-income students in grades 9 through 11. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA, be recommended by their teachers or counselors, aspire to attend college, and be interested in learning English as part of their preparation (Rowan University, 2015). The program has demonstrated a

consistent pattern of success with a high level of college matriculation. For example, 13 out of 17 graduating UB seniors, or 76% from the class of 2014, enrolled in postsecondary education by the fall term immediately following high school graduation (Rowan University UB database, 2014). Subsequently, all 19 graduating UB seniors or 100% from class of 2015, enrolled in postsecondary education by the fall term immediately following high school graduation (Rowan University UB database, 2015).

Designed to focus on academic needs for ELL students, students are introduced to different colleges that meet their demands and participate in other educational program activities in and out of Rowan University (Rowan University, 2015). Program planning and curriculum design are structured for the academic year and summer programs. Both academic year and summer components include rigorous and intense academic enrichment. Certified teachers, college instructors, community partners, and college students are hired to work with students in the program year round (Rowan University, 2015).

It is expected that through this rigorous academic experience, students will be prepared for college. As such, each of the summer and academic year programs are designed with specific goals and objectives. Each program prioritizes meeting the target population's needs and the assigned Annual Performance Report (APR) objectives as per the Department of Education goals (Rowan University, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The UB program also encompasses a variety of social and cultural events to expose ELL participants to a world outside of their norm. The Rowan University UB program seeks to engage ELLs in a resourceful program that helps them focus on preparing for a bright future in a safe haven where they can receive support from

mentors and teachers. Working collaboratively with high school and college staff, the UB program opens new opportunities to motivate more ELL students to pursue higher learning at Rowan University (Rowan University, 2015).

English Language Learners (ELLs) in a K-12 setting. Since the Rowan UB program focuses on ELL students, it is important to understand this population further. English Language Learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing segment of the public school population. Over the past 15 years, the number of ELL students has nearly doubled to about 5 million. By 2025, nearly one out of every four public school students will be an English Language Learner (NCELA, 2007). Two-thirds of ELLs come from low-income families, and three-fourths are Spanish-speaking (NCELA, 2007). Unfortunately, these students' academic performance is well below that of their peers. Consequently, ELLs have excessively high dropout rates (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Andrade et al., 2014, 2015; Baum & Flores, 2011; Braine, 2013; NCELA, 2007; Van, 2008). Since ELL students come from diverse backgrounds, they often face multiple challenges in the classroom. To complicate matters, teachers lack practical, research-based information, resources, and strategies needed to teach, evaluate, and nurture ELL students in American public schools (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Andrade et al., 2014, 2015; Baum & Flores, 2011; Braine, 2013; Goldenberg, 2008; Hedge, 2001; NCELA, 2007; Tellez & Waxman, 2006).

Recent testimony presented to Congress revealed that ELLs' academic performance levels are significantly below those of their peers in nearly every measure of achievement (Alberta et al., 2005; Andrade et al., 2014, 2015; Baum & Flores, 2011; Braine, 2013; Goldenberg, 2008; Hedge, 2001; NCELA, 2007; Van, 2008). In the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, only 29% of ELLs scored at

or above the basic level in reading, compared to 75% of non-ELLs. There also are significant achievement gaps between ELL students and their Caucasian American and African American counterparts (Andrade et al., 2014, 2015; Baum & Flores, 2011; Braine, 2013; NAEP, 2005).

Meeting the learning needs of English Language Learners is a significant undertaking, one that not only requires coordination throughout the educational system, but also with community and organizational partnerships. This collaboration must examine strategies to close the gaps in student achievement, reduce the dropout rate, and increase the number of high school graduates who attend and graduate from college (Abedi & Dietel, 2004; Alberta et al., 2005; Andrade et al., 2014, 2015; Baum & Flores, 2011; NAEP, 2005; Tellez & Waxman, 2006; Van, 2008). As such, high schools have an obligation to better prepare students academically for the rigors of higher education.

Underprepared students in higher education. According to Kuh, Kinzie, and Buckley (2006), underprepared students exhibit several characteristics that lead to various struggles in the period immediately following their admission to college. These characteristics include being first-generation students, being underprepared, and belonging to low-income ethnic minority groups in institutions dominated primarily by Caucasian Americans. These students are at a disadvantage in college access and admission, college experiences, and college outcomes (Strayhorn, 2011; Walpole, 2007). Several institutional forces and barriers create roadblocks to educational attainment among underrepresented students (Adelman, 1999; Alberta et al., 2005; Deil-Amen & Turley, 2007; Walpole, 2007).

Indeed, many students admitted into postsecondary institutions eventually fail to

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graduate. Despite the gradual improvement in the rates of African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics, the rates of Latinos who graduate from postsecondary institutions, still remain low compared to Caucasian Americans and Asian Americans (Alberta et al., 2005; Ortiz & Heavy-Runner, 2003). With such systemic failures, the American higher education system is desperately in need of positive change. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2006) estimates that the period stretching between the present and 2030 represents the highest rate of diversity in U. S. history in the school-age population. Despite this fact, the rates of diverse groups of students in higher education, particularly 4-year universities, remain relatively stagnant.

Many scholars have explored the role a person's inner potential has on college success. Understanding the concept of social capital can be an important tool in changing the perspective of educational practitioners (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino, Hefferman, & Shuttlesworth, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; Wall, Ferrazzi, & Schryer, 1998). Social capital, as a theoretical construct, is key to being able to thoroughly explain the gaps in student's educational performances among diverse, underrepresented groups and reducing the disparity of learning outcomes between these groups.

Theoretical Framework

While there are many reasonable differences in opinion as to how best conceptualize social capital, Coleman (1998), Dike and Singh (2002), and Goddard (2003) have held and proposed definitions of social capital that are centered primarily on the notion of social networks offering access to resources and supports for groups and individuals. The concept of social capital is a useful tool for understanding differences among student learning outcomes (Balatti & Black, 2011; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003). For

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the purpose of this study, I focused on the concept of social capital and how it relates to education, particularly in relation to college choice, access to higher education, and transition to and retention in college (Burt, 2009; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; DeLuca et al., 2001; Dike & Singh, 2007; Field, 2000; Forsyth & Adams, 2004; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003). Using Maeroff's (1999) four-sense model associated with effective educational programs as a foundation, this study explored the influences of the Upward Bound program on ELL students' transition-to-college experiences, academic, social, and emotional factors, interactions with institutional agents, and intention to persist to degree completion at Rowan University.

Social Capital

Social capital can be understood as the collection of resources that can be accessed by a person and organized for a particular purpose within a social structure (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1994; Lin, 2001). It must be noted that social capital can hardly be perceived as an object, but is instead a variety of different entities. Networks are the core element of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti & Black, 2011; Miksic, 2014). It is generally suggested that it is embedded in the relationships that a person develops with others, particularly in informal, social activities and their memberships in groups and associations. In other words, it depends on the size of the social network. Moreover, it is suggested that social capital exists in a hierarchical structure (Lin, 2001). School is one of the first places where students learn about hierarchy. The evidence shows that people tend to protect their advantageous position from others and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure (Coleman, 1988, 1994; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

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One of the major functions of social capital is to provide people with opportunity and empower them (Balatti & Black, 2011; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003). This function of social capital perfectly correlates with the primary goals of schools, since educational facilities were not just designed to transmit knowledge, but serve as far more important agents (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Liou & Chang, 2008). At the institutional level, the norms that are established the school community and relationship between home and school are two important forms of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Miksic, 2014). These forms of social capital contribute to student learning outcomes (Ho, 2000; Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999; Walpole, 2007). James Coleman (1998) explained the fundamentals that a strong family provided to a child's education as social capital. Finally, social capital is action oriented (Lin, 2001). This falls in line with the views expressed by other scholars who argued that the organization of social capital is much more important than its mere accumulation (Baker, 2000; Wall et al., 1998). An imbalance of social capital creates unequal educational opportunities for students (Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999). That is why, to a certain extent, the school might be seen as a platform that contributes to the mobilization of social capital.

The next significant concept of social capital deals with institutional agents. Institutional agents can be defined as individuals who possess the capacity, as well as commitment, to distribute directly, or effectively negotiate the distribution of, various institutional resources and opportunities (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Tovar, 2015). Therefore, one of the key elements of this definition focuses on the distribution of institutional resources. The importance of institutional agents becomes extremely apparent when evaluating the performance of ethnic minority

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students. Ethnic minority students' disadvantaged status has a negative impact on their academic performance (Jenkins, Miyazaki, & Janosik, 2009). At times, underrepresented students' backgrounds prevent them from gaining the proper educational experiences as well as free access to the resources reserved for students by the school (Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003; Phillips, Stephens, & Townsend, 2016). The primary responsibility of institutional agents is to remove these barriers.

There are two ways in which institutional agents might remove barriers and thus assist students (Museus & Neville, 2012; Tovar, 2015). First of all, they may assist minority students in integrating their culture with the mainstream school culture (London, 2000). This assistance may be particularly helpful during the transition from high school to college, as colleges tend to be more diverse. Secondly, as underrepresented students develop relationships with the institutional agents, they gain access to the resources and support in various ways (Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Thus, school staff plays a pivotal role in supporting the distribution of institutional resources among students.

Some scholars have concluded that the distribution of social capital among children in need, who often belong to minority groups, positively influences the community, enhancing it and making its foundation stronger (Coleman, 1994; Dike & Singh, 2002; Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999). Therefore, institutional agents can have an impact not only on their respective educational facility or the life of an underrepresented student, but also on society in general. Thus, students need to develop strong and caring relationships with these institutional agents (Antonio, 2004; Coleman, 1994; Dike & Singh, 2002; Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999; Museus & Neville,

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2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

Disadvantaged students connect to their educational institutions through building positive

rapport with staff, thus gradually enhancing their position in society (Coleman, 1994;

Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999). This bond might be lost when a student transitions

from high school to college; therefore, educational programs that build a system of

support for students in need may serve as the platform that sets the right course.

The Four-Sense Model

Educational programs geared to provide support and build social capital represent

an effort to confront and manage the barriers that block the academic achievement of

some students (Maeroff, 1999). There are four different logics or senses that are

associated with effective educational programs, implying that the influence of

institutional agents should feature them as well. Such programs share similar objectives:

they seek to foster a sense of connectedness, a sense of well-being, a sense of academic

initiative, and a sense of knowing. Few of the programs accomplish all four logics in their

entirety. What is important, though, is that borrowing could assemble a composite from

all the programs (Maeroff, 1999).

The first of them is the sense of connectedness. Students in need generally lack a

network that allows them to succeed in school and attain a sense of belonging (Maeroff,

1999; Miksic, 2014; Stanton-Salazar, 1997; 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

According to Maeroff (1999), when a student is engaged in a particular educational

program, the student experiences the feeling of belonging to a certain group. A student's

socioeconomic status is not a factor in determining this sense of belonging, instead their

status provides the opportunity to interact with people from other social classes, gradually

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contributing to one's upward social mobility (Maeroff, 1999; Snell, 2008; Tierney, 2001; Strayhorn, 2011; Walpole, 2007).

A sense of connection is a support system most students need to be successful in education (Dike & Singh, 2002; Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2004, 2011). Once students establish a sense of connection with their peers and institution, they have an opportunity to connect to specific programs and staff members, which provides social capital through resources and guidance (Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2004, 2011). This arrangement meets participants' academic or emotional needs (Goddard, 2003; Hedge, 2001; Maeroff, 1999). Connection to the institution also benefits students with financial aid and tutoring services that further builds on the institutional relationships.

The second sense is focused on well-being. Institutional agents are responsible for distribution of resources, but this distribution should not be understood in a strict materialistic light (Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Psychological support and care are extremely valuable, especially for those students who come from communities facing a lot of problems (Alberta et al., 2005; Bandura, 1993, 1997; Phillips et al., 2016; Robbins et al., 2004). These support systems hone in on students' emotional and health welfare, putting in them in direct contact with social services and resources (Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2004, 2011). There is a range of services that these programs offer to promote students' well-being. Students are exposed and can enjoy the benefits of drug prevention sessions, tutoring, mentoring, after-school homework help, Saturday workshops, summer programs, and a host of other activities. When applicable, even their parents and siblings can choose from a range of services (Maeroff, 1999).

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The third sense deals with the academic initiative. This sense of initiative gears the educational programs' focus on the academic development of a student. School culture friendly to success can determine how much students will push themselves on behalf of academic achievement (Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). That is why it is generally suggested that a student should put effort into learning and becoming the active participant of the educational process. Self-discipline in the form of good study habits plays an essential role in fostering academic initiative (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Maeroff, 1999). Mentors and role models, who can serve as institutional agents, provide academic initiatives within these programs to impart the how to within the educational arena (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2003). Enrichment programs also try to improve academic initiative by encouraging teachers to develop lessons that will entice their students (Goldberg, 2008; Maeroff, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1988; Weaver & Qi, 2005). For far too many students, especially those in awful economic situations, education often lacks meaning. Students cannot imagine how these lessons connect to the realities of their lives (Kuh, 1993, 1995; Loeb & Fox, 2014; Maeroff, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1988).

Finally, the last sense engages the concept of knowing. One should not confuse it with the previous concept of academic initiative, which is mostly applicable within the academic field. To the contrary, the concept of knowing is applied in other, nonacademic areas of life (Dekker & Uslaner, 2003; Maeroff, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1988). A sense of knowing supports academic achievement. Acquiring academic knowledge is more meaningful when there are chances to apply what students are learning to real life,

especially for this population in need (Dekker & Uslaner, 2003; Kuh, 1993, 1995; Loeb & Fox, 2014; Maeroff, 1999). In more wealthy households, parents take the initiative to begin the process of learning and use their resources when infants are still in the crib and continue throughout childhood and so forth (Maeroff, 1999). These parents surround their children with experiences that increase vocabulary and deepen meaning, exposing them to a world that prompts conversations. Most programs, in one way or another, try to evoke the same foundation at the same time trying to make up for the areas that were omitted (Maeroff, 1999; Ng et al., 2012, 2014; Perna, 2002, 2005; Tierney 2001). Educational leaders who have a singular academic focus too often lead to the failure of the academic programming (Maeroff, 1999). Educational, precollege programs represent a critical attempt to make academic outcomes for students in need more closely resemble those of students from more affluent backgrounds (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2002, 2005; Tierney 2001). Institutional agents must be proactive and flexible in how they determine the goals and objectives of their respective programs in order to be effective ((Dike & Singh, 2002; Goddard, 2003; Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011).

Scholars identified other aspects of the importance of social capital – the whole system of networks, values, norms, and trust - and the influence of institutional agents in schools (Dike & Singh, 2002; Goddard, 2003; Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011). For example, the concept of social capital serves to create bonds between people and bridge the differences that exist in society (Putman, 2000). As a result, it is important that social capital is delivered to those who will benefit from it the most. Through the process of network development, social relationships are built with

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resources rooted in contacts (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti &

Black, 2011; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997,

2004, 2011). Specifically, students in educational programs create social relationships

with program staff and peers (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti &

Black, 2011; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997,

2004, 2011). These connections motivate students to get more involved with the

institutional resources of the program (Ambrosino et al., 2005; Museus & Neville, 2012;

Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007; Ryan, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2011). In other words, the

process of creating networks encourages participants to get involved with the activities

and services in the program. This active participation and the associated institutional

resources enables students to counter the harmful effects of their past environments.

Putnam (2000) noted underrepresented minority students are able to gain a better

chance of achieving their career objectives and breaking the vicious circle of poverty

through education. That is why their advancement along the path of education is

extremely important for them. Ultimately, it will provide the opportunity for upward

social mobility. In addition, institutional agents, as they distribute social capital, may also

contribute to self-improvement of underrepresented, minority students (Coleman, 1988,

1994; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). This can be particularly beneficial in disadvantaged or

urban communities where there is a stronger need to protect or enhance strong networks

and norms (Putman, 2000). Institutional agents should understand their meaningful

positions and take on active roles in the empowerment of these students through the

educational programs, exchange of information, and resources embedded in the contacts.

In summation, a focus on social capital allows educational practitioners to

consider the importance of educational programs as they relate to diverse, underrepresented groups transitioning from high school to college. These networks (formal or informal) can bring potential benefits or resources that may flow from a person or group's network of social ties. Precollege programs, specifically the Rowan University Upward Bound program for ELLs, can include these benefits or resources through academic readiness and support systems at the high school and university level, exposure to community services, coordinated information to newly arrived immigrants, network contacts at the local level, emotional support during students' educational journeys, and reinforcement of positive behavior during their academic experiences. If the Upward Bound program at Rowan University is to prepare ELL students for productive, fulfilled lives, then social capital may be fundamental to that goal. These benefits or resources can serve as bonding, bridging, and linking concepts of social capital to college success.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter 3 outlined the details of a qualitative research design, specifically focusing on an intrinsic case study approach. This overall study focused on issues of academic preparedness, social and emotional readiness, and subsequent college enrollment of ELL students in Rowan University through the Upward Bound program. In chapter three, I provided a rationale and purpose for using this intrinsic case study model as it relates to this precollege program. The chapter included a description of the sampling strategy, participant sample, and site of the research study. Based on the literature review in chapter two, my intent in this case study was to contribute to the body of knowledge and gain an understanding of the challenges and motivations of ELL students transitioning from high school and entering institutions of higher education (Bedsworth et al., 2006; Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Cline et al., 2007; Coles, 2002; Conley, 2007, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Goddard, 2003; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Hedge, 2001; Maeroff, 1999; Perna & Jones, 2013; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Additionally, I examined the role a precollege program plays in supporting ELL students academically, socially, and emotionally during this transition.

Given the recent changes in demographics, the numbers of ELLs in urban environments are increasing at a rapid rate (NCELA, 2007). The percentage of students in ELL programs is generally higher for school districts in urban areas. For example, in 2014-2015, ELL students in cities made up an average of 14% of total public school enrollment, ranging from 9.4% in small cities to 16.7% in large cities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Despite these statistics, ELL students are "less likely to

progress through school than any other student subgroup" (Loeb, Soland, & Fox, 2013, p. 6). It is necessary to explore the phenomenon of ELLs and postsecondary education as these students are generally underrepresented at this level and there are many obstacles that potentially hinder this growing population from academic and social success.

Qualitative Research

The purpose of qualitative research is to understand and explain participant meaning (Morrow, 2005). More specifically, Creswell (1998, 2014) defines qualitative research as a process of inquiry that attempts to gain a deeper understanding of specific people, social phenomena, and organizations/events. Qualitative research methods are useful in uncovering the hidden meaning people give to their personal experiences (Creswell, 1998, 2014). Thus, using a qualitative methodology allowed me to study the phenomenon of English Language Learners in a higher education setting. This study fostered a unique perspective of prior Upward Bound alumni and their own comprehension of how they are adapting and excelling at Rowan University.

This study allowed participants an opportunity to reflect and discuss their views on transitioning from the Upward Bound program to Rowan University, specifically focusing on their challenges and achievements academically, emotionally, and socially as current college students. Having participants recount their experiences provided rich and thorough descriptions. In an academic setting where the goal is to gather information on students' lived experiences within courses and programs, engaging in qualitative research is the most appropriate (Flowers & Moore, 2003).

Case Study Design

Case study research is an important research design in which the researcher thoroughly examines an event, activity, process, program, or individual(s) (Stake, 1995). The strength of case study research lies in the capacity for in-depth study of complex social phenomenon in real-life settings (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Case study research provides an opportunity to gather first-hand experience using a variety of data collection methods, and is based on establishing long-term relationships between the researcher and the research participants (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Stake (1995), Merriam (1998), and Yin (2009) discuss different techniques and strategies to conduct case study research that inherently complement one another. Yin (2009) suggests that case study research is best used in studies focused on a single institution or program and which seek to answer research questions on the how and why of a phenomenon. Utilizing a case study research design is the most appropriate research model because my overall goal was to gain better insight on the Upward Bound program by collecting descriptive information.

Scholars have not only extensively explored the concept of case study, but have also outlined approaches for conducting and organizing this research. The primary criterion for a case study is the opportunity to learn (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). By this the scholars mean identifying a case where there is good access and a willingness to participate. This ensures that the researcher can maximize the learning opportunities (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). This perspective best serves as the central focus of their research on case study methodology.

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Intrinsic case study. An intrinsic case study focuses on analyzing the case of a person or a specific department, occupation, organization, or group (Grandy, 2010; Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) uses the term intrinsic and proposes that researchers who have a genuine interest in the case should use this approach when the intent is to better understand the case. A case may be considered to be of interest given its ordinary or distinct features, such as focusing on a specific population or problem or building theory based on new knowledge (Grady, 2010; Stake, 1995). Intrinsic case study involves exploration of one particular case for its own sake, where there is no expectation that results have implications for other case studies (Grady, 2010; Stake, 1995).

My research study employed an intrinsic approach to the case study (Grady, 2010; Stake, 1995). Intrinsic case studies focus on a specific department, program, or organization as the primary interest of the research. The Rowan University Upward Bound program is unique since it is the only precollege program that serves strictly high school ELL students from the city of Camden. As such, the main purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to explore the role the UB program played in the experiences of Upward Bound ELL alumni at Rowan University, particularly what impact the UB program had on their academic development, socialization to college, and motivation to enroll and persist.

Purpose

The main purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to examine Upward Bound ELL alumni at Rowan University and gain a better understanding of the role and impact the Upward Bound program has on ELL students' experiences academically, socially, and emotionally. Maeroff (1999) examined the effects of various educational

programs and explains why and how programs work successfully according to his four-sense theme: a sense of connectedness, a sense of well-being, a sense of academic initiatives, and a sense of knowing. In this study, I purposely explored how the Upward Bound program empowered the four senses critical to each ELL student who is currently enrolled at Rowan University. Data was used to further inform on-going practices that could improve the program and for our ELL population at Rowan University, as well as those students who desire to pursue higher education elsewhere.

Research Questions

My research explored the concepts of social capital as it relates to the Upward Bound ELL alumni enrolled at Rowan University. Lin (2001) states that social capital refers the availability and accessibility of resources within an individual's social network(s). How ELL students navigate through their collegiate experiences is largely dependent upon their professional and personal social networks. Conducting this research through this lens is relevant because the overall study focused on how institutional agents and resources supported and assisted in the transition of ELL students to Rowan University, specifically the role the UB program plays in students' overall success. I used Maeroff's (1999) four-sense themes associated with effective educational programs, including: a sense of connectedness, a sense of well-being, a sense of academic initiatives, and a sense of knowing. Relying on these senses, I explored how the Upward Bound program has influenced ELL alumni's experiences academically, socially, and emotionally at Rowan University.

This study sought to investigate the following research questions:

1. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program

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played in their academic development?

2. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program had in their socialization for college?

3. How did the Upward Bound program affect ELL program alumni's motivation to successfully enroll in college?

I used an interview-based approach within a qualitative intrinsic case study design in order to gain a deeper understanding of the students' experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

The research questions emerged from my experience as the Director of the Upward Bound Program at Rowan University. The research questions were significant because of the lack of available programming throughout the region to support ELL student's transitions from secondary education to four-year institutions of higher education (Rowan University, 2015).

Sampling

There are several strategies available to qualitative researchers. The purpose of the research study determined the type of sampling needed for a particular study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest that one of the most significant challenges for qualitative researchers is identifying a sample that captures the essence of a study through rich and the descriptive experience of the research participants. In a qualitative case study, the researcher may use this type of sampling when demonstrating that similarities exist in the population (Creswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Tansey, 2007; Yin, 2009). The researcher chooses the sample based on whom she thinks would be appropriate for the study. This is used primarily when there are a limited number of people who have expertise in the area

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being researched (Creswell, 2014). For the purposes of my research study, a non-probability sampling strategy was used to identify Upward Bound ELL alumni who were active participants in the program and could provide rich description of their experiences transitioning from high school to Rowan University, which I explained in greater detail later in this document.

Sampling Strategy

In alignment with Miles and Huberman's (1994) criteria and the purpose of my qualitative research design, I engaged in a non-probability purposeful sampling strategy. Purposeful sampling is generally used in case study research (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2001). Purposeful selective approach is defined as a selection strategy which involves a deliberate selection of persons, activities, and particular settings in such a way that information obtained cannot be obtained for other available sources (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2002).

There are different sampling strategies available to qualitative case study research. One of the most significant challenges is determining an appropriate sample size to inform the study and provide sufficient detail to create a thorough narrative of the research phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Since the goal of qualitative research is not statistical significance, qualitative sample sizes are typically small in order to minimize potential redundancy of feedback and create space for more in-depth narratives and anecdotal detail (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2003). The target goal for this research study was to secure between 7-10 participants since the objective of qualitative research is to obtain a small sample size in order to explore the data in greater depth. Upward Bound alumni were selected through purposeful sampling techniques. The study

was purposeful since they were prior Upward Bound students, who have transitioned to Rowan University.

Participants

The target population for this study was male and female ELL alumni who were participants in the Upward Bound program in 2014-2016 and are currently college students at Rowan University. These participants were active in the program while enrolled in secondary education and transitioned to Rowan University once they graduated from high school either through the English Language program (ELP) or the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program.

Rowan University's English Language Program (ELP) is designed to provide high quality, rigorous, academic, English programs for both local and international students (Rowan University, 2015). The Rowan University EOF program is an alternative admission program aimed to support students who may lack the finances and have limited academic preparation, but desire to pursue higher education (Rowan University, 2015). These programs have been pathway programs for Upward Bound ELL students who may need to further their English language skills or are not college-level ready to matriculate into the general Rowan population. Additionally, these ELL students have much needed access to a support system provided by the ELP and EOF programs that is especially tailored to meet their needs, including but not limited to: intensive counseling, supplemental instruction, tutoring, and workshops (Rowan University, 2015; Rowan University UB database, 2015).

Every student in the Upward Bound program was identified as an English Language Learner and a resident of Camden city. Of the seniors enrolled in the program

during the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years, approximately 78% are both low-income and first-generation. Of those seniors, 88% were Hispanic, 9% were of African descent, and 3% were Asian. In qualitative research, the quality of participants is more important than the number of participants (Creswell, 2007, 2014). For fairly in-depth interviews, it has been suggested the range be 8 to 12 participants or until data saturation. Currently, there were a total of 18 UB ELL students from 2014-2016 at Rowan University. As a result, I contacted 10 prior UB students and asked them to participate in this study and reached saturation. Although at the college level, they are no longer classified as English Language Learners; they are identified as nonwhite, specifically Hispanic, Asian, or African-American.

Study Context

The effectiveness of qualitative research is largely determined by the richness of detail provided by participants (Creswell, 2007). Conducting interviews with research participants in a familiar location enhances their comfort level (Berg, 1998; Creswell, 2014; Esterberg, 2002). In order to ensure that each participant could speak freely and honestly, interviews were conveniently held at the Starbucks located in the University bookstore across the street from the Rowan campus in Camden, New Jersey. This city was also home to a significant number if not all of the participants; therefore, availability and convenience for interviews was more likely (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). If the bookstore was not a suitable location, I met them in a convenient place of their choice.

Data Collection

A trademark of case study research is the use of several data sources, a strategy that also enhances data credibility (Merriam 1998, 2000; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995, 2000;

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Yin, 2003). In this study, data sources included: semi-structured interviews, a review of primary documents from the Upward Bound program, and a journal. In order to attain precise and comprehensive results from the participants' understanding, triangulation or data convergence techniques was adopted (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003).

Interviews allow participants to tell their stories and serve as a meaning-making process (Seidman, 2003). Participants delve into their conscious world to expose their experiences. Based on the nature of this research, I relied mainly on interviews to collect data. Interviews were appropriate because they chronicled participants' experiences in the UB program and Rowan University. Additionally, I collected data from UB program documents and maintained a personal reflective journal to conclude my findings, which I explained in detail further along in this document.

According to the Maeroff (1999), effective programming is dependent upon meeting the goals of each of his four senses, which explains a particular dynamic of program effectiveness. Successful programs provide opportunities for students to benefit from the social capital offered in alignment with goals and objectives. Each piece of data in this study was used to inform my research questions and further explored how the UB program empowered Maeroff's (1999) four sense themes, including: 1) a sense of connectedness, 2) a sense of well-being, 3) a sense of academic initiatives, and 4) a sense of knowing. The UB program data collected from the interviews and document scan as well as my reflective journal helped to inform on-going practices and determine the ways in which the program achieves its desired outcome of influencing students to enroll in higher education institutions. The target population for the study was UB program alumni as they can best speak to how these four themes are directly tied to the program goals and

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objectives.

Interviewing

There are four major reasons for using interviewing as the primary data source for this study. First, this approach allowed the participants to provide a firsthand, first-person account that incorporated participants' experiences instead of simple "yes" or "no" answers that provide incomplete feedback (Creswell, 2014; Kvale, 2008). Secondly, interviewing played a critical role in capturing non-verbal ques. Through one-on-one interviews, I had a better sense of participants' feelings towards the UB program and observed both the body language and expressions associated with those feelings. Patton (2002) confirmed the importance of perspective assessment in terms of emotional data in addition to the hard, factual data. Thirdly, qualitative interviews culminated in thick descriptions of the participant, thus enabling readers to make decisions about transferability of study results (Merriam, 2002). I obtained these descriptive narratives through my style of questioning, the comfortable interviewing environment, and personal nature of our established relationships. Finally, interviewing allowed for triangulation of information, thus increasing the credibility of the findings (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 1995).

For the interviews, I adopted a semi-structured approach with open-ended questions to obtain the following from the participants: demographic information, perceptions, and experiences in relation to the Upward Bound program. Appendix A, Interview Protocol (English), and Appendix B, Protocolo de Entrevista (Spanish), detailed the initial questioning structure for the study. When necessary I had follow up questions, which assisted in clarifying a response (Creswell, 2014).

As stated by Vygotsky (1978), language allows a standard for learning and is a

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tool to construct a way of thinking. Learning takes place in a social context through language and students need to internalize knowledge in a related context using language (Vygotsky, 1978). If students are not competent in that language, they may come up with misconceptions in understanding (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, since Spanish is the native language most of the ELL students who were interviewed spoke, I provided the participants the option to choose which language protocol would be best to gather the most authentic, factual information. Interviewing Upward Bound ELL alumni, I uncovered their overall experiences, challenges, and achievements as prior UB participants and Rowan University students. As Patton (2002) suggested, participants are knowledgeable and insights can be of great importance in helping a reader comprehend the how and why experiences.

All of the research participants were treated in accordance to the University IRB standards although minimal risk was anticipated. During the interview process, I recorded the interviews after attaining the participant's approval (Merriam, 1998, 2002). Participants were informed verbally and through consent forms regarding the objective of the study, potential benefits, research protocols, confidentiality, as well as their right to remove themselves from the study at any time during this process. Moreover, I asked participants if they had any questions related to the research procedures and the research study. In order to establish rapport and develop trust, I provided information about myself accordingly.

This research study is based on a qualitative approach to data collection within an intrinsic case study design (Stake, 1995, 2000). Data was collected over a period of three months through semi-structured, open-ended interviews and a review of program related

documents. I conducted an independent face-to-face interview with each voluntary participant in the local Starbucks located in the University Bookstore. The interviews were approximately 25-35 minutes long. Although there was no universal format on qualitative interview transcription, I hired a bilingual external source to professionally transcribe the interview responses (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). However, I also listened to and reviewed each transcript to ensure that participants' experiences were accurately reflected. In qualitative research, member checking is a quality control method generally used to enhance the accuracy of findings (Harper & Cole, 2012). I provided the interview participants an opportunity to review their own transcription in order to ensure that I appropriately captured the meaning of their insight. It also guided the discussion that helped in understanding more about the findings.

Furthermore, I jotted down handwritten notes during each interview as a method of quality control. Healy and Perry (2000) suggested that the quality of a study could only be judged by the dynamics of a specific paradigm. In this qualitative research study, I used note taking as a means to assist me in setting my own parameters that can be used as a basis of evaluation (Muswazi & Nhamo, 2013). Reflective journaling also allowed me to evaluate my personal beliefs and assumptions in order to enhance my understanding of my own subjectivity (Ortlipp, 2008). This enabled me to also track vital points to review later on in the interview or to accentuate the ideas of particular interest or importance.

Documents

The documents used for this study included any type of program data such as the Upward Bound database where data logs, including attendance records and program participation, and other useful data could lead to possible valuable findings about the

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Upward Bound program and its influences on prior UB students. As an ethical consideration, these documents did not reveal personal or identifying information about program and research participants. More general information was collected through surveys, evaluations, and pre- and post-tests taken from prior UB students during the program and was used to understand the factors that led to their academic determination, retention in the program, and persistence at Rowan University. These documents provided valuable data that interviews may miss (Creswell, 2014).

Reflective Journal

The reflective journal is defined as documents kept by the researcher in order to reflect, tentatively interpret, and plan data collection (Krefting, 1991). A key focus in the reflective journal was what Denzin and Lincoln (2000) call "working the hyphen" between insider and outsider, or simply exploring the awareness that "researchers are always on both sides of the hyphen" (p. 1021). In this example, the concept of insider-outsider is not one of duality but of contradiction; there is strength in writing from positions in both perspectives. The existence of this hyphen is an opportunity to recognize and merge the complex identities that a researcher embodies as it directly impacts the lens through which the collected data is understood and possible recommendations that can be made. Peshkin (1988) suggests that researchers should have an ongoing "enhanced awareness that should result from a formal, systemic monitoring of self" (p. 20). One of the most significant, yet damaging, pitfalls that qualitative researchers succumb to is viewing the researcher/participant relationship in, what Fine (1998), suggests is "us-v-them." Reflective journaling throughout this study was particularly important as a way to manage subjectivity since my own identity very closely

mirrors that of the subjects being studied.

There has been constant conversation among scholars regarding bias and subjectivity in qualitative research as researchers play such an integral in interpreting findings (Silverman, 2006). My experiences as a Latina, born and raised in Camden, and my position in the program informed my understanding of the participants' stories. In order to enhance my awareness of potential bias and devalue the integrity of the research study, I engaged in "systematic monitoring of self" through the use of reflective journaling, member checking, and transparently communicating my relationship (Peshkin, 1988, p. 20). To convey the participants' perceptions of their experiences accurately, I focused specifically on what they were saying, the conclusion they drew, and their intentions for the future. The journal entries gave me a chance to describe my feelings, reactions such as the insights, expectations, assumptions, and biases about the research process.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis are the two major components involved in qualitative research studies (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). Qualitative analysis is considered a form of artistry. There is no single way to complete qualitative research since data analysis involves the use of creativity and not mechanical efforts (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Qualitative case study researchers are reminded by Stake (1995) that data analysis is a continuing process. Case study data analysis generally involves an iterative, spiraling, or cyclical process that continues from more general to more specific explanations (Merriman, 2002, Stake, 1995, Yin, 2001). Data analysis should be an interactive, analytical practice, reciprocal in nature (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995). This iterative

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process is relevant to my study, since it involved asking and re-asking probing questions that illuminated the broader research questions.

From the perspective of the Upward Bound program, this data was extremely helpful in identifying why Upward Bound is and is not working well in some areas and what can be done to change it. In this case, it not only meant comprehending the experiences of former ELLs in the Upward Bound program and how it related to academic developments, emotional resilience, and socialization at the college level, but also identified resources and institutional agents that impacted their development, transition, and adjustment overall. I began with data analysis following the first interview in order to identify patterns through the use of coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2007).

To add to the rigor of my study, I entered the participants' worlds and through ongoing interaction, analyzed participants' perspectives and meanings. Moreover, additional data analysis was provided in the journal (Creswell, 2014). Acknowledging the insider-outsider paradox and documenting data collection through journals involved me in a process of personal identity reflection that informed the critical analysis of developing ELLs' academic, emotional, and social development.

Furthermore, to enhance my findings, I brought an additional researcher into the coding process so as to widen the sphere of possibilities in terms of interpreting and enacting the data (Miles & Huberman, 1984, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). This involved crosschecking of coding strategies and interpretation of data by an independent researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1984, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). This researcher coded the same raw data and then attempted to bridge or synthesize the spheres of divergence and move towards interpretive convergence (Miles & Huberman, 1984, 1994; Saldaña, 2013).

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Such member checks and triangulation of interpretations in the coding process increased the validity of my knowledge claims and added richness to the analysis by prompting deeper analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). These records helped to crosscheck the data and writing of the final report of the study.

Coding

In a qualitative study, coding as stated by Saldaña (2013) refers to a word used to categorizing data. Coding is the process of exploring and organizing data for themes, and reducing data in order to identify key passages for subsequent analysis and interpretation (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009). It is important to code data in order to reduce the amount of information and organize it more efficiently. Data coding makes it simpler to identify consistent themes and patterns for later analysis found in the data (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006; Stake, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). There is no clear strategy used in coding. Coding is an interpretative art with the capabilities of evoking more meaning to the data (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006; Saldaña, 2013; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009).

For the purposes of my study, coding was used to organize, sort, and analyze my data as obtained from my participants during the interview process and transcription. I conducted a general coding sequence beginning with open coding to analyze the data for broader thematic categories before a second round of coding to identify trends and create sub-themes. This allowed me to reduce the data I collected in my research study (Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2009). Coding enabled me to focus on the participants' voices in order to get an idea of their perspective and obtain background details (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006; Saldaña, 2013; Stake, 1995; 2000; Yin, 2009). Codes were

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then categorized for emerging themes in the data. This data was analyzed through the lens of Lin's (2001) theory of social capital and Maeroff (1999) four-sense model on program effectiveness. Furthermore, I recorded insights and summarized my reflections after each interview for additional data collection and analysis.

Ethical Considerations

All of the participants were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) and Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Although there were no identifiable risks for participating in this study, a couple of concerns were taken into consideration. First, there was discussion with the students about their prior experiences as high school students in the program and transitioning to Rowan University. Secondly, participants in this study touched on the challenges they faced at the college level. As such, I allowed participants the freedom to skip questions. Thirdly, there was the potential participants may have felt the need to answer all the questions designed for the interview in a specific way given my leadership position in the program. Students were thus made to feel comfortable and safe. Additionally, they were given freedom to revoke their full participation in the study if they felt the need to do so.

Interviews were professionally transcribed in order to ensure accuracy in participants' comments. Member checking of interview transcripts, one of the ways that Rubin and Rubin (2005) recommend to partner with research participants, was an integral part of the research process. As Stake (2000) explains, the ethos of interpretation in any case study involves "seeking out those values held by the people within the case" (p. 441). Each participant in this qualitative case study reviewed and approved his or her

interview transcript before data analysis began, and member checking for accuracy was recursive through the analysis stages.

The participant's confidentiality was assured. Pseudonyms were used to hide participants' identities. A locked cabinet at my home was used to store all notes, transcripts, and audiotapes. Also, a written consent form was obtained from all the participants. Furthermore, each participant was presented with a letter outlining a consent form for their records and the research, as well as the consent form was kept by me.

Role of the Researcher

As both the researcher and Coordinator of the Upward Bound program, I looked forward to uncovering the meaning of this phenomenon from the data collected from the interviews and review of the documents. During my own interpretation process, the information was used to enhance my program's mission, goals, and initiatives that relate to the empowerment of all ELL UB students at Rowan University. This study's recommendations could significantly inform and contribute to diversity initiatives at the university, student support services, and ultimately supporting all ELLs positively.

Summary

Qualitative research, mostly exploratory, is used to gain an understanding of fundamental reasons, opinions, and motivations (Creswell, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research in the future (Rubin & Rubin, 2014). Qualitative Research is also used to uncover developments in thought and opinions, and goes deeper into the problem (Creswell, 2014). This chapter offered qualitative data collection methods using semi-structured techniques including individual interviews. The sample size was small and

participants were purposefully selected. I attempted to explore the phenomenon of English Language Learners in higher education in its most authentic environment. A qualitative approach fostered a unique perspective of prior Upward Bound alumni and their own understanding of how they were adapting and excelling at Rowan University.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study was to examine Upward Bound

ELL alumni at Rowan University and gain a better understanding of the role and impact

the Upward Bound program has on ELL students' experiences academically, socially,

and emotionally. I also sought to gain insight specifically on how the program can

improve the experience for future classes of students from the participants' perspectives.

This chapter consists of themes based on the findings and data analysis from individual

face-to-face interviews with former UB program participants and an overview of key

program documents. I concluded this chapter with a summary and address significant

developments identified through the data collection process.

Overview

In this research study, I investigated how the Upward Bound Program contributed

to the academic, social, and emotional success of ELL students transitioning from high

school to college. Yin (2009) suggests that case study research is best used in studies

focused on a single institution or program and seek to answer research questions on the

how and why of a phenomenon. Utilizing a case study research design was the most

appropriate research model because my overall goal was to gain better insights of the

Upward Bound program by collecting descriptive information. Each piece of data in this

study informed my research questions, which are based on Maeroff's (1999) four sense

themes, including: 1) a sense of connectedness, 2) a sense of well-being, 3) a sense of

academic initiatives, and 4) a sense of knowing.

Research Questions

This study investigated former Upward Bound Program participants' experiences regarding academic, social, and emotional factors through the following research questions:

1. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program played in their *academic* development?

2. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program had in their *socialization* for college?

3. How did the Upward Bound program affect ELL program alumni's *motivation* to successfully enroll in college?

These research questions emerged from my experience as the Project Director of the Upward Bound Program at Rowan University.

Participant Summary

For this study, I engaged in a non-probability purposeful sampling strategy. A total of 10 former Upward Bound Program participants chose to participate in the research study. Each participant was enrolled as a participant in the Upward Bound Program from 2014-2016 and is currently enrolled as a student at Rowan University. These participants were active in the program while enrolled in secondary education and transitioned to Rowan University once they graduated from high school either through the English Language program or the Educational Opportunity Fund program. Every student in the program was identified as an English Language Learner, a resident of Camden city, first-generation, and low-income college student. The participants' confidentiality was assured by applying a pseudonym in lieu of personal identifying

information. Each student was approached individually regarding voluntary participation in the research study. After this initial conversation, a detailed consent form was given to each participant both in English and Spanish, when needed, prior to the scheduled interview. See Appendix C for the Informed Consent Form (English) and Appendix D for the Formulario de Consentimiento Informado (Spanish). Table (1) illustrates the year participants entered the Upward Bound program, gender, and collegiate level of each interviewee. The group consisted primarily of freshman and sophomore students from a range of academic disciplines. Each participant freely discussed their academic, social, and emotional experiences as it relates to the program and their preparation for higher education.

Table 1

Research Participant Data

Pseudonym	Entry Year in UB	Gender	Collegiate Year
Annie	Junior	Female	Freshman
Elizabeth	Freshman	Female	Freshman
Fernando	Sophomore	Male	Sophomore
Hilda	Junior	Female	Sophomore
Juan	Freshman	Male	Freshman
Lucy	Sophomore	Female	Sophomore
Maryann	Freshman	Female	Sophomore
Sandra	Junior	Female	Freshman
Tiffani	Freshman	Female	Sophomore
Victor	Sophomore	Male	Freshman

Data Analysis

I conducted an analysis of data using a qualitative intrinsic case study approach based on strategies introduced by Merriam (1998), Stake (1995), and Yin (2009). The UB program data collected from the 10 interviews, program documents, and reflective journals helped to determine in what ways the program achieved its desired outcome of influencing students to enroll in higher education institutions. Each data source was analyzed individually using two rounds of coding (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006; Saldaña, 2013). The first round of coding was open coding to analyze the data for broader thematic categories before a second round of coding was used to identify trends and create sub-themes (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006; Saldaña, 2013; Stake, 1995, 2000; Yin, 2009). In alignment with standard qualitative methodology, the data was organized and reduced in order to accurately interpret the findings. With the development of these groupings, I thoroughly assessed the amount of data related to each category and used further data reduction when irrelevant amounts or overlapping data was found. Ultimately, the initial categories emerged in the following three themes: (a) self-efficacy; (b) support networks; (c) confronting and managing campus climate and diversity.

Self-Efficacy

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the relationship between positive self-concept and academic achievement has been well documented. Students who are clear about the significance of education are motivated and more determined to attend and graduate from college (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Zulli & Frierson, 2004). In response to questions about academics, socialization, and motivation, interview

participants each highlighted a reoccurring theme of self-efficacy. Since self-efficacy was a theme developed as a result of the data collection, it was important to define the term to establish a shared understanding. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's self-perception pertaining to one's abilities and level of motivation, emotional, and actions (Bandura, 1986). Participants discussed the idea of self-efficacy in relationship to setting goals, completing tasks, and overcoming challenges, which were each identified a subtheme.

Setting goals. Participants' level of motivation to achieve their goals was expressed in their willingness to work towards attainment of goal. Interviewee Hilda stated:

> I want to go to Rowan and I want to do good…I am the first to go to college and being in college. Now my sister is going to same college…my sister, she is following in my footsteps, which is great.

Juan exemplified this same ideal by mentioning, "I want[ed] to be a mentor one day in the program [Upward Bound]" and continued by discussing the importance of being a role model to current Upward Bound students. When reviewing the Upward Bound program documents, Juan accomplished this goal summer 2016. He is a currently a mentor in the UB program and actively works with UB ELL students. Most participants acknowledged the importance of going to college. Tiffani said:

> So far is that like college can be really hard. College is very hard. You have to work hard if you want to accomplish your goal and be a successful person, you just have to work hard for what you want. That is what I do. I have to.

Lucy was adamant about the certainty of going to college as an option when she affirms, "It's not if I'm going to college…it's I am going to college."

Completing tasks. When participants were faced with completing a task whether it took place in the Upward Bound program or currently as Rowan students, their approach to completing the task was focused on the ways they would achieve that objective. The challenge did not become a deterrent towards accomplishing the goal. Setting goals was linked to their task performance. According to Sandra, "I decide first to like prepare myself [for college] by studying English and reading books." All participants felt the need to work harder and practice whatever task was introduced. "Practice helps me to improve," believed Juan. Tiffani stated, "Practice, practice, practice, practice over and over to get it." Annie said, "I have problems with my management time…I get help...it's something good." Elizabeth stated, "I try to work hard, harder…I have to."

Many of the participants, despite the difficulties of completing tasks, wanted to share what they were doing and learning with other students in similar situations. "I try to take all the information I learn in class and share it with other people," said Victor. The need to motivate others in similar circumstances was a priority for many of the participants as they appreciated the same reinforcement and verbal persuasion from other support networks. Fernando stated:

> My priority was to pass classes with good grades…I want to motivate others around me, giving them a good example. Talk to my friends and look let's go to college, let's do this, let's do what you gotta to do to be successful.

Lucy realized as a college student, she would have to expand her comfort zone dramatically. Lucy stated, "I have to go out of my comfort zone…I have to let them know I am here." Another participant felt swamped with the demands of college, but despite being inundated she saw the purpose in pressing forward. "Sometimes I feel kind of

overwhelmed with college and classes but at the end I see it's worth it," said Maryann.

Overcoming challenges. The majority of the participants found language and writing an obstacle. Despite this barrier, participants' self-assessment and lack of language proficiency did not hinder their drive to succeed and may also have been a reason for their success transitioning from the Upward Bound program, completing the ESL and the EOF program, to performing well as current Rowan students.

Language barrier. "I had to speak English and it was difficult but I did it," stated Lucy. Elizabeth said:

> English was really bad and I know if I go to the university without learning the language it would be harder, maybe I fail so I keep practicing and more practice to not give up.

"My main concern was being an English Language Learner and speaking English but I keep trying to do well," said Annie. Sandra believed that the Upward Bound program had been one of the main reasons that she had been able to make progress in English and overcome difficulties:

> I don't talk too much but it [Upward Bound] help me talk more…I'm trying to speak more, learn more, like different vocabulary so they can understand what I'm trying to say.

Fernando expressed, "I don't speak right language but I'm trying and I keep working so I just don't pay attention to those who don't pay attention to me."

Writing barrier. Participants had high perceptions about the importance of ESL writing skill for their academic study and their future career. Their responses suggested that they were aware of their needs to improve their writing proficiency in English. "One

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of the struggle a lot with the writing process because sometime we cannot write the way we speak, I go to the writing center now and get more help, " stated Elizabeth. "As an ESL student writing had not been my strength, I still struggle but doing better because it's important," commented Lucy. Jose stated:

> High school was more about doing classwork than intense writing, like doing essay. [In high school] I'd probably write an essay a month, while in college I'm writing two essays a week. It's more intense writing but practice helps me improve…that's my academic concern writing.

> Maryann expressed, "I used to say how am I going to write papers if the students around me they are fluent in English…I was struggling a lot because of the grammar." Tiffani stated, "I had problem writing essays…but I had people that help me to like write essays."

> All 10 interviewees chose to approach their challenges with a positive mindset. All of the participants felt that their negative experiences were not going to discourage them from continuing on. "I won't let one bad experience be compared to the rest of good experiences," indicated Annie. Maryann stated:

> When I feel like something that is not going right, I just try to look the other way and just try to find a positive way to it…I overcome by just looking at the positive side not just the negative side.

This alternative approach to overcoming barriers was strengthened through the various support groups that interviewees identified as motivational sources in assisting them academically and socially while in high school, the transition to college, and currently as college students.

Support Networks

Support networks can be an invaluable asset to a student's success. All participants expressed how specific types of contacts and social dimensions influenced and impacted their development and college experiences. These supportive networks became a pathway to their current status and continual road to success.

Friends. Varied support networks have an influence in the academic and social experiences of students. Friendship groups appear to have had a positive effect on participants' self-confidence and had strong significant relationships to students' sense of belonging. "I feel like I belong. I like it here in Rowan," said Maryann. "I felt like I was part of the family in Upward Bound," stated Elizabeth. Research participants described that group participation enhanced their feelings of belonging and expanded their connection with the group. Sandra stated, "Participation in activities help me have more friends in the program [Upward Bound]." "I made a lot of friends in Upward Bound and now in Rowan University," added Victor. One research participant expressed the necessity to make friends to build on her support contacts. "I had to make new friends, like whenever I need help in here [Rowan University] I need somebody that I can talk and can help me with my problems," shared Tiffani.

Family. During the interviews, all participants shared how they would be the first to graduate college. All participants realized the struggles and sacrifices their parents went through to provide them with a better life. "My family background is not really educated…but my dad came to the United States to have a better future for us," said Tiffani. Annie also stated, "My parents never went to high school…so me [I am the] first to finish high school and to college." Fernando said, "My family, my mom and my

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brothers we came here for better futures and you know. Looking for opportunities."

Victor expressed, "My dad graduated from high school but didn't go to college because

he wanted to come the United States to have a better future for us. For me to go to

college, I have to." One interviewee in particular shared the lack of knowledge her

parents had about college, but connected with them in other ways. "My parents…my

mom and I have a strong connection…she tell me 'I didn't go to college but I can help

you see things differently'," stated Maryann.

High school. While students were either negative or did not discuss how their

high school experience prepared them, one participant mentioned a teacher and several

mentioned their counselors. In fact, when examining program documents, only three out

of the 10 interviewees participated in advanced placement or honors level classes at the

high school level. Those who took advanced placement classes felt that high school

helped in their college transition and helped in the process. Hilda said, "My writing

teacher in high school, like she taught us not at a high school level but you know like at a

college level so you know what to expect as a freshman in college."

Three of the research participants communicated how their high school counselors

were helpful and shared information pertinent to the college process. "My counselor in

high school was telling me to apply and pushing me to college and graduate too," said

Victor. Fernando stated, "Guidance counselors in high school and Upward Bound

counselor was helpful for me they have a lot of information about college and Upward

Bound." However, one particular participant felt if it were not for her assertive approach

about English classes, her counselor would not have made any changes to her schedule.

"I didn't want ESL classes in high school. I started talking to my counselor and you put

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me in classes that I know I only have to speak English only," said Elizabeth.

Academic support. The majority of interview participants shared that there were academic supports at Rowan University that helped them. Sandra shared, "Creative writing and math helped me now at Rowan." Regarding professors, Hilda stated, "Professors that have treated me well encouraged me to continue doing what I was doing." Juan mentioned his use of supplemental resources, such as the writing center. He affirmed, "If you need help in writing, there's a writing center so there's help if you need it you just have to find it…I've been there a couple of times." Lucy shared the same idea by discussing the availability of supports by asserting, "If you need help in Math, there's a tutor." One participant discussed her uncomfortable feelings about her academic experiences. Maryann said, "Like sometimes that you are in classes and you feel that you are behind compared to other students."

ESL program. Participants believed the Rowan University ESL program helped them gain the English proficiency needed to attend Rowan University. It is important to note that three out of the 10 interviewed were more than a year in the ESL program. Those three identified more closely with the ESL program. The other interviewees appeared to have connected more with the EOF program. Sandra stated, "I was struggling a lot because of the grammar but ESL teacher help us." "ESL help me with my English, cause my English is, was not good, so it was a big help for me," said Annie. Elizabeth was the only one who hinted to the partnership between ESL and the Upward Bound program:

ESL program help [ed] me more. When I left Upward Bound they [ESL program] took me to help me more. They work with me while I was also in Upward Bound.

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EOF program. Another component that interviewees addressed was the significance of the EOF program. All the participants thought if they needed support academically, they referred to the EOF and Upward Bound program as a resource to assist them. Seven out of the 10 participants cited the EOF program as being the program that provided the structure they needed to better prepare them as college students. Some of the participants felt the Upward Bound program should mirror EOF in composition. "EOF program was good…because they understand where I'm coming from and they [are] like Upward Bound but more strict," said Lucy. Likewise, Fernando affirms, "They need to treat them [current UB students] more like the EOF program."

All of the participants connected with the EOF program. This sense of belonging helped bridge the transition from the Upward Bound program to their current status at Rowan University. "EOF help me too...they help me feel like I belong too and they talk to me first when I was with you [Upward Bound]," voiced Victor. Juan was the only one who spoke on the partnership between Upward Bound and the EOF program. He made clear the introduction to EOF was through a workshop provided by Upward Bound:

> EOF program help [s] a lot [there are] many people that also understand my
> situation. I met them when I was in Upward Bound at a workshop.

Upward Bound program. When asked about the role the Upward Bound program played in their transition from high school to college, all 10 participants pointed to the program as the main source of information about college. "Upward bound [was] the first thing that helped me to go to college," said Jose. "Upward Bound [was the] first like program to help me go into college…just to be aware of what college was going to be," affirmed Victor. Lucy stated, "Upward Bound helped me a lot…like college fair, I

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learned about different colleges, different majors."

When participants were asked how the program supported their academic pursuits, all interviewees felt they were being prepared for success as future college students. "The reasons why I kept coming back to the Upward bound program again its optional was because I was getting something from it," said Tiffani. "Great experience to be part of the Upward Bound program…you will have fun but you will also learn...it's going to help you be successful," stated Maryann. Many felt that the cultural trips helped enrich the curriculum that eventually assisted in their sense of belonging at the university. Hilda voiced:

Being an immigrant you don't have a lot of experience doing like skiing, those trips are so much meaningful because you are sort of like behind...those trips that Upward Bound took us were filling that gap.

A fellow participant, Fernando expressed the same feeling:

Trips you would think like it was fun but as an immigrant is this country you, I remember being criticized for not knowing some movies or the pop culture…for me those were really a benefit [UB trips] on of the academic part.

One participant knew the program aided in keeping her focused and active in the program. "Upward Bound…they always like talk to me and they try to make me on track...they [Upward Bound] call me a lot," added Tiffani. She continued to discuss that without the continual push and encouragement from the program and staff, she would have utilized her time for her afterschool work only. Another participant, Maryann, believed the program as a whole including staff, mentors, teachers, and students were great motivators since, "many people that understand my situation in the program

[Upward Bound] and that are just like me going through it." Many participants elaborated particularly on the role the counselor, mentors and teachers played while in the program.

Counselors. Participants believed that the Upward Bound counselor had access to information about classes, how to get to college and how to pay for college. They understood the counselor helped them see the big picture when it came to planning for their future. "Like my counselor like he [UB counselor] helped me how to fill out the application," said Elizabeth. Participants referenced to Upward Bound counselor being a resource for information about financial aid and gave them insight on how the process works. "I didn't know how I was going to pay for college…if I was going to get help from the government," explained Victor.

Mentors. The mentoring component in the Upward Bound program consists of prior UB students who are current Rowan students and work with current UB students throughout the year and summer. Participants communicated how the guidance they received from mentors worked as encouragement and knowing them served as a resource once matriculated into Rowan University. After reviewing program documents, 8 out of 10 research participants were current mentors working for the program at the time of the interviews. The research participants considered the college mentors knowledgeable about the college experiences, which in turn helped ease the process once they left the Upward Bound program and transitioned into the larger Rowan community. "We had a chance to meet people who went to college and who could answer our concerns," said Elizabeth. Lucy stated, "I always look up to the mentors here [Upward Bound] they help a lot and help me with my work and college stuff."

Participants also voiced the significance of having mentors who were once in the Upward Bound program, therefore, building a trusting relationship between the mentors and students. Jose stated, "College mentors [Upward Bound mentors] let you know about what's going on...they were Upward Bound students too." Fernando stated, "The same students to be mentors when they go to college, when I was a student I didn't appreciate a lot what the mentors and the staff was doing, but now that I am staff [mentor] I tell them everything we learn we are going to use in college." Participants also appreciated having an affiliation with mentors once they matriculated into the larger Rowan community. "You see people from the Upward Bound program now in college and we're able to even say hi to each other because we know each other," expressed Juan.

Teachers. When participants shared their thoughts about the Upward Bound teachers, they expressed their concerns in the three major subjects: English writing, English language, and math. "I had to improve my writing and for my English…I know I would speak English only," said Sandra. Despite their concerns in those areas, many participants referenced the Upward Bound teachers in helping them get through that barrier. "Upward Bound professors were teaching me courses that you have to learn in college and that helped me be prepared and not be surprised when I go to college," said Victor. Fernando said:

They [math and ESL Upward Bound teacher] made me understand that I really need to understand the English language and math because English and math is really hard when you go to college so have to improve your skills.

Annie strongly expressed that the skills she learned in the math class helped her once she started college saying, "Math class helped me a lot." She realized the same

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skills continue to help her while in college. Tiffani mentioned how learning different glossary terms helped her as well. She stated, "They [UB teachers] help me with math and different vocabulary."

Confronting and Managing Campus Climate and Diversity

Campus climate can directly impact student learning, and therefore the very mission of the university (Hurtado, 2007). Likewise, the recruitment and retention of diverse groups of students can be affected by campus climate (Hurtado, 2007). Many of the interviewees spoke about how they confronted and managed their experiences while developing a sense of belonging on Rowan's campus. All interviewees expressed how the diversity of Rowan University's campus community, particularly diverse students, impacted their understanding and learning outcomes.

Rowan University. Several of the respondents discussed some of the aspects of higher education that were different from their expectations. They experienced a sense of "culture shock" in a variety of ways. Victor talked about the size of classes by stating, "I thought it was going to be like small classes…but it was huge…I was nervous to talk in class." Lucy also mentioned some challenges associated with adjusting to the new schedule by sharing, "[each day there's] different schedule, one day you have this class, another day you have another class." Overall, one of the research participants specifically stated he believed Rowan offered more supports and benefits than he expected. Juan expressed, "One thing I can say about college that I never thought I've got so much support." He also stated, "Rowan was a really good choice for me because it definitely had support of ESL students… it was welcoming in that sense. It was in my community. I can still live home."

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Diversity. Diversity was the strongest emergent subtheme participants identified when describing the culture at Rowan University. All of the interviewees agreed that Rowan's student population adds diversity to the campus community and promotes academic exchange and support. The majority of participants agreed that the Rowan University Camden campus was diverse. Annie mentioned that there were many students from, "different backgrounds and different cultures here [Rowan University]." Respondents, such as Sandra, viewed the diversity as positive and expressed that there were people from "different cultures so I like it." Victor saw this level of difference as a learning opportunity as he mentioned, "a lot of different people, different customs and traditions, different ways to learn."

A common subtheme throughout each interview was the association of diversity and their connectedness to social groups. Maryann noted that, "The Camden campus is very diverse." Elizabeth said she has the chance to, "make connections with different people from different places." Sandra mentioned that she is making, "good relationship with other students and I have learned from them." One participant shared that her sense of belonging is more closely associated with being around people of the same identity. Lucy said, "When I [am] around my [ethnicity] I feel like I belong because there's people from my country." Hilda described her experience as "being like a foreigner in an environment that is mostly dominantly White." She went on to say, "sometimes you know because of the way things are like when like White people thinking they are better than Black people or such."

The participants who are enrolled in classes at both the Camden and Rowan campuses described a difference between the two concerning diversity. Fernando said,

there are "two different kinds of experiences because Rowan has two campuses: one in Glassboro and one in Camden." Juan also described, "There's a sense of unity in Camden...it's always helpful to have those people [from the UB and EOF program] [to] connect with versus going to Glassboro." Juan shared the same sentiment by highlighting, "there's a difference between the two campuses." Two participants shared that they have concerns about how people perceive ESL students. Juan stated, "As an ESL student, there are people who don't understand what that means here [Rowan University]." Hilda mentioned, "My concern wasn't more academically, it was being an English Language Learner."

Summary

While most participants agreed the Upward Bound program helped in the college transition to Rowan University, self-efficacy was the main resource in former UB students' transition, persistence, and motivation to continue on despite the challenges they encountered. As the interviewees reflected on the study's themes, including self-efficacy, support networks, and confronting and managing campus climate and diversity, a significant finding emerged in that participants felt the need to continue to connect with the Upward Bound program and partner with other support networks while at Rowan University. All participants acknowledged how support networks provided a clearer roadmap and tools while in high school and their transition and persistence at Rowan University. More importantly, although many continue to struggle in the academic areas and with inclusion, their intrinsic ability to persist and succeed is their driving force to change and success. A discussion of these findings and their implications for other stakeholders take place in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Findings and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine and document the role the Upward

Bound program played in Upward Bound alumni's transition from high school to Rowan

University applying Maeroff's (1999) four-sense model of effective educational

programs. Using social capital as the theoretical framework, the findings provide K-12

districts, high school and college instructors, ESL programs, pre-college programs, and

institutions at large with a better understanding of the challenges and experiences

encountered by ELL students during their transition into higher education and as current

college students.

This study gave ELL Upward Bound alumni students a voice using a qualitative

study with semi-structured interviews. A total of 10 former Upward Bound alumni were

interviewed, all of whom were current Rowan students. Each data source was analyzed

individually using two rounds of coding (Gibbs, 2008; Lofland & Lofland, 2006;

Saldaña, 2013). Themes were developed producing some significant findings worth

emphasizing in the overview before presenting the discussion:

Overview

Self-Efficacy. Respondents' ability to demonstrate self-efficacy was an emergent

theme throughout the interviews. Self-efficacy is a major construct in Bandura's (1993,

1997) social cognitive theory, and a key factor in self-regulatory ways leading

individuals' motivation and action. According to social cognitive theories (Bandura,

1993, 1997; Schunk, 1989), people's feelings of self-efficacy affect several aspects of

their behavior, including their choice of activities, their effort and persistence, and

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ultimately, their learning and achievement.

The interviewees' beliefs that he or she had the ability to achieve a goal or outcome, such as attending Rowan University, was developed in part because the Upward Bound program provided realistic and meaningful affirmations, documented and celebrated their achievements, and encouraged students to participate in cooperative learning throughout the academic and summer components of the program (Rowan University, 2015). Program planning and curriculum design were structured for the academic year and summer programs. Both academic year and summer components included rigorous and intense academic enrichment. Certified teachers, college instructors, community partners, and college students were hired to work with students in the program year round (Rowan University, 2015). The Upward Bound program was committed to motivating and preparing participants academically and socially for college by cultivating their belief in their ability to succeed, developing these goals, and showing them the pathways to get there (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Harris et al., 2014; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007; Public Law 90-222, Dec. 23, 1967; Renchler, 1992; Ryan, 2001). However, after reviewing the data, what fundamentally drove the participants to enroll and continue to persist at Rowan University was self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993, 1997).

While some of the study's participants struggled in areas of assimilation, integration, and academic levels of proficiency at Rowan University, all interviewees described their motivation to persist as unwavering, determined, and steadfast. As revealed in the literature review, students who are clear about the significance of education are motivated and more determined to attend and graduate from college

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(Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Zulli & Frierson, 2004). Their tenacity to never give up was the attitude that exemplifies choosing to approach difficult circumstances with a productive mindset. According to Bandura (1993) stronger perceived self-efficacy is associated not only with the selection of more challenging activities, but also with greater persistence, effort, and success in performing those activities. Many interviewees noted that although their limited English proficiency was a struggle in the UB program and had an impact on their academic performance at the university, they were going to continue to improve and achieve proficiency, echoing previous research that found personality and academic confidence were associated with better motivation and adjustment, reduced dropout rates, and higher GPA (Bandura, 1993; Duckwork & Seligman, 2005; Maeroff, 1999; Nes, Evans, & Segerstrom, 2009; Strayhorn, 2011). The researchers concluded that with increased self-efficacy and a "belief in a positive outcome, students can succeed in the academic world, regardless of whether or not they are optimists" (Nes, Evans, & Segerstrom, 2009, p. 1908). None of the participants mentioned their obstacles as limitations, but rather opportunities to demonstrate personal determination to manage and overcome difficult situations while in the UB program and as current Rowan students.

EOF and ESL programs. Various college programs serve different academic, social, and cultural purposes for students. While the Upward Bound program is intended to support students prior to college in their transition from high school to an institution of higher education, the interviewees transitioned to Rowan University either through the English Language program (ELP) or the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program. These programs were pathway programs for participants who needed to further their

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English language skills and were not college-level ready to matriculate into the general Rowan population. As cited in the literature on student support programs, these preparatory programs are designed to supplement school-based learning and intended to improve the level of support academically and socially within students' educational environments to assist them in becoming college-ready (Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). Parallel with Maeroff's (1999) four-sense model, educational programs geared to provide support and build social capital represent an effort to confront and manage the barriers that block the academic achievement of some students. All participants recognized the support systems provided by the ELP and EOF programs were tailored to meet their needs, including but not limited to: intensive counseling, supplemental instruction, tutoring, and workshops (Rowan University, 2015, 2016; Rowan University UB database, 2015).

Interview participants indicated that in addition to the Upward Bound program, the EOF and ESL programs were a benefit and motivation to them. Working with the EOF counselors and the ESL teachers provided additional support they needed once they left the Upward Bound program. This is in accordant with the theory of social capital that indicates as underrepresented students develop relationships with institutional agents, they gain access to the resources and support in various ways (Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).

The study's data indicated that the process of creating networks in the Upward Bound program encouraged participants to get involved with the activities and services the ESL and EOF program offered. These relationships motivated students to get more involved with the institutional resources of the program (Ambrosino et al., 2005; Museus

& Neville, 2012; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007; Ryan, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2011). This active participation in the Upward Bound program and the associated institutional resources that the ESL and EOF provided, enabled participants to counter the harmful effects of their past experiences and challenges transitioning from high school to Rowan University.

Campus Climate and Diversity

Diversity was a major subtheme that emerged, although distinctions were made between those participants who were taking classes at the Glassboro campus verses Camden campus. As the literature suggests, institutional agents can remove barriers to assist disadvantaged students integrate their culture to the mainstream school culture (Dike & Singh, 2002; London, 2000; Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011; Tovar, 2015). Once students establish a sense of connection with their peers and institution, they have an opportunity to connect to specific programs and staff members, which provides social capital through resources and guidance (Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2004, 2011). This arrangement meets participants' academic or emotional needs (Goddard, 2003; Hedge, 2001; Maeroff, 1999). Despite the difference on the campus descriptions, all interviewees felt the diverse nature at Rowan University overall was a reflection of a changing world and sensed a feeling of belonging. According to the concept of social capital, social capital serves to create bonds between people and bridge the differences that exist in society (Putman, 2000).

The proximity to their homes and school also influenced their decision to attend Rowan University. More importantly, the participants acknowledged the link between the Upward Bound program and the opportunity to be a part of the Rowan community either

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through the ESL or EOF program. Most participants felt that the Upward Bound program played a role in a smoother transition from high school to the university and allowed for a feeling of inclusion at the university level. These key findings are examples of institutional agents provided through the Upward Bound program that resulted in additional support networks for interviewees during their transition to Rowan and as current Rowan students (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti & Black, 2011; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011). The assistance from the Upward Bound program was helpful to the participants during the transition from high school to Rowan University.

The research questions I created to focus this study highlighted the perspectives and expectations that ELL students embody in addition to the social, cultural, and academic struggles they experienced in their attempt to transition from high school to the university. I next answer these questions. The chapter ends with implications for practice collected from these results, recommendations for future research, the role of leadership, and conclusions drawn from the study.

Discussion

Research question one. *What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program played in their academic development?* The first research question asked about the role the Upward Bound program played in student's academic development. According to the data, students believed the writing, math, and speaking skills they developed were critical in their current college experience.

Language and writing development. ELL students have to endure the challenges of limited English proficiency within institutions of higher education based purely on English language standards. Many students enrolled in college courses are not academically prepared (Cline et al., 2007; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Kallison & Stader, 2012; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Roderick, Nagaoka, & Coca, 2009). Upward Bound provided an atmosphere for students to improve their verbal and written English skills. Several of the interviewees recognized that there was a need for them to focus on improving their English speaking ability as it had a direct impact on their academic performance.

Each student mentioned the development of their English language proficiency and their writing capabilities as a result of the English and writing classes in the UB program during the academic and summer component. They specifically discussed writing and grammar as the academic areas that posed the most significant challenge during their participation in the program. However, the majority of participants shared a desire to do better in their written and oral English communication and felt the UB program encouraged them to continue to do better by providing additional assistance when needed.

Academic curriculum. The interview responses showed that the majority of participants felt the Upward Bound program did play a role in their academic development as current Rowan students. The participants credited many of the Upward Bound teachers for their improvements and helping them get through the academic barriers. Many mentioned how the Upward Bound teachers taught skills conducive to college.

Many participants' statements also support the notion that pre-college programs, like Upward Bound, are critical to a successful academic transition to college for ELL students. Student support services in high school are essential to prepare them academically and motivate them to achieve success (American Institutes for Research, 2013). The available research on ELL students and academic preparation for higher education has suggested that this population is largely unprepared academically to compete within these institutions (McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007; Tierney, Corwin, & Colyar, 2004). First-generation students were less likely to have access to more advanced courses, which can have a direct and negative impact on their academic performance in the future (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2003).

Based on the interview feedback, the Upward Bound's focus on academic courses, primarily math and grammar, was helpful for students as they reflected on their academic experiences that prepared them for collegiate level courses. There was no clarification as to whether or not interview respondents were referring to introductory level math and grammar college level courses or more advanced courses, which scholars have stated is related to students' level of persistence (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2003). Since UB participants typically do not have a rigorous high school curriculum because of language development, Upward Bound plays a critical role in providing access to rigorous work. The rigor of a student's high school curriculum is strongly associated with the extent of remedial coursework, rates of persistence and attainment, and postsecondary GPA at the college level (Conley, 2007, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2005; Somers et al., 2004; Warburton et al., 2001; Xianglei, 2005).

Research question two. *What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program had in their socialization for college?* The second research question asked about the role the Upward Bound program played in student's social development. According to the data, students believed the relationships they established were significant in their current college experience.

Sense of belonging. After reviewing the data, there was a strong relationship between social belonging and student's persistence. All of the participants in the study expressed a sense of belonging while in the Upward Bound program. In accordance with the literature, parent's opinions about college, resources the UB program afforded, and peer relationships contributed to their retention in the program and their persistence to continue on to Rowan University (Baum & Flores, 2011; Choy & Premo, 1996; Cohen, 1983; Gandara, 2001; Miller, 1997; Ryan, 2001; Steinberg, Brown, Cider, Kaczmark, & Laaro, 1988; Zuekle, 2008; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Participants' aspirations for college degrees were highly dependent on various factors, including the personal opinions of their family members, friends, and the financial support they received from different support systems (Baum & Flores, 2011; Choy & Premo, 1996; Cohen, 1983; Gandara, 2001; Miller, 1997; Ryan, 2001; Steinberg, Brown, Cider, Kaczmark, & Laaro, 1988; Zuekle, 2008; Pike & Kuh, 2005).

All of the participants felt their backgrounds, language, and classification as English Language Learners connected them to the Upward Bound program and continues to connect them as current Rowan students. Also, many participants used the term "engaged" when describing the culture in the Upward Bound program and their relationship with their teachers and mentors while being supported through the college

process. The data and literature aligns with the theory on social capital suggesting that social capital is embedded in the relationships that a person develops with others, particularly in informal, social activities, and their memberships in groups and associations (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti & Black, 2011; Miksic, 2014).

The relationships among institutional agents introduced to them in the Upward Bound program such as UB teachers, mentors, staff, and other key personnel aided in providing the resources needed for a comfortable transition to Rowan University. School culture friendly to success can determine how much students will push themselves on behalf of academic achievement (Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney et al., 2001, 2004). The study affirmed the role of these institutional agents in the UB program who helped participants understand how colleges operate. Students are often unprepared for what will be expected of them in college and lack an understanding of how colleges operate (Conley, 2007, 2008; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Xianglei, 2005). Based on the study's data, the diverse nature in the UB program eased the college process for participants and offered a learning atmosphere and campus connectedness needed to persist and succeed both academically and socially as current college students.

Support network. Support networks were a cyclical theme throughout this study. The results from this study are consistent with research indicating institutions realize that students not only need academic and personal support during their first year transition from high school to college but throughout their entire college experience (Braxton, McKinney, & Reynolds, 2006; Phillips et al., 2016; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Venezia &

Jaeger, 2013; Walpole et al., 2008). The support networks participants were exposed to in the UB program provided a sense of belonging at Rowan University and within the Rowan community.

Study's data affirmed that positive peer relationships in the program, UB faculty and staff, mentors, and familial and community support were all types of support networks essential in encouraging a sense of belonging and increasing participants persistence. All participants felt building relationships in and out of the program's sphere helped establish a recurring sense of connectedness. In agreement with the social capital theory on institutional agents and Maeroff's (1999) four-sense model on effective educational programs, disadvantaged students connect to their educational organizations through building positive rapport with staff, thus gradually enhancing their position in society (Coleman, 1994; Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999). Specifically, students in educational programs create social relationships with program staff and peers (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti & Black, 2011; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011).

The encouraging relationships with various institutional agents in the Upward Bound program, especially the relationship with Upward Bound mentors, increased their confidence, allowing for a positive attitude towards facing challenges and belief they can overcome them within their control (Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004). Building a relationship with the Upward Bound mentors allowed participants to connect with Rowan once they transitioned into the university. For underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, developing relationships with key stakeholders including, but not limited to staff, not only impacts students' sense of belonging, but also

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enhances self-efficacy, which in turn increases learning gains (Strayhorn 2011).

Research question three. *How did the Upward Bound program affect ELL program alumni's motivation to successfully enroll in college?* The third research question asked about the role the Upward Bound program played in motivating them to succeed academically and socially as they transitioned from high school to Rowan University. According to the data, students believed the program contributed to their motivation to enroll and persist at Rowan University.

Empowerment. The study's data indicated the Upward Bound program played a role in embodying positive attitudes and participants' ability to look at the difficulties they faced, and believed they can find a way through or around those struggles. This ability to stay focused on their goals and change paths when needed to succeed ultimately came from their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993, 1997). All of the participants recognized the Upward Bound program as a pathway to Rowan University and acknowledged the program motivated them to seek higher education and assisted in the college process. The Upward Bound program was purposefully designed as a support-centered structure so that students can develop the self-efficacy and resilience needed to pursue, matriculate, and graduate from postsecondary programs, fueling their success (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.).

The UB program was a vehicle that empowered and helped them see this goal accomplished, aligned with social capital theory in which one of the major functions of social capital is to provide people with opportunity and empower them (Balatti & Black, 2011; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003). All participants felt the UB program inspired them to do

better academically and socially by providing the tool necessary to press forward.

Classes. Other participants mentioned how the UB classes were fun and working in small groups engaged them. All the participants spoke about the various trips taken in the program and the exposure to a life unknown to them otherwise, which was a motivator to keep coming to the program. Aligned with Maeroff's (1999) fourth sense, acquiring a sense of knowing, underrepresented students apply what they are learning to real life (Dekker & Uslaner, 2003; Kuh, 1993, 1995; Loeb & Fox, 2014). Moreover, this speaks to the research stating educational, precollege programs represent a critical attempt to make academic outcomes for students in need more closely resemble those of students from more affluent backgrounds (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2002, 2005; Tierney 2001). Therefore, institutional agents must be proactive and flexible in how they determine the goals and objectives of their respective programs in order to be effective ((Dike & Singh, 2002; Goddard, 2003; Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 2001, 2004, 2011). The ability to see a world outside of their reach acted as a motivation to seek an education beyond high school. This link between academics and the real world supports the literature affirming that students who are clear about the significance of education are motivated and more determined to attend and graduate from college (Caldwell & Siwatu, 2003; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Zulli & Frierson, 2004).

Program culture. Some participants mentioned how the programs culture was very welcoming and this sense of belonging is what essentially motivated them to become active participants and stay in the program. Participants felt Upward Bound exposed them to what college would be like and therefore provided them with a clearer window of what to expect at Rowan University. The idea of feeling included and staying

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connected to the UB students, mentors, teachers, and staff in the UB program were motivators to attend Rowan University. This feeling of inclusion and program culture support the research on institutional agents as they distribute social capital, may also contribute to self-improvement of underrepresented, minority students (Coleman, 1988, 1994; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). This can be particularly beneficial in disadvantaged or urban communities where there is a stronger need to protect or enhance strong networks and norms (Putman, 2000). Institutional agents should understand their meaningful positions and take on active roles in the empowerment of these students through the educational programs, exchange of information, and resources embedded in the contacts.

Affiliation. Many felt that the affiliation with the UB program is what ultimately provided a status at the college, which acted as a motivator to enroll at the university. The affiliation alone motivated them to stay in the program. According to Maeroff (1999), when a student is engaged in a particular educational program, the student experiences the feeling of belonging to a certain group. A student's socioeconomic status is not a factor in determining this sense of belonging, instead their status provides the opportunity to interact with people from other social classes, gradually contributing to one's upward social mobility (Maeroff, 1999; Snell, 2008; Tierney, 2001; Strayhorn, 2011; Walpole, 2007). Participants expressed that the Upward Bound program was their initial exposure to college. Interview respondents also mentioned that the support of the Upward Bound program was a critical factor in attending Rowan University. Putnam (2000) noted underrepresented minority students are able to gain a better chance of achieving their career objectives and breaking the vicious circle of poverty through education. That is why ELL advancement along the path of education was extremely important for them.

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Ultimately, it provided the opportunity for upward social mobility.

Teachers. Many of the participants mentioned the Upward Bound teachers as key personnel in their motivation to enroll in Rowan University. Some of the participants felt without the continual push and encouragement from the teachers they probably would not have been current Rowan students. Based on the data, the understanding and nurturing of the teachers inspired participants to remain in the program and aided in finalizing the decision to attend the university.

Mentors. All participants stated the mentors were key motivators that provided academic advantages within the Upward Bound program that imparted the how to within Rowan University (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2003). Mentors served as role models, which served to motivate the participants to pursue higher learning at Rowan University. Participants communicated that the guidance they received from mentors encouraged them and meeting mentors in the Upward Bound program served as a motivator to matriculate in Rowan University.

Counselor. Participants felt the UB counselor contributed to their motivation to enroll at Rowan University. Participants noted how the UB counselor provided information about the college process, walked them through the application and financial aid process and introduced them to key people as additional support while in the program (Dike & Singh, 2002; Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Tovar, 2015). This initial relationship impacted their decision to attend college. The counselor's commitment was acknowledged and appreciated by the interviewees. The positive relationship between the counselor and the participants played a role in their motivation to enroll at Rowan University. The concept

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of an institutional agent is central to the link between social networks and academic achievement, and highlights the multiple roles of leadership held by an individual (e.g., school personnel, counselor, community leaders, etc.) (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001; 2004). When this individual is situated in an adolescent's social network, he or she establishes his or her potential role as an institutional agent by directly transmitting, or negotiating the transmission of, highly valued resources such as high school course requirements for admission to four-year universities and financial aid assistance (Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004). The concept of social capital, as illustrated in the previous example, addressed how ELLs gain access to vital resources through relationships with institutional agents in the Upward Bound program.

Staff. Many participants mentioned how certain staff members introduced to them in the Upward Bound program impacted their decision to enroll in Rowan University. According to the research, academic habits ingrained before and during the high school years, combined with students' accomplishments, have a major impact on college success, not only for first-generation students, but also for all college students (Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Walpole et al., 2008; Wyer, 2005). These staff members in the Upward Bound program included people who participants encountered with as a result of workshops, supplemental classes, and activities offered in the UB program and implemented at various times throughout the academic and summer component. These activities were all designed to improve the financial and economic realities of program enrollees ("Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). It was expected that through this rigorous academic experience, students would be prepared for college. As such, each of the summer and academic year programs were designed with specific

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goals and objectives. Each program prioritized meeting the target population's needs and the assigned Annual Performance Report (APR) objectives as per the Department of Education goals (Rowan University, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

The strength of these contacts enabled participants to transform social networks into key forms of capital that not only enhanced their learning experiences, but also contributed to their academic, social development, and motivation to seek institutions of higher learning (Conley, 2007, 2008; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Perna & Jones, 2013; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Thus, Upward Bound staff played a pivotal role in supporting the distribution of institutional resources among students. Participants implied that these relationships helped gained access to Rowan's support networks, easing the decision to attend Rowan University. This data aligns with the theory on social capital that states establishing instrumental relationships with these key people is vital, as these relationships will enable the students to gain access to key forms of institutional support (Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004). These institutional agents and resources became key motivators for ELL students to enroll and persist Rowan University.

The findings show that there were a direct positive link between the main concepts of social capital, institutional agents, self-efficacy and a successful transition to college as shown in Figure 1. The relationship between positive self-concept and academic achievement has been well documented (Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Zulli & Frierson, 2004). Social capital can be thought of as the interpersonal and personal relationships that students develop and the resources available to them through those connections. With access to social capital, students experience a

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greater sense of self-efficacy and ambition (Ambrosino, Hefferman, Shuttlesworth, & Ambrosino, 2005). Institutional agents, as a form of social capital, serve a significant purpose in the life of ELL students. They represent a social network and relationship that motivate this population of students to achieve and succeed socially and academically. When underrepresented students develop relationships with the institutional agents they gain access to the resources and support in various ways (Dike & Singh, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2004, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995).
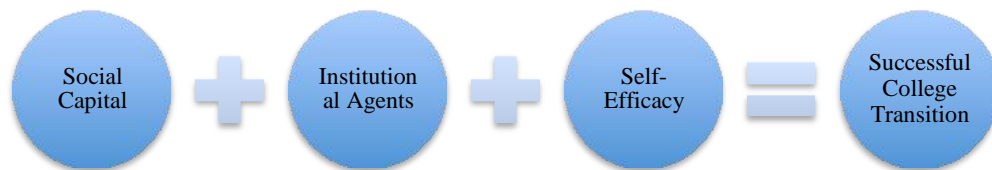

Figure 1. Link Between Theoretical Framework and Research Themes.

Social Capital and Institutional Agents

Consistent with the literature, social capital theory, and results from the study, academic performance, social development, and motivation are all interconnected and function as one unit for ELL students transitioning from high school to college. Students who are prepared academically, socially, and emotionally in high school have an increased chance for a successful transition to college (Conley, 2007, 2008; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Perna & Jones, 2013; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). The literature has emphasized that preparation for college not only involves the dimensions of academic preparation, but also the dimensions of emotional and cultural support. Without support in these areas,

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students, particularly first-generation students, are at risk of failing to complete the programs in which they enroll (Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Coles, 2002; Cline et al., 2007; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). The results of this study can help bridge the gap between practice in high schools, Upward Bound, and at the higher education levels. High schools, the Upward Bound program, and colleges must partner together to bridge the gaps between what it means to be college eligible versus college-ready with these three dimensions in mind (Bui, 2002; Conley, 2007, 2008; Gandara, 2001; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007; Perna & Swail, 2001; Tierney, 2004).

At times, underrepresented students' backgrounds prevent them from gaining the proper educational experience as well as free access to the resources reserved for students by the school (Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003; Phillips, Stephens, & Townsend, 2016). The primary responsibility of institutional agents is to remove these barriers. Institutional agents, as they distribute social capital, may also contribute to self-improvement of underrepresented, minority students (Coleman, 1988, 1994; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). This can be particularly beneficial in disadvantaged or urban communities where there is a stronger need to protect or enhance strong networks and norms (Putman, 2000). Institutional agents should understand their meaningful positions and take on active roles in the empowerment of these students through the educational programs, exchange of information, and resources embedded in the contacts.

Maeroff (1999) suggests that the influence of institutional agents should feature the four senses associated with effective educational programs. Consistent with these findings, Upward Bound incorporates all four senses; however, UB could strengthen

some areas to provide better support and build more social capital as an effort to confront

and manage the barriers that block the academic achievement of ELL students.

Maeroff's (1999) Four-Sense Model

Effective educational programs encompass specific characteristics intended to

support the social and academic development of students. Maeroff's (1999) proposed

four-sense model characterizes effective academic programs that address the needs of

underrepresented student populations, including first-generation students. The

institutional agents that support the work of academic programs should work toward

demonstrating these four senses in an interconnected fashion, although most programs do

not consistently represent all four senses simultaneously successfully.

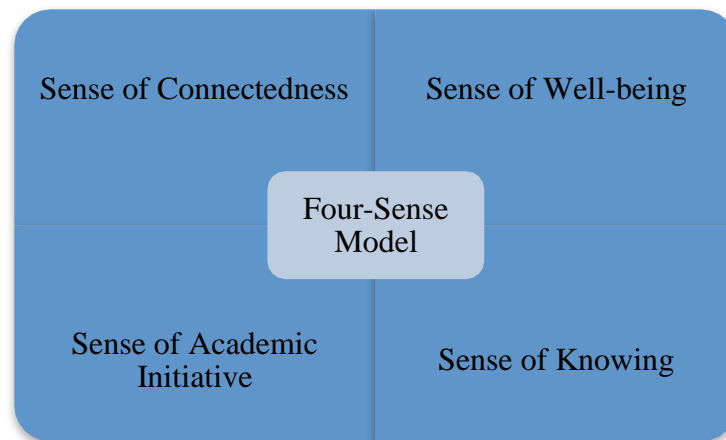*Figure 2.* Maeroff's (1999) Four-Sense Model.

First Sense: Sense of Connectedness

According to Maeroff (1999), when a student is engaged in a particular

educational program, the student experiences the feeling of belonging to a group. All of

the participants felt connected to the program and experienced a sense of belonging. Being labeled as an English Language Learner unified the group by providing a level of comfort, despite some cultural differences and academic levels of proficiency. Language and ethnicity provided a sense of belonging for many and their connection to each other stemmed from knowing that their commitment in the Upward Bound program afforded an opportunity for them to attend Rowan University.

The benefits that institutional agents offered while in the program included introducing them to resources otherwise unknown to them at the high school level (Ambrosino et al., 2005; Museus & Neville, 2012; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007; Ryan, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2011). As a result of these institutional relationships, a normalcy was created while in the program and during their transition to Rowan University. All participants continue to keep in contact with teachers and staff from the program. Many work as mentors and tutors in the program as a way to stay connected and further build relationships with the current Upward Bound students.

Maeroff's (1999) sense of connectedness also reflects the literature on social groups and cultural identity. Students who connect with social groups that reflect their own cultural identity have an increased chance of persistence and success in higher education, and it is imperative that institutions of higher learning create opportunities for these relationships to develop organically (Kuh & Love, 2004). If students are able to assimilate in social groups that they feel comfortable in, those positive feelings with affect their sense of educational satisfaction (Orsuwan & Cole, 2007).

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Second Sense: Sense of Well-Being

None of the participants discussed or mentioned how the program may have supported their emotional and health welfare. This area is one of importance, as the literature states these support systems hone in on students' emotional and health welfare, putting them in direct contact with social services and resources (Maeroff, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2004, 2011). Scholars believe that many low-income, first-generation students lack fundamental academic and social skills needed to succeed in college courses and, as such, need academic and emotional support (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996; Walpole, 2007). Although UB students are exposed to and have enjoyed the benefits of drug prevention sessions, tutoring, mentoring, after-school homework help, Saturday workshops, summer program, and a host of other activities offered by the program, many of the interviewees suggested more workshops on college readiness in areas that consist with college expectations and school climate. Jose specifically stated:

> Bring former students of Upward Bound or currents students to do workshop like time management or workshops that would help directly advise what skills to have in college.

Others suggested structuring the program more like the EOF program where students are required to speak English only, expectations are strict, college-driven, and students are expected to take an active role in their learning by recognizing they are accountable for their academic success.

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Third Sense: Sense of Academic Initiative

Students' sense of initiative and self-efficacy was the clearest theme from the data. As such, participants' motivation and engagement played an important role in their learning and academic initiative. Closely related to motivation is the concept of self-discipline, which is the ability of students to monitor and control their own behaviors (Duckwork & Seligman, 2005; Maeroff, 1999). All of the interviewees indirectly implied they had a sense of being highly self-disciplined, which showed in their focus on long-term goals and better choices made related to academic engagement. Self-discipline in the form of good study habits plays an essential role in fostering academic initiative (Duckwork & Seligman, 2005; Maeroff, 1999).

Based on the study's data, the mentoring component in the program also played a significant role in students' academic initiative by building networks while in the program and once they matriculated into Rowan University. Participants expressed how the mentors put them in touch with contacts who helped make their college experience more successful. Interviewees also voiced how the program's mentoring fostered long-lasting relationships through which they and their mentors continued to collaborate for the rest of their time at the university and outside of the educational realm. Mentors and role models, who can serve as institutional agents, provide academic initiatives within these programs to impart the how to within the educational arena (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2003).

Fourth Sense: Sense of Knowing

Acquiring a sense of knowing refers to students applying what they are learning to real life, especially for underrepresented students (Dekker & Uslaner, 2003; Kuh,

1993, 1995; Loeb & Fox, 2014; Maeroff, 1999). In more wealthy households, parents take the initiative to begin the process of learning and use their resources when infants are still in the crib and continue throughout childhood and so forth (Maeroff, 1999). Upward Bound represented a critical attempt to make academic outcomes for ELLs more closely resemble those of students from more affluent backgrounds (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2002, 2005; Tierney 2001).

The study corroborated this sense of knowing when interviewees expressed the need to not just have more classes, but "try to see them [UB students] as college students so they [UB students] can get that in [the] mind, like oh I'm going to college," affirmed Lucy. In more affluent households the conversation about college start at a young age (Maeroff, 1999; Tierney 2001). Upward Bound, in one way or another, tried to evoke the same foundation at the same time tried to make up for the areas that were omitted (Maeroff, 1999; Ng et al., 2012, 2014; Perna, 2002, 2005; Tierney 2001). Some participants expressed the same sentiment of being treated and seen as college students while in the program even though they were still high school.

This sense was also one that implicitly confirmed the significance of being culturally sensitive in the educational arena when working with diverse groups of students. In the past, the program was criticized at times for taking students on some cultural trips that appeared to be non-educational or just fun. Many explanations went into justifying the need to expose ELL students to a world outside of their environment. After almost eleven years of the UB program existence, this study provided invaluable data from participants' own voices about the significance, influence, and impact these trips contributed to their dedication, motivation, and commitment to the program.

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Fernando said:

> Trips you would think like it was fun but as an immigrant is this country you, I
> remember being criticized for not knowing some movies or the pop culture…for
> me those were really a benefit of the academic part.

Hilda cosigned:

> Being an immigrant you don't have a lot of experience doing like skiing, those
> trips are so much meaningful because you are sort of like behind...those trips that
> Upward Bound took us were filling that gap.

The data showed participants reported a stronger sense of life purpose, which is leading them to greater levels of academic success.

Implications and Recommendations

Implications result from the findings and discussions of the role the Upward Bound program played in ELL program alumni's academic development, socialization and motivation to successfully enroll in college.

Practice

There is a need for a continuum of college preparatory support networks throughout a student's high school years. Students who are prepared academically, socially, and emotionally in high school have an increased chance for a successful transition to college (Conley, 2007, 2008; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Perna & Jones, 2013; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). The findings of this study confirm that pre-college programs provide access to a variety of activities that include academic, social, and cultural components (Conley, 2007, 2008; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Perna & Jones, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2015; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Services and programs are

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provided to the participants according to the participants' academic needs, educational and career goals, and high school grade level. By the time participants graduate from high school, they have engaged in an array of services that not only help them enter college, but also persist in college, which requires perseverance and resilience (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). All of these factors aid in a college student's academic achievement and persistence (Braxton, McKinney, & Reynolds, 2006; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; Hossler, 2006; Perigo & Upcraft, 1990; Schultz & Mueller, 2006; Somers et al., 2004; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013).

In providing support for these pre-college programs, postsecondary institutions have a responsibility to support minority youth, which is evident in the relationships that colleges and universities develop with public schools. This support is crucial because low-income students who are college eligible and receive college preparatory support are more likely to attend college than those who do not (Gandara & Bial, 2001; Gullatt & Jan, 2003; King, 1996; Kallison & Sader, 2012; Perna 2002, 2005; Perna & Jones, 2013; Perna & Swail, 2001; Walpole et al., 2008). Additionally, researchers urge colleges to incorporate or maintain dropout prevention services, such as mentoring, tutoring, test preparation, cooperative learning, inquiry-based instruction, summer camps, and bridge programs (Cline et al., 2007; Finn, 1989; Hammond et al., 2007, Phillips, Stephens, & Townsend, 2016; Terenzini et al., 1996).

Based on the previous literature, in order to establish a system between high school and Rowan University, I would recommend creating a Rowan University English Language Center for College Access where all levels of the education spectrum including Camden county districts serving ELLs, and Rowan University are held accountable for

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ELL student learning. The center's responsibility will be to collaborate across Rowan University to create programs for ELL students that will increase access to postsecondary education, and improve retention and success at Rowan. The center can implement these programs in high schools serving the ELL population supported by grants from local, state, and federal agencies, private foundations, and corporations.

The goal will be to create a college-going culture in which ELL students develop the skills they need to apply, transition, and eventually graduate from Rowan University. The center's mission will involve more innovative learning strategies with the freedom to do whatever it takes to help ELL students achieve and enroll in Rowan University or elsewhere (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). As the research affirms, preparation for college not only involves the dimensions of academic preparation, but also the dimensions of emotional and cultural support. Without support in these areas, students – particularly first-generation students– are at risk of failing to complete the programs in which they enroll (Bui, 2002; Choy, 2001; Coles, 2002; Cline et al., 2007; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). Thus, some researchers strongly advocate for academic, emotional, and social support strategies that may help strengthen otherwise poor student achievement and promote continuous enrollment (Cline et al., 2007; Finn, 1989; Hammond et al., 2007, Phillips, Stephens, & Townsend, 2016; Terenzini et al., 1996). At different levels of the education-college process and implementing Maeroff's (1999) four-sense model, this can create a system for English Language Learners that support their transition to Rowan University with the aid of student support services and educational program at Rowan University including the Upward Bound program for English Language Learners.

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English Language Center for College Access. The most important feature in a college preparatory approach is a sincere belief that every child can learn and achieve college readiness. This method should foster a college for all culture by demonstrating that a college education is attainable and should support each student, particularly ELLs (Noddings, 2005). Literature indicates that students of color or students for whom English is their second language often encounter additional challenges when entering college, which can serve as a barrier to higher education (McCoy, 2014; Van Roekel, 2008). These challenges include lack of academic preparation at the high school level, the absence of information concerning the importance of higher education, lack of professional support to assist them during the college admissions process, and cultural differences (McCoy, 2014). Based on the most current research, an English Language College Access Center is necessary to better prepare specifically our ELL population at the high school level for academic success and college readiness as they transition to Rowan University.

Using innovative and research-based strategies to strengthen the educational pipeline, ELL students can become academically prepared, enroll in Rowan, and persist through graduation, increasing their potential for successful futures. Therefore, it is critical to create a more cohesive system representing Maeroff's (1999) four-senses of learning that adequately prepares this diverse group of students to be successful in the transition to and as Rowan students. This system requires attention from institutions from the high schools in the district and Rowan University. More importantly, the center will need to work with all of the stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, administrators, and staff from community agencies, arts and cultural organizations, and businesses to share

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knowledge and resources to create a college-going culture in the homes, schools, and communities for this diverse population.

College readiness, skills, and success classes. When students transition from high school to college, there is an increased expectation and pressure to succeed (Conley, 2007, 2008; Oseguera et al., 2008), and students often encounter a gap between high school and college expectations. High schools are designed to get students to graduate, but are not necessarily designed to aid students in enrolling in and succeeding in college.

Based on the study's data, it is vital for the Upward Bound program and programs instituted at this center to integrate secondary-postsecondary curriculum that embodies test prep (SAT, PSAT, ACT, college placement tests), student-centered instruction with a college-prep track and provide intensive academic supports while in high school and during their transition to four-year universities specifically, Rowan University. The study's findings confirm that many of the ELL students lacked college prep courses in high school (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008; Engle, 2007; Parsad & Lewis, 2003).

To increase college and workplace readiness, Dougherty, Mellor, and Jian (2006) advocate the strategy of enrolling more students in advanced and college-preparatory courses while in high school. This notion was reinforced by the College Board's findings that students who had participated in its Advanced Placement (AP) courses had greater college success (Conley, 2007, 2008; Oseguera et al., 2008; Samarge, 2006). These courses allow for a more seamless transition from high school to postsecondary education, as AP course expectations are very similar to those of professors in college courses (Conley, 2007, 2008; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001, 2008). Certain high school courses can influence students' educational qualifications for college and students must

understand this early in their scholastic years in order to better perform academically and succeed in college (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; Samarge, 2006).

Summer bridge courses. Although currently summer bridge courses are offered at the university, there needs to be more emphasis and opportunities to make underrepresented students aware of what is expected of them in college and elsewhere (Strayhorn, 2011; Walpole et al., 2008). In addition to classes in English, study skills, and math, ELL students in the center can participate in other activities designed to build academic skills and create a sense of belonging, adjust and adapt to university life, and help them become members of the overall Rowan community once they transition from the high school to Rowan (Maeroff, 1999; Snell, 2008; Strayhorn, 2011; Tierney, 2001; Walpole, 2007; Walpole et al., 2008). Partnerships among school districts, the Upward Bound program, other pre-college programs, student support services, and other departments at Rowan University need to work together, communicate, and recommend the various opportunities available from each department as well as the different types of programming that are being offered and could provide additional assistance to these underrepresented groups and assist in the transition from high school to Rowan University.

Mentoring. The data demonstrated that having former UB students as mentors and the continual hiring of formal UB mentors to work as tutors and role models was beneficial. Therefore, having mentors who have the first-hand experience about college life and culture can increase levels of confidence and create relationships essential to help ELL participants navigate through the college process. Study's findings also indicated

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participants expressed how the mentors put them in touch with contacts who helped make their college experience more successful. Literature coincides with the findings affirming mentors and role models who serve as institutional agents provide academic initiatives and the how to within the educational arena (Maeroff, 1999; Perna, 2005; Stanton-Salazar, 2003). It is also equally important to stay connected with those UB students who have transitioned to college, but do not necessarily work for the program. Some of the participants expressed the need for a better relationship between former UB students who have matriculated into the main campus, but are not actively connected with UB program. The data and literature aligns with the theory on social capital suggesting that social capital is embedded in the relationships that a person develops with others, particularly in informal, social activities, and their memberships in groups and associations (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Ambrosino et al., 2005; Balatti & Black, 2011; Miksic, 2014). In order to establish functioning partnerships, mentoring programs established at the center and Rowan University could work together with different support networks in the community, high school and college in making sure a conversation and action are taking place consistently about the different services and opportunities accessible.

   Student support services in high school. Student support services in high school are essential to prepare students academically and motivate them to achieve success (American Institutes for Research, 2013). The support networks include programs like Upward Bound that are designed to prepare them for high school completion, college enrollment, and college graduation (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Harris, Nathan, Marksteiner, 2014; Lederman, 2006; "Office of Postsecondary Education," n.d.; U.S.

Department of Education, 2015; 2016). These support systems also offer underrepresented students advice from institutional agents (Museus & Neville, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004) in the admissions process, the opportunity to learn about strategies for writing effective personal essays and preparing for college interviews, and to hear about strategies for affording college. These networks provide much needed access to information and resources, especially for ELL students; the hope is that access to information will reduce the stress and uncertainty associated with the college application process.

Cohorts of students receiving common supports together. One interviewee in particular mentioned how she felt disconnected at times from the program, since she was unavailable to meet on most Saturdays or partake in the afterschool program during our academic component. Consistent with the theory of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001) the strength of contacts enables students to transform social networks into key forms of capital that can enhance their learning experiences (Maeroff, 1999). These networks serve as a ladder to provide students with access to maneuver through their educational pursuits. This sparked an interest in finding ways to incorporate those students who are unable to come on scheduled days and times. How can we include these students with other responsibilities, while still being able to provide the needed services to ensure they are active participants in the learning process? Through these contact networks, adolescents can feel connected and benefit from social and institutional support that contributes to their academic and social development in addition to motivation to seek institutions of higher learning, and preparation for adulthood (Maeroff, 1999). It is also important to discuss ways we can help students share academic experiences together,

thus linking academic and social integration. As previous literature indicates, scholars believe that many low-income, first-generation students lack fundamental academic and social skills needed to succeed in college courses and, as such, need academic and emotional support (Cahalan & Curtin, 2004; Cokley, 2000; Gordon, 1995, 1996; Harris et al., 2014; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996; Walpole, 2007).

One way we can seek and share learning to increase students' participation is to create learning communities structured similar to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) but on a student level (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Putnam, Gunnings-Moton, & Sharp, 2009). Connecting participation to these learning communities with institutional agents (Museus, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004) could yield promising insights into how to more effectively structure other aspects of the Upward Bound program and other college programs for certain groups of students. Establishing instrumental relationships with key people will enable the students to gain access to key forms of institutional support (Museus, 2012; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001, 2004).

Common meeting place. A common meeting place in Glassboro would be ideal for ELL students both living on campus and commuters to congregate at times and know that there is a place to go when necessary. Currently, the only office space afforded is at the Camden campus where the UB program is housed. This location is convenient for the participants and constituents and can also be convenient for the center. The center's office space should have access to a conference center or rooms where it can host meetings, classes, conferences, and workshops. However, many interviewees expressed the need to have a common place at Rowan's main campus where those ELL students who now are primarily at the main campus can go. According to the research, students in

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need generally lack networks allowing them to succeed in school and attain a sense of belonging (Maeroff, 1999; Miksic, 2014; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). If this center for college access was to be created, a designated area can be setup at the main campus where UB alumni can also be a part of it. ELL students may feel a sense of connectedness with home, school, and Rowan University since one of the main goals of the center would be to establish a pipeline between home, school, university, and beyond fostering a sense of belonging (Maeroff, 1999; Miksic, 2014; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2011; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995). Parallel with the literature, when a student is connected, the student experiences the feeling of belonging to a certain group (Maeroff, 1999).

Professional development. This is one area that the Upward Bound program needs to emphasize thus providing more opportunities for active learning, content knowledge, and the overall coherence of staff development (Beamon, 2001; Borko, 2004; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). It is important for teachers to stay current with the technology and teaching strategies that continue to evolve with time (Beamon, 2001; Bedsworth et al., 2006; Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Borko, 2004; Cline et al., 2007; Gandara, 2001; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2007; Jacobs, 2010; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). This is aligned with the research findings indicating fewer minority and low socioeconomic status (SES) high school graduates completed advanced and specialized courses (Planty et al., 2006).

The rigor of a student's high school curriculum may predict the likelihood of their college graduation (Adelman, 1999; Blackburn, 2008). Two particular interviewees suggested the UB curriculum should resemble a college one. When asked to elaborate,

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Juan stated, "Teachers can do some online classes too like Rowan." When student's transition from high school to college, there is an increased expectation and pressure to succeed and while completing their coursework, students often encounter a disparity between high school and college expectations (Conley, 2007, 2008; Oseguera et al., 2008). In alignment with Maeroff's (1999) sense of knowing, teachers are encouraged to develop lessons that will entice their students (Goldberg, 2008; Maeroff, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1988; Weaver & Qi, 2005). Far too many students cannot imagine how academic lessons connect to the realities of their lives (Kuh, 1993, 1995; Loeb & Fox, 2014; Maeroff, 1999; Steinberg et al., 1988).

Although the university currently uses an online system to teach certain classes, the Upward Bound program has yet to institute it in the curriculum. A possible alternative in teaching some classes can be with the use of online learning (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Jacobs, 2010; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Technology has changed the way we approach teaching. This method of instruction can allow both teachers and students to utilize Rowan University resources in the most effective way (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013; Jacobs, 2010; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). This new approach is an example of how to utilize meaningful professional development workshop(s) (Beamon, 2001; Borko, 2004; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). In order to expect and ensure that learning outcomes produce effective results, it requires the proper preparation and training of teachers.

During the interviews, participants also spoke about the lack of understanding of the ESL culture at the university level. How can we as educational leaders and institutional agents, connect culture, language and academics to create cultural

competency, sensitivity and awareness while in high school and at Rowan University? Traditional models of teaching do not focus very much on learning how to adapt one's skills to different populations. More professional development can better prepare our faculty and staff to support the diverse nature of the campus community and give teachers a say in the curriculum they teach and change materials to meet ELL students' needs (Beamon, 2001; Borko, 2004; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

Parent component. College readiness also includes some of the softer skills that may be harder for schools to teach. It involves previous educational and personal experiences of students. This is where parents can step in. Parents can help take the lead for helping students in the area of personal experiences that help to prepare them for college (Choy, 2001; Choy et al., 2000; Garg et al., 1990; Gofen, 2009; Miller, 1997; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). But this is also the drawback. For first-generation, college bound high school student, parents are dependent on signals from the school administrators regarding readiness for college, since parents may not have the personal gauge for making such assessment on their own (Conley, 2007, 2008; Garg, Melanson, & Levin, 1990; Hoyt & Sorensen, 2001; Kim & Sherraden, 2011; Miller, 1997; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Oseguera et al., 2008; Spady, 1970; Wells & Lynch, 2012). Research also indicates that low-income, often first-generation, families feel ill equipped to provide advice to their children (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, 2007; Choy, 2001; Choy, Horn, Nuñez, & Chen, 2000; Conley, 2007, 2008; Nuñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Steinberg, Brown, Cider, Kaczmark, & Larro, 1998). It is important for parents to be active partners in their child's learning. It is up to institutional agents in the program to facilitate parent involvement

and engage them in all levels of the child's education. Thus, providing the tools and services geared to empower parents will be necessary.

It is crucial to provide parents with options that meet their needs while also engaging them in the conversations. PTAs and other parent associations are not enough anymore. As educational leaders we must have an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools, and communities with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success. This is in accordance with the theory on social capital and the relationship between school and home (Coleman, 1988; Miksic, 2014). The relationship between school and home represents one of the most significant examples of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Miksic, 2014). These forms of social capital contribute to student learning outcomes (Ho, 2000; Liou & Chang, 2008; Maeroff, 1999; Walpole, 2007). It is imperative to create an environment, in which parents can be more involved.

Research

Colleges and universities unfairly expect underrepresented students to take personal responsibility for their own assimilation, however Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2004) suggest that the responsibility should be shared with institutions. It is also important to look into institutional opportunities to culturally integrate students in ways that not only recognize, but also embrace the cultural capital of minority students (Benham, 2006). Benham (2006) finds that successful educational models incorporate cultural identity and cultural capital. Finding ways to reduce financial, academic, cultural, and social barriers are critical to college success.

Major recommendations are being suggested for further research as a result of the

findings of this study. The results from this study provide useful data that can be used to enhance the future implementation of college access programs, pre-college, bridge programs for first-generation, low-income, minority groups particularly ELL students and on a larger scale, a possible college-prep academy in Camden city. The level of preparation that students have prior to entering college impacts their probability of persistence and success in college (Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Parsad & Lewis, 2003; 2004; Somers et al., 2004; Tierney, 2004).

There needs to be further research with this growing population because the present study was conducted with only 10 participants currently at Rowan University. In order to get the best results, future research should be conducted with more UB participants outside of Rowan University to provide a wider-range of perspectives. Furthermore, this study did not take place over a long period of time. Although positive effects of the Upward Bound program have been noted, future research should measure the longer-term effects of this population beyond the 2nd year at Rowan University or those ELL students who may be struggling. Moreover, in order to fully ascertain the benefits of the Upward Bound program, this study needs to include ELL students with different cultural backgrounds.

This study could be expanded utilizing a focus group following the interviews to further expand on the perceptions and challenges participants experienced. This in-depth group format would perhaps result in an expanded depth of understanding concerning the nature and interpretation of ELL student-group experiences. Participant responses might also prompt future investigation focusing on emerging factors that may not have been previously studied. Lastly, the methodology used in this study could be replicated in

other institutions of higher education with a precollege program serving first-generation, low-income, and student of color. The research studies may suggest regional areas of higher concentration of culturally diverse backgrounds may yield interesting results that provide a different outcome.

Leadership

The Rowan University community, local school districts, pre-college programs, and student support programs must collaborate in order for change to be successful. We must agree to work together and buy-in to wanting to see an improvement of more underrepresented particularly ELL students in higher education. Also, Rowan University and local school districts must work on developing a better relationship with pre-college programs such as the Upward Bound Program, CHAMP, Future Scholars, and the GearUp Program. These programs must also embrace the commitment to help prepare first-generation, low-income, especially ELL students, differently than what they were used to experiencing (Ng, Wendell & Lombardi, 2012). This idea of team and building relationships is what I exemplify as a leader.

Transformational leadership. Transformation is not a one-person job, but it only takes one person to see the vision and create a guiding coalition to help push the mission forward with the speed and momentum necessary for success (Burns, 2003; Kotter, 2015). Transformational leaders embody the same concepts as creating a guiding coalition: Create vision, motivate people to buy-in and deliver, manage the vision, and build relationships (Burns, 2003; Kotter, 2015).

What I have learned as an educational leader is that I cannot implement new strategies on my own. Working with diverse groups of key stakeholders is fundamental to

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transformational change (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Burns, 2003). In addition to the roles and titles that give credibility to the change effort, it is the diverse perspectives, insights, and services that will strengthen the team and will get the job done (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Burns, 2003; Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Transformational leadership is about motivating and empowering people (Burns, 2003; Balatti & Black, 2011; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003). As a leader and institutional agent, it is my job to empower those around me (Ambrosino, Hefferman, Shuttlesworth, & Ambrosino, 2005; Balatti & Black, 2011; Coleman, 1988, 1994; Gonzalez & Jovel, 2003; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). It is about capitalizing on all of the strengths of each team member while on the other hand, understanding, valuing, and using the differences in every person.

As I continue to grow as a leader, I realize that a great leader characterizes whatever approach at that time is necessary to get the job done (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). Recognition of all the leadership styles allows me flexibility in my own capacity to draw on different inner strengths and resources to cope most effectively as an educational leader and an institutional agent for change. As a leader, I believe in shared leadership, which involves bringing the support networks and community along. This characteristic has helped me build strong trusting relationships in my organization. However, what should be most important as an educational leader and institutional agent is to be authentic and take on a collaborative approach to change. If, as a community of learners we are to enrich the lives of all our students academically, socially, and emotionally, we must together consciously in a unified force so we can accomplish great wonders.

Conclusion

This research sought to shed light on the challenges English Language Learners faced while transitioning from high school to Rowan University. It also explored how the Upward Bound program has influenced ELL alumni's experiences academically, socially, and emotionally at Rowan University. Although limitations still remain, this study offers a strong beginning for future decision-making practices enabling key stakeholders to facilitate the academic success of ELL students in their higher education experience. The findings can offer critical suggestions on how to make strategic plans to facilitate the successful transitions of these ESL students, providing tools to apply effective strategies in their instruction, curriculum development, advising, and cultural and social approaches to the effective integration of ELL students in institutions of higher learning. The relationships between social capital, institutional agents, and self-efficacy have an influence on students' successful transition to college. This awareness, understanding, and possible tactical next steps to decision-making resulted from the participants' voices regarding the challenges, perspectives, and desires they experienced in their transition from high school to Rowan University. The study revealed the various methodologies and thought processes surrounding English Language Learners, and recommended opportunities about how to learn from each other's experiences which laid the foundation for ELL student's access to college and motivation towards college persistence and retention.

More research is needed, but the Upward Bound program is a solid starting point. The results from this study called for an understanding of ESL students' perceptions, and for us to rethink the current practices in the Upward Bound program, as well as campus-

wide services with a possible implementation of a Center for College Access for ELLs. Although this study is non-transferable to other institutions of higher learning due to the unique population it serves, the findings and recommendations offer various examples that can help in the practice of recruiting more ELL students in higher education.

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Interview Protocol (English)

Participant Interview Questions (Demographic)

1. What is your current major and year of study?

    a. What has been your experience as a student while at Rowan?

2. Describe your family background?

Academics

3. How would you describe your classroom and academic experiences?

4. Thinking back to your senior year in high school, what were your academic concerns about enrolling in college/university as an ELL student?

    a. How did you manage or overcome the challenge(s)?

5. During high school, what was helpful, if anything, in preparing you academically to attend college? How was it helpful?

    a. Parents
    b. Teachers
    c. Counselors
    d. Upward Bound Program

Socialization

6. Tell me about the environment/culture of Rowan University?

7. Can you describe experiences that make you feel like you belong or do not belong at Rowan University?

8. What were the challenges, if any, you faced socially while transitioning from high school to Rowan University?

    a. How did you manage or overcome the challenge(s)?

9. What role if any did Upward bound program play in your transition to college?

    a. What, if any, have been advantages and benefits of the Upward Bound program?

      b. What about disadvantages?

Motivation

10.   In what ways, if any, has the Upward Bound program supported you in your academic pursuits?

Final

11. In what ways, could the Upward Bound program better support ELL students in the transition to college?

Appendix B

Protocolo de Entrevista (Spanish)

Participante preguntas de la entrevista (demográfica)

1. ¿Cuál es tu carrera universitaria y en qué año estás?

    a. ¿Me podrías contar acerca de tus experiencias en la universidad de Rowan?

2. Describe el origen de tu familia.

Académica

3. Cómo describiría tus clase y tus experiencias académicas?

4. Pensando en su último año en la escuela secundaria, ¿cuáles fueron sus preocupaciones académicas acerca de inscribirse en la universidad como estudiante?

    a. ¿Cómo lograste o superaste los retos?

5. ¿Durante la preparatoria, ¿qué fue útil, si acaso, al prepararse académicamente para asistir a la universidad? ¿Cómo fue útil?

    a. Padres
    b. Profesores
    c. Consejeros
    d. El programa de Upward Bound

Socialización

6. ¿Cuénteme acerca del medio ambiente/cultura de Rowan University?

7. Dígame algunas de las experiencias que te hacen sentir como que eres parte de la Universidad de Rowan y las que no.

8. ¿Cuáles fueron los desafíos, si alguno, que enfrentó socialmente durante la transición de la escuela secundaria a la Universidad Rowan?

    a. ¿Cómo manejaste o superaste el reto?

9. ¿Qué papel desempeño el programa de Upward Bound en tu transición a la universidad?

    a. ¿Cómo lograste o superaste los retos?

b. ¿Has tenido alguna(s) desventajas?

Motivación

10. ¿De qué manera, si alguna, el programa Upward Bound te ha apoyado en tus actividades académicas?

Final

11. ¿De qué manera, podría el programa Upward Bound apoyar mejor a los estudiantes ELL en la transición a la universidad?

Informed Consent Form

TITLE OF STUDY: English Language Learners Transitioning from High School to College: A Case Study on the Upward Bound Program for ELLs at Rowan University

Principal Investigator: Dr. MaryBeth Walpole
Co-Investigator: Margarita Olivencia

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you to decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study. It will help you to understand what the study is about and what will happen in the course of the study.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask them and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

I will also sign this informed consent to demonstrate that we are agree to the terms of the research. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form to keep.

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

Why is this study being done?

As a doctoral student in Rowan University's Educational Leadership Department, I am conducting this dissertation research as a part of the program. The main purpose of this qualitative intrinsic case study is to examine ELL students at Rowan University and gain a better understanding of the role and influence the Upward Bound program has on their experiences. This research study is significant because as the demographics of colleges/universities become increasingly diverse, administrators should pay closer attention to the unique needs and experiences of ELLs in order to enhance program efficacy.

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program played in their academic development?

2. What role did ELL program alumni believe the Upward Bound program had in their socialization for college?

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3. How did the Upward Bound program affect ELL program alumni's motivation to successfully enroll in college?

Why have you been asked to take part in this study?

Transitioning from high school to Rowan University as an ELL student is the main focus of this study. As a former Upward Bound and ELL student, you have a unique cultural and academic experience that can inform this study.

Who may take part in this study? And who may not?

I am looking for participants that are/were participants in the Rowan University Upward Bound Program between the years 2014-2016. Participants should have also been active in the program while enrolled in secondary education and transitioned to Rowan University once they graduated from high school either through the English Language program (ELP) or the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program.

How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?

There will be approximately 7 participants chosen to participate in the study.

How long will my participation in this study take?

The complete study will take place over a period of approximately 10 months. As a participant, I ask that you dedicate at least one 20-25 minute session with the potential for a brief follow-up meeting as needed.

Where will the study take place?

You will be asked to participant in a face-to-face interview that will be scheduled based on your availability at the Barnes and Noble University District Bookstore. The address is:

Camden County Technology Center Building
601 Cooper Street
1st Floor
Camden, New Jersey 08102

You will be asked to come to the agreed upon location during the month of November/December to participate in a one-on-one taped in-person interview.

What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?

Step 1	*Participate in a one-on-one taped interview*
Step 2	*Participate in a follow-up session (as needed on a case by case basis)*

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What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?

Minimal risk has been identified as a part of this study. However, if at some point you feel uncomfortable with the nature of the research and/or interview environment, you are free to opt out of the remainder of the study.

Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?

The benefits of taking part in this study is that participants will be contributing to the growing body of knowledge on the issues of social capital and ELLs student populations transitioning from secondary education to higher education. This information can then be used in order to enhance the efficacy of academic programs whose goal is to meet the unique needs of ELL student populations.

The following alternative treatments are available if you choose not to take part in this study:

If you choose not to take part in a taped interview, you can opt for a phone version of the same questionnaire instrument.

How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?

During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted directly and in a timely manner.

Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?

The only cost for you to participate in the study will be in the form of your voluntary time. No financial and/or material resources are necessary to participate in the research study.

Will you be paid to take part in this study?

For your participation in the research study, you will be compensated with lunch at the time of your scheduled interview.

How will information about you be kept private or confidential?

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. In order to ensure the confidentiality of each participant, you will select a pseudonym that only I have access to

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and asked to provide general anecdotes that cannot be traced directly back to you. All recordings, coding materials, and memos will be stored in a secure location and communicated regularly and sincerely to participants to ease any potential anxiety regarding participation in the study.

What will happen if you are injured during this study?

Minimal risk has been identified for participation in this research. If you are injured in this study and need treatment, contact Margarita Olivencia (Co-Investigator) and seek further treatment and/or guidance.

If at any time during your participation and conduct in the study you have been or are injured, you should communicate those injuries to the research staff present at the time of injury and to the Principal Investigator, whose name and contact information is on this consent form.

What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

*You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to **Margarita Olivencia via e-mail, olivencia@students.rowan.edu**.*

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions about taking part in this study or if you feel you may have suffered a research related injury, you can call the study doctor:

> MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.
> Rowan University
> College of Education
> 856-256-4706

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

> Rowan University

What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read this entire form, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed. All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered.

Subject Name:

Subject Signature: Date:

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent:

Signature: Date:

Formulario de Consentimiento Informado

TÍTULO DEL ESTUDIO: Estudiantes de inglés que pasan de la escuela secundaria a la universidad: Un estudio sobre el programa Upward Bound para estudiantes ELL en la Universidad de Rowan.

Investigadora principal: Dra. MaryBeth Walpole
Co-Investigadora: Margarita Olivencia

Este formulario de autorizacion es parte de un proceso de consentimiento informatorio para un estudio de investigación que le proporcionará información que le ayudará a decidir si desea ser voluntario para este estudio de investigación. Le ayudará a entender de qué se trata el estudio y qué va a pasar en el transcurso del estudio.

Si tiene preguntas en cualquier momento durante el estudio de investigación, debe sentirse libre de preguntarnos sobre cualquier duda que tenga, y sientase seguro de que recibira respuestas que usted entienda completamente.

Después de que todas sus preguntas hayan sido contestadas, si usted todavía desea participar en el estudio, se le pedirá que firme este formulario de consentimiento informativo.

También firmaré este consentimiento informativo para demostrar que estamos de acuerdo con los términos de la investigación. Se le dará una copia del formulario de consentimiento firmado para que lo conserve.

No está renunciando a ninguno de sus derechos legales ofreciéndose como voluntario para este estudio de investigación o firmando este formulario de consentimiento.

Por qué se realiza este estudio?

Como estudiante de doctorado en el Departamento de Liderazgo Educativo de la Universidad de Rowan, estoy realizando esta investigación de tesis como parte del programa. El propósito principal de este estudio de caso intrínsical cualitativo es examinar a los estudiantes ELL en la Universidad Rowan y obtener una mejor comprensión de la función e influencia que el programa Upward Bound tiene en sus experiencias. Este estudio de investigación es significativo porque a medida que la demografía de las universidades se vuelve cada vez más diversa, los administradores deben prestar mayor atención a las necesidades y experiencias únicas de los ELL con el fin de mejorar la eficacia del programa.

Este estudio tratará de responder a las siguientes preguntas de investigación:

1. *¿Qué papel jugó el programa de Upward Bound en su desarrollo academico?*

2. *¿Qué papel usted cree que el programa de Upward Bound tuvo en su socialización para la universidad?*

3. *3. ¿Cómo afectó el programa Upward Bound en la motivación de los estudiantes del programa para inscribirse éxitosamente en la universidad?*

¿Por qué se le ha pedido que participe en este estudio?

La transición de la escuela secundaria a la Universidad Rowan como estudiante ELL es el enfoque principal de este estudio. Como ex Upward Bound y estudiante de ELL, usted tiene una experiencia cultural y académica única que puede ser informacion valiosa para este estudio.

¿Quién puede participar en este estudio? ¿Y quién no?

*Estoy buscando participantes que son / fueron estudiantes en el Programa de Rowan University Upward Bound entre los años 2014-2016. Los participantes también deben haber estado activos en el programa mientras se matricularon en la educación secundaria y se trasladaron a l
a Universidad de Rowan una vez que se graduaron de la escuela secundaria, ya sea a través del Programa de Lengua Inglesa (ELP) o el Fondo de Oportunidades Educativas (EOF).*

¿Cuántos sujetos se inscribirán en el estudio?

Habrá aproximadamente 7 participantes elegidos para participar en el estudio.

¿Cuánto tiempo durará mi participación en este estudio?

El estudio completo se llevará a cabo durante un período de aproximadamente 10 meses. Como participante, le pido que dedique al menos una sesión de 20-25 minutos con la posibilidad de una breve reunión de seguimiento según sea necesario.

¿Dónde tendrá lugar el estudio?

Se le pedirá que participe en una entrevista cara a cara que se programará en base a su disponibilidad en la Librería del Distrito de Barnes and Noble University. La dirección es:

Camden County Technology Center Building
601 Cooper Street
1st Floor
Camden, New Jersey 08102

Se le pedirá que venga a la ubicación acordada durante el mes de noviembre / diciembre para participar en una entrevista personal grabada de persona a persona.

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¿Qué se le pedirá que haga si participa en este estudio de investigación?

Paso 1	Participa en una entrevista grabada cara a cara
Paso 2	Participar en una sesión de seguimiento (según sea necesario caso por caso)

¿Cuáles son los riesgos y molestias que podría experimentar si participa en este estudio?

Se ha identificado un riesgo mínimo como parte de este estudio. Sin embargo, si en algún momento usted se siente incómodo con la naturaleza de la investigación y / o el ambiente de la entrevista, usted es libre de optar o parar el resto del estudio.

¿Hay beneficios para usted si decide participar en este estudio de investigación?

Los beneficios de participar en este estudio es que los participantes estarán contribuyendo al creciente cuerpo de conocimiento sobre las cuestiones de capital social y las poblaciones estudiantiles ELLs de transición de la educación secundaria a la educación superior. Esta información puede usarse entonces para mejorar la eficacia de los programas académicos cuyo objetivo es satisfacer las necesidades únicas de las poblaciones de estudiantes ELL.

Los siguientes tratamientos alternativos están disponibles si decide no tomar parte en este estudio:

Si decide no participar en una entrevista grabada, puede optar por una versión telefónica del mismo instrumento de cuestionario.

¿Cómo sabrá si se aprende nueva información que pueda afectar si está dispuesto a permanecer en este estudio de investigación?

Durante el transcurso del estudio, se actualizará sobre cualquier información nueva que pueda afectar si está dispuesto a continuar participando en el estudio. Si se aprende nueva información que pueda afectarle, se le contactará directamente y de manera oportuna.

¿Tendrá algún costo participar en este estudio?

El único costo para participar en el estudio será en forma de su tiempo voluntario. No se necesitan recursos financieros y / o materiales para participar en el estudio de investigación.

¿Se le pagará para participar en este estudio?

Para su participación en el estudio de investigación, usted será compensado con el

almuerzo en el momento de su entrevista programada.

¿Cómo se mantendrá privada o confidencial la información sobre usted?

Todos los esfuerzos se harán para mantener su información personal en su registro de investigación confidencial, pero la confidencialidad total no puede ser garantizada. A fin de garantizar la confidencialidad de cada participante, seleccionará un seudónimo al que sólo yo tenga acceso y se le pedirá que proporcione anécdotas generales que no puedan remontarse directamente a usted. Todas las grabaciones, materiales de codificación y memorandos serán almacenados en un lugar seguro y comunicados regularmente y sinceramente a los participantes para aliviar cualquier posible ansiedad con respecto a la participación en el estudio.

¿Qué pasará si se lesiona durante este estudio?

Se ha identificado un riesgo mínimo para participar en esta investigación. Si usted está lesionado en este estudio y necesita tratamiento, comuníquese con Margarita Olivencia (Co-Investigador) y busque más tratamiento y / o orientación.

Si en cualquier momento durante su participación y conducta en el estudio usted ha sido o está lesionado, debe comunicar esas lesiones al personal de investigación presente en el momento de la lesión y al Investigador Principal, cuyo nombre e información de contacto están en este formulario de consentimiento.

¿Qué pasará si no desea participar en el estudio o si decide posteriormente no permanecer en el estudio?

La participación en este estudio es voluntario. Usted puede optar por no participar o puede cambiar de opinión en cualquier momento.

Si no desea participar en el estudio o decide dejar de participar, su relación con el personal del estudio no cambiará y puede hacerlo sin penalización y sin pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

*También puede retirar su consentimiento para el uso de los datos ya recopilados sobre usted, pero debe hacerlo por escrito a **Margarita Olivencia por correo electrónico,** olivencia@students.rowan.edu.*

Si usted decide retirarse del estudio por cualquier razón, se le puede pedir participar en una reunión con el Investigador Principal.

¿A quién puede llamar si tiene alguna pregunta?

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre participar en este estudio o si siente que puede haber sufrido una lesión relacionada con la investigación, puede llamar al médico del estudio:

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MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.
Rowan University
College of Education
856-256-4706

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, puede llamar a:

Rowan University
Office of Research
(856) 256-5150 – Glassboro/CMSRU

¿Cuáles son sus derechos si decide participar en este estudio de investigación?

Usted tiene el derecho de hacer preguntas sobre cualquier parte del estudio en cualquier momento. No debe firmar este formulario a menos que haya tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas y se le han dado respuestas a todas sus preguntas

ACUERDO DE PARTICIPACIÓN

He leído todo este formulario, o me lo han leído, y creo que entiendo lo que se ha discutido. Todas mis preguntas sobre este formulario o este estudio han sido contestadas.

Nombre del Sujeto/ Persona:

Firma del Sujeto/Persona: Fecha:

Firma del investigador / Individuo Obteniendo el consentimiento:

A lo mejor de mi capacidad, he explicado y discutido el contenido completo del estudio incluyendo toda la información contenida en este formulario de consentimiento. Todas las preguntas del sujeto de la investigación y las de su padre o tutor legal han sido contestadas con precisión.

Investigador/Persona Obteniendo Consentimiento:

Firma: Fecha:

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