

Running Head: EARLY OUTREACH FOR THE UNDERSERVED

Reaching Hispanic Communities through Co-Cultural and Diffusion Theory to Increase College
Knowledge and First-Generation Graduates

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Abstract

The Latino population is steadily growing in the United States, and often Hispanic communities have limited knowledge concerning higher education. To take advantage of the Higher Education Act and to increase college knowledge, potential first-generation college students and their families must receive targeted information through multiple methods of communication. This capstone project reports how co-cultural theory and diffusion theory are applied in Mesa Community College's early outreach programs. Not only are underserved middle school students invited to campus for a summer bridge program, elementary school children are often interacting with elements of the college campus too. A concerted effort is made to educate and involve Hispanic parents early in the education of their children in order to create a community of college-ready students.

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My husband and 14 year-old son deserve shiny medals for earnestly supporting me through the past 18 months. Seriously, award-winning acts of heroism.

Signature Page

We certify that we have read this capstone and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a capstone for the degree of Master of Professional Communication.

Capstone Chair

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Introduction

The Higher Education Act of 1965 legislates that no student will be turned away from college because he is poor. To meet that vision, community colleges and universities must actively increase efforts to reach those proportionately underrepresented and marginalized populations of potential college students. Families and entire neighborhoods must obtain college knowledge to become a community that supports first-generation college graduates.

In 2016, a Mesa, Arizona demographic analysis reported a population of almost 500,000 with 28% of those citizens identifying as Hispanic (City of Mesa website). Within this marginalized segment of the population, there are many potential first-generation college students. As a post-secondary institution, Mesa Community College supports programs that focus on Latino early outreach and parent education.

In this capstone paper, I will describe my experiences on MCC's Early Outreach committee. The bulk of this project's work occurred in April, May, and June of 2017. I attended planning meetings, prepared presentations, interviewed and then recorded student vignettes, brainstormed innovative diffusion strategies, wrote and created an all-employee Google form survey, served as a lead in a summer bridge program for high school freshmen, and provided the team with guidance through the lens of curriculum and instruction.

The final element of the capstone project involved researching other programs and initiatives that are being carried out across our nation. Some successful and creative early outreach ideas will be presented in an annotated list.

Literature Review: Theory Exploration

Communication is the answer. Political battles over education policies can reach a point where both sides are satisfied through the use of effective communication. An institution of higher learning can influence the community it serves through purposeful communication. An eighth grader can enroll in classes that lead to college readiness when requisites are clearly communicated. A second grader can imagine what he/she is going to do in college if parents communicate the expectation of post-secondary education. Communication is the answer.

Provide, Permit, and Assist

Presidential speechwriters understand the power of communication, and they use it to influence millions of people. President Lyndon B. Johnson, at his post-secondary alma mater Southwest Texas State College, delivered a speech marking the signing of the Higher Education Act of 1965. President Johnson proclaimed that the law “means that a high school senior anywhere in this great land of ours can apply to any college or any university in any of the 50 states and not be turned away because his family is poor” (L.B. Johnson, 1965 Nov 8, Remarks at Southwest Texas State College upon signing the Higher Education Act of 1965). This was an eventful time in United States history, as civil rights movements swept the country. Now, President Johnson made higher education a right of every American, and his passion behind the Higher Education Act was clear:

You are witnessing a historic moment. You should carry the memory and the meaning of this moment with you throughout your life. And when you look into the faces of your students and your children and your grandchildren, tell them that you were there when it began. Tell them that a promise has been made to them. Tell them that the leadership of

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your country believes it is the obligation of your Nation to provide and permit and assist every child born in these borders to receive all the education that he can take” (Johnson, 1965 Nov 8, para. 48-49).

Post-secondary education became legally available to all. Indeed, the legal statute holds firm after over fifty years, and all citizens are permitted to apply to college. However, there are elements of the Higher Education Act that need to be readdressed. The snags in President Johnson’s verbiage are revealed in the words ‘provide’ and ‘assist’.

To provide realistic college opportunities for all, varying demographics and populations must be considered. In his remarks in 1965, President Johnson specifically spoke of high school seniors enrolling in college. Karen Pedersen, an officer of the Online Learning Consortium, describes today’s student. “..non-traditional learners...represent 85 percent of today’s higher education learners according to the U.S. Department of Education. [They are] ... working adults, single parents, military personnel and their families, veterans, caregivers, farm families, and others. For them, classroom-based learning creates enormous challenges of time, access, and cost. Yet, the current higher education system, which was established over 50 years ago, when the typical student was ‘college-aged’ and full-time, is out of step with 21st Century learners” (Pedersen, 2016). While college admittance is permitted to these individuals, obtainable postsecondary options are out of reach, and only provided to those who fit the outdated norm.

Assistance is the component of President Johnson’s speech that has most been ignored from the Higher Education Act’s inception. Without assistance, those from marginalized communities have no knowledge of college readiness, financial aid, or university acceptance. It is as if higher education sits on the edge of a large hole in the ground; while there may be some

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who can easily find their way to additional schooling, many others are at the bottom of the hole and have no ladder. Without assistance, without a structure to support and lift those at the bottom, few will ever get out.

Communication is the strongest of tools used to assist those underserved populations that are eager to attend college. All levels of education, city governments, religious organizations, and nonprofit agencies can together create the scaffolding necessary so children can reach the promise that President Johnson made to American children to “receive all of the education [they] can take” (Johnson, 1965 Nov 8, para. 49).

The Worth of Community

An underlying philosophical debate that applies to the benefits of a college education is ‘ME vs. WE’. In his article, “Debt, Merit, and Equity in Higher Education Access,” Glater (2016) explains how different perceptions affect legislative actions. “According to one narrative strand, higher education is a private good that accrues to the benefit of the student rather than to the larger society” (p. 90). This way of thinking asserts that individuals (ME) who obtain more education create better lives for themselves. Assumptions are made that if one really wanted a better life, that individual would work hard enough to get to college. A different stance that straddles the debate is described by Glater. “As one lawmaker put it, ‘Investment in education by the Federal Government will be far more repaid, even if the cost is viewed in strictly economic terms’” (p. 93). The lawmaker referenced above is appealing to the individual desire to save money in the future by paying a little money now. ME makes the decision based on wealth, but others in the community (WE) will benefit. Robert Putnam (1995) offers a different view of WE societies that are built on “networks, norm, and trust” (p. 67). Hopkins, Thomas, &

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Ewing, (2004) explain it this way. “[community building is]...the invisible bonds that connect people into smaller and larger social groups and allow people to work together cooperatively, for the good of the group rather than the benefit of the individual” (p. 370). Community colleges, and some other institutions of higher learning, function for the good of the group – the success of the community. Phelan (2014) reports “[there is a] three-part community college mission of transfer education, vocational education, and community service” (p. 12). Communities are strengthened when colleges provide an education for all its citizens. Sandoval, Maes, & Klingsmith (2014) state, “Community college attendance also benefits the community in terms of partnerships with employers, retraining of displaced workers, higher retention rates at baccalaureate institutions, lower crime rates, and lower utilization of public assistance” (p. 523). While the benefits of community colleges listed above can be observed and documented, the community will grow in effective ways as well. In her article, “Walking the Walk: Portraits in Leadership for Family Engagement in Urban Schools,” Auerbach (2009) reports that “the administrators saw the value of parent involvement for family health, lifelong learning, and greater access to life opportunities in underserved communities” (p. 26). Individuals contribute to the community, and the community creates, supports, and sustains the individuals. With the power of a strong network of communication, communities can influence perception, guide aspirations, and establish a culture of college expectations.

College Knowledge

In Green Bay, the community has been indoctrinated to know that the Packers are the greatest football franchise that has ever existed. In Chicago, a century of generations of Cub followers have supported the baseball franchise without fail. It is time for communities, especially in low socioeconomic areas, to establish a heritage as a college-going people - change

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habits of thought from “*if* you go to college” to “*when*” you go to college. The culture of the community must revere college knowledge. Hooker & Brand (2010) describe college knowledge as, “students have an understanding of the complex college admission and selection processes, the options available to help pay for postsecondary education, the academic requirements for college-level work, and the cultural differences between secondary and postsecondary education” (p. 77). While college knowledge may be addressed in some traditionally advantaged secondary schools where many parents went to college, some demographics must be taught the information, beginning at an early age. Hooker & Brand (2010) continue:

Research has shown that many low-income, first-generation college-going students often face particular challenges in applying to, enrolling in, and persisting in college...Students from underrepresented groups often lack the social capital to understand the world of postsecondary education, as they are less likely to have role models who have attended institutions of higher education, and they may have less collective college knowledge in their communities (p. 77).

When President Johnson delivered his Higher Education Act speech, he may not have realized that the facts stated above are an enormous barrier and often negate his claim that our nation will provide and assist every American in gaining a post-secondary education. Those barriers can only be brought down through communication with everyone in the community.

Potential First-Generation Hispanic College Students

Many communities throughout the country are proud to claim a racially and ethnically diverse population, yet varying groups in the area differ in the amount and quality of communication they receive. It is not difficult to identify groups that have been marginalized,

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and correspondingly see that they are underrepresented on post-secondary campuses. Ponce (2013) reported, “Latino students continue to be underrepresented in higher education even though they belong to the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the nation, [...and a contributing] factor is the lack of college knowledge within the family’s realm of educational access and opportunity” (p. 7). It is difficult for potential first-generation college students to achieve a college education when the expectations, processes, and policies are unknown.

Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee (2002) reveal, “...nearly 66 percent of the [Latino] parents surveyed failed the college knowledge test...the high rate of failure on this assessment draws attention to the challenges facing many Latino parents across the country” (p. 5). Latino parents understand the importance of education and give moral support to their children, but many struggle to assist academically because there is a lack of ability or they are starting in a deficit. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that, “forty seven percent (47%) of first-generation Latino children have parents who have less than a high school education” (Fry & Passel, 2010, p. i). Help is needed to ensure that these potential first-generation college students and their families have access to information. Organizations that recognize multiculturalism in the Latino and surrounding communities can make appropriate efforts to reach out and communicate.

Communication Theories: Co-cultural and Diffusion

Many potential first-generation Hispanic college students come from immigrant families who are seldom embraced by the larger community. Co-cultural theory focuses on the viewpoint and communication strategies of the underrepresented members within a dominant society.

Mark Orbe (1998a) established co-cultural theory to provide a framework for “understanding the ways in which persons who are traditionally marginalized in dominant societal structures communicate in their everyday lives” (Orbe & Spellars, 2005, p. 174). In other words,

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communicators must think beyond their own cultural teachings and expectations in order to effectively reach different populations. Co-cultural theory urges exploration of a group, without assumptions, to develop messages that authentically connect with intended receivers. For example, within an underserved population, families have previously experienced both positive and negative intercultural interactions that have influenced mindsets. As such, to send an effective message communicators must consider how those existing perceptions might affect communication, especially in an intergroup context. Orbe & Groscurth (2004) emphasize that "... co-cultural group members strategically enact communication practices" (p. 42). These communication practices and interactions between cultures are significant because "each co-cultural group member is engaged in a dynamic process of constructing, and subsequently deconstructing, the perceptions of what constitutes appropriate and effective communication..." (Orbe & Spellers, 2005, p. 178). If communicators are aware of the feelings and motivations of those from a different group, then they can more accurately interpret messages and eliminate incorrect judgments. Within the lens of community college enrollment in Mesa, in order for outreach efforts to be successful, both the messages and methods of communication must reflect the various Hispanic cultural teachings. In the article, "Learning from Latino Families" Auerbach (2011) explained that a school district in Oregon made the effort to go into a specific culture's community to connect with people instead of developing one constant and stagnant message delivered to all. "[When they took] the unusual step of asking its growing population of Latino parents what would make them comfortable at meetings, they learned that parents did not want to stand out by wearing a translation headset or sitting with a translator at school events; they wanted separate meetings in Spanish" (p. 19). The Oregon school district practiced Orbe's co-cultural theory of communication, but the concepts stretch beyond a simple change of

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location or delivery method. Every culture has traditions and mindsets that are distinct. Only through communication can these differences be discovered and understood. Auerbach provides more examples within the education setting. “Latino immigrant parents have high aspirations for their children that they express at home according to their own cultural scripts. These are not always the same as educators’ scripts, which often equate parent involvement with attendance at school events and responsiveness to school requests” (p. 18). In many white, suburban areas, active membership in a school’s Parent Teacher Association is a visible perceived demonstration of parents who care about their child’s education. In the *Journal of Education*, Tang (2015) describes why adopting co-cultural theory is so important when establishing a college-going community. She illustrates:

In traditional Mexican American families, for example, parents are responsible for their children’s moral development while the school is responsible for their children’s academic development. Parents perceive that asking teachers questions about their children’s progress infringes on the domain of the teacher, who is regarded as the expert of their children’s academic education. Consequently, out of deference to and respect for the teacher, Mexican parents may be less likely to engage in traditional forms of family educational involvement (p. 23).

Providing this context can change the perception of an entire community, and stereotypes can be dismantled when co-cultural theory is practiced. Then, once a culture is better understood, information and marketing - communication - can more effectively meet the needs of unique communities.

Communication is the foundation for creating successful change. In a book addressing health communication Piotrow, et al. (1997) states, “The power of communication is clear.

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Communication influences how people vote. Communication determines what people buy. Communication affects what people wish for and what they aspire to become. Communication shapes how people conduct their daily lives” (p. xvi). Those who conduct research to improve the lives of individuals and the status of communities must share their work with those who are capable of spreading those findings to a larger population. Diffusion theory tackles how to best send a message to a group of people, taking environment and culture into consideration. The diffusion model of communication follows a process: “perception, interpretation, understanding, agreement, and action” (Piotrow, 1997, p. 21). Those steps should be considered when attempting to influence community mindsets.

Backer & Rogers (1998) provide an academic definition of diffusion theory. “Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 20). The terms “diffusion” and “innovation” are often used together to describe a situation where new or improved information needs to be communicated to large populations. For instance, in the advancement of technology and science, there are groups that utilize diffusion to spread educational messages that can create positive social change. Back & Rogers (1998) report that diffusion theory was used to create corporate worksite programs to educate American workers about the AIDS/HIV epidemic. Business managers used training meetings at work to communicate with groups that may not have been exposed to the life-saving information otherwise (pp. 18-21). If the message concerning the epidemic was diffused effectively, workers went home to families, friends, and communities and shared correct, proven information, creating a healthier society. While the previous example relied on face-to-face communication, diffusion can easily occur using media. For example, Collins & Zoch (2001) tell of a successful campaign that capitalized on the diffusion of

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information. The campaign was described in a report from John Hopkins Center for

Communication about a health program in Uganda:

The campaign included a mix of television, radio and print PSAs, community education activities, drama performances, video shows, village meetings, soccer matches, special World Cup promotions during the event...and bicycle rallies, as well as training and client education materials such as flip charts and cue cards. Findings showed that 99.6% of clients had heard or seen one message, while most had been exposed to messages in at least six channels (p. 197).

Because 99.6% of a population received the important message, it is evident that communication diffusion was used effectively. Consider that the campaign was conducted in the African country of Uganda. Also consider that the report was written in 2001, before the social media explosion. If those levels of successful outreach were attainable more than 15 years ago, a closer look at the current practices of information transmission should guide future improvement of diffusion communication.

Institutions of higher education often attempt to recruit new students; to enroll tuition paying customers. As the culture of America has changed, so must the college marketing tools. Referencing Auerbach (2004, 2007) Ponce (2013) states, “Historically, access to college knowledge by immigrant Latino parents and their child has been limited to the information disseminated by school systems...after a student enters high school, which has been argued to be too late to prepare students and to influence parental aspirations” (p. 1). Instead, information must enter the home through a variety of channels that appeal to all members of the community. Second graders can come home from school talking about the scientist from MCC who did a cool experiment during homeroom. Fifth graders can ask parents to sign a permission slip,

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allowing the child to visit the career and technology labs at MCC to learn about welding, interior design, auto mechanics, digital design, and veterinary sciences. Middle school students can enroll in MCC's theater and music camps during the summer, culminating with a performance where families fill the campus auditoriums. Bright, achieving secondary students can participate in the dual-enrollment program and earn college credits while taking courses at their own neighborhood high schools. Parents can enroll in free evening workshops that MCC employees provide free of charge at the local elementary school. Frequent interactions with Mesa Community College can fill homes with knowledge and experience. Families must be shown a variety of paths that lead to college success and completion, and then potential students can enjoy support from confident parents (Berg, 2010). If college knowledge became the norm in Latino neighborhoods, young people would progress through schools knowing the necessary steps to gain additional education, and students would pursue the college aspirations that their parents hold for them, becoming first-generation college graduates.

Setting

The city of Mesa, Arizona is an example of the application of co-cultural theory and diffusion theory as new efforts for early college-readiness are being made in the community. The city's population of almost 500,000 is 28% Hispanic, with the majority of the Latinos living in close proximity to Mesa Community College. In addition, a 2016 analysis reveals that 20% of the city's population is under the age of 14, so numerous communication efforts must have a focus on reaching the children (City of Mesa). In an article entitled, "College-going Decisions by Chicanos" Post (2010) explained,

The idea behind this college outreach curriculum for upper elementary students was not just to get them to want to go to college. Nor was it aimed at specific skills like how to

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write a college admittance essay or obtain scholarships. The idea was to give students a broad introduction to the realities of preparing for and entering higher education and to help students become proactive about their own education (p. 176).

Mesa Community College is the organization supporting the programs presented in this capstone, and most of the experiences have Latino early outreach and parent education as the goal. While high school students have college representatives in their schools, and programs and marketing already in place to assist in college enrollment, middle school students need to be taught post-secondary paths and provided the information necessary to take steps toward their goals. Additionally, children can develop visions of their futures early in their elementary school years, and parents can be taught to advocate for their children. With effort and persistence, Mesa will be welcoming many first-generation Hispanic college students into institutions of Higher Education for years to come.

Method for Theory Application

As a capstone to my professional communication courses at Southern Utah University, I wanted to not only research a topic, but to also put my newly acquired knowledge into practice. My interests in serving the marginalized Hispanic community in Mesa, Arizona began with my impactful personal interactions with first-generation college students. Because I was drawn to the determined strength of many Latino students with whom I worked in a higher education classroom, I was eager to learn more. Repeatedly, when SUU professors asked me to pick an area of interest to study, I chose to learn more about the relationship between college and the Hispanic population. Below is a chart articulating the coursework that lead me to this project:

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Each assignment required me to extend beyond my regular mindset and to engage with numerous others on the MCC campus. Ultimately, I made the strongest connection with the Outreach Center and that was the focus of my capstone project work. While I attended multiple workshops to enhance my own understanding of the Hispanic culture and to interact with leadership of MCC's Hispanic Serving Institution Action Team, much of my capstone work originated in the Outreach conference room. I attended planning meetings, prepared presentations, interviewed and then recorded student vignettes, brainstormed innovative diffusion strategies, wrote and created an all-employee Google form survey, served as a lead in a summer bridge program for high school freshmen, and provided guidance through the lens of curriculum and instruction. I was not paid monetarily for any of my contributions to the team. Instead, I consider my efforts a service-learning experience because I learned the content of the Master of Professional Communication coursework through actively engaging with the community to create additional educational opportunities for those in need. Within three months I recorded over one-hundred HSI service hours in a website created by the Corporation for National and Community Service: <https://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov>.

As stated in my capstone prospectus, the intended final product of this capstone was a template that any community could use with guaranteed results: "Combining the ideas that can be physically implemented through MCC, with the visions I have for applying the communication model at a grand level, I will produce a template describing an effective early outreach campaign for colleges and universities that serve those populations who are typically underrepresented in higher education" (Sherman, 2016, p. 5). After engaging in the real work, I recognize that it is presumptuous and ego-centric to assume I can provide a template for community outreach. Not only are there already suggested programs posted on the Internet for free, each community must

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consider its own specific needs and circumstances. Instead of a template, I offer a buffet. In this capstone paper, I will present my experiences and then narrate the advantages and flaws so others may choose to use my (and MCC's) ideas in a variety of forms.

I will also present some of the other successful programs and creative initiatives that are being carried out across our nation (annotated list in appendix A). Readers may be intrigued by one outreach method and discouraged by another. Each reader, each school, or each organization must choose appropriate and realistic activities for the communities they serve.

In a practical sense, this capstone project and the culminating paper have been a welcome treasure of support and knowledge for the small, five person, early outreach committee I serve. As MCC is in the beginning stages of extending beyond the typical marketing to high school seniors, any information I provide both reassures and enlightens my colleagues. I have been able to provide research to support some of the department's planned events. When ideas are scarce, I can refer to the programs I studied while completing my capstone work. When an example of an outreach activity needs to be seen, I have been able to provide one. Even if my capstone offering does not extend beyond my campus, I know I am making a difference. Because of my work at SUU, I am an integral part of a diverse campus. I am more informed, better prepared and more effective in all of my work at the community college I call home.

Mission Accomplished: Personal Reflections

Discussion

I am not the first individual that has worked to make life for others better and more enriching. Philosophers, doctors, and scientists have all generated ideas, made a plan, and put

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their plans into action. Each brainstorm endures an arduous path from idea to product. Thomas Edison, one of the most prolific American inventors with over 1,000 patents stated, “Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration.” Many trials, with many errors, are necessary to develop a reliable template that can lead to successful reproduction.

While completing my capstone project, I endured the process that inventors know well. I was not able to simply generate a beautifully new idea and an infallible product. Instead, I had to research, develop, design, experiment, and analyze before creating a prototype that still must endure customer and professional testing before being marketed to an ever-changing customer and/or audience.

- **Research** – From my perspective (and also the perspective of my capstone committee at SUU) the initial idea for my culminating project seemed new and creative. As stated in my prospectus, I set out to: “provide suggestions to use elementary school engagement as a bridge into homes and families in order to change habits of thought from ‘IF you go to college’ to ‘WHEN you go to college’”. As all inventors must, I investigated to see if my idea had already been developed. I was overwhelmed with the results because there are many programs already in place to create college knowledge communities. The *College Board: for Education Professionals*, the *Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities*, and the *Institute for Higher Education Policy* have developed extensive websites providing free information and support for professionals in all levels of education. Nonprofit groups like *Mapping Your Future*, *Expanded Learning*, and *EdSource* have programs and activities that instruct and support families. Various areas of government have written legislation and funded programs that educate and support families. Minnesota’s *College Knowledge Month*, *College Goal Arizona*, and Salt Lake

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City's *Westside Pathways Project* bring together stakeholders and create community frameworks that truly make a difference. While I was discouraged at first because I would not be creating a one-of-a-kind project that reached into the homes of younger children, I later grew optimistic because there are many who are working to create a national paradigm shift to positively affect our youth for generations to come.

- **Develop** – At Mesa Community College, the school where I am an adjunct faculty member in the communication department, I learned of the *College Starts Now* program that began seven years ago. The program's title appeared to match my capstone ideas, so I made contact with the coordinator to offer my services. Weeks later, I was invited to join their planning meetings. While *College Starts Now* is only one of many outreach efforts in which I have been involved since spring, it provides a clear illustration of my inventor's process. *College Starts Now* brings 60 high school freshmen (most being first-generation students) to the college campus for a two week day-camp which provides enriching experiences that encourage the youth to become college graduates. This program seemed like a great fit for me, as I taught grades 6-12 for six years before becoming a college instructor. However, as the newest member to join the committee, and being someone who only learned of the program weeks ago, I was hesitant to contribute too much because I assumed all others at the table were seasoned leaders. After a couple of meetings however, I realized that there were only two other people on the committee who had ever helped with the program, and the founder was retired and no longer involved. Consistently, there were questions: 1) What did they do last year? 2) Will the instructor from last year come back again? 3) Did anyone keep the handouts from last year? Without knowledge or assistance, the committee I joined struggled to

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rebuild a program without the use of blueprints, the original architect, the master contractor, or even project managers. We had two workers who previously visited the site, so we endeavored to build upon their unsure foundation. The development stage of this project was not sound. I would have an idea that I enthusiastically contributed, the coordinator would graciously incorporate my idea, and we quickly moved on to the next element of the program. We had no real vision so development was clunky, confusing, and chaotic – yet I was still excited for the main event.

- **Design** – The coordinator for *College Starts Now* designed a detailed outline of each day's activities and shared it with all involved. Binders were color-coordinated and labeled with student names, snacks were purchased and ready for distribution, and boxes of supplies lined the walls waiting for use. Every effort was made to have this two-week adventure run smoothly. The design was flawed, unfortunately, because the students we served did not fit within it. Our activities were designed for eager students who would listen, contribute, participate, and reflect. Instead, the culture of our group of 14 and 15 year-olds was one of disruption, arrogance, disrespect, and apathy. While discouraged, our determined committee gathered at the close of each day to discuss ways we could redesign tomorrow's plans to create a better result. We changed the size and physical environment of the room, we provided more time for the students to interact and create stronger connections, and we shortened lessons to better meet the group's typical attention span. Like any inventor experimenting with a prototype, we welcomed feedback and were willing to change.

One of the most impressive steps of design came a week after the conclusion of the event. Our good-intentioned committee reconvened and discussed the successes and failures of

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every element of *College Starts Now*. In my past experiences, many people were not comfortable talking in an open group about what went wrong because of pride and embarrassment, but this was not so with our committee. We were willing to scrap ideas, consider new possibilities, and restructure the whole program. Instead of lamenting the flawed prototype, we discussed a better design for next year.

- **Experiment** - Testing is requisite to create a quality product. In the conference room where our *College Starts Now* committee met each week, the plans seemed solid. It was not until we experimented upon the ideas that we discovered the areas of failure. Experimentation proved that a stronger base is needed before we begin again. First, research needs to be done. As mentioned previously, there are schools (both secondary and postsecondary) that have successfully hosted events that create a college knowledge community. MCC need not hypothesize about ingredients when there are proven successful recipes. Second, next year's *College Starts Now* committee must develop its own aims, goals, and objectives. While previous experience and analysis should contribute to the plan, the group must develop a strong vision instead of trying to patch together pieces from the old prototype. Third, the design needs to include more perspectives from various program architects and engineers. There are so many areas of expertise on our campus – both within the student body and the staff – and they must be taught the importance of building a college knowledge community. A few people devoting minimal time each week to early outreach cannot solely create the massive shift in education perception that is needed. Program designs benefit from diverse ideas and talents, so more volunteers need to be invited to participate.

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the knowledge I gained while investigating effective communication with communities with a high population of potential first-generation college students.

I offer ‘sketches and initial renderings’ of possible early outreach methods. As discussed, a consistent template for, or a specific blueprint of, the ideal extension program is simply not applicable. Instead, I present ideas that will hopefully lead to enthusiastic experimentation. Interested stakeholders can invent customized products that aim to reach into all classroom levels to create college-going communities.

Parent Involvement

Free Parent Education Workshops

After brainstorming methods to connect with Latino parents in the community, the bilingual Early Outreach Coordinator at MCC (Monica Margailan) created a survey to see if there was adult interest in free workshops hosted by our institution (see figure B1). The optional surveys were distributed while visiting schools to educate community members about English courses in the evenings.

The results of the survey excited those seeking opportunities to build college knowledge among Hispanic families. During an HSI meeting Monica explained, “Latinos are hungry for information” (see figure B2). Not only would do they want to learn how to better advocate for their children’s education, they would like to attend workshops for their own self-improvement. The workshop that appealed to almost 92% of respondents was learning to speak English more proficiently. The topics that tied for the second most desired workshop with 83% interested were “How you can plan for your child’s college education while he/she is in middle school” and “Early college opportunities – earning college credits while still in high school”. The other

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workshop that garnered over 80% interest was the basic “How to pay for your child’s college”. Every topic addressing student support interested over 70% of respondents. When it came to their own education, 65% of Latino parents were interested in preparing to earn a GED. Regarding higher levels of academic achievement however, only one parent expressed interest in learning how to transfer previously earned college credits from a different country, and one parent wanted to learn about college scholarships and awards in which they, themselves, might qualify. One concludes that Latino parents are highly focused on improving life for their children – it is the priority whether caregivers want to learn basic skills to provide more income for their families, or more often, to sacrifice and work for their children’s education and future success.

While community desire may be strong, opportunities to attend workshops must be presented realistically. The most effective way of creating a community of college knowledge would be to have parents come to the MCC campus for the free workshops. Ideally as campus workshop attendees, parents would become more comfortable with the college atmosphere, thus become more likely to support and advise their own children in college decision making.

However, the survey reported that an overwhelming 91% of respondents preferred classes be held at the public elementary school closest to their home (see figure B3). Still, 36% of parents indicated they would be willing to attend classes held at MCC and over 25% expressed that online options would be acceptable. As sponsors of the workshops, the Outreach Department must determine if providing workshops within the community’s ‘comfort zone’ would lead to better attendance or if requiring the parents to make the much larger effort to come to campus would produce the most powerful results.

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For those who question the validity of building a community of college knowledge at the elementary school level, the survey results show that 75% of parent respondents have children in elementary school (see figure B4). Desire for higher learning is evident; the community just needs to be taught where they can find the information. The answer is the neighborhood community college, MCC, where I have been teaching for more than 17 years.

It was motivating to be in the room when these results were given. Having an eager community makes our committee's time and effort feel like humble service instead of a job requirement. This first-round of survey results are skewed, however, because the survey was given to parents who had repeatedly made the effort to go to a nearby school in the evening to gather information. These parents already demonstrated their level of interest and activity, so now the survey needs to be distributed to all parents in the community. While the results will still not be an accurate sampling of the population because only interested parents will bother completing the survey, it will still provide additional data to guide our outreach plans. The results of these surveys have a direct impact on me which will be discussed in the coming "College Connections" section of this report.

Elementary School Outreach

Dr. Seuss' Birthday Event

Collaboration between America Reads and MCC's Center for Community and Civic Engagement sponsors a Dr. Seuss Day each year. About 200 second graders are invited to campus for as a school field trip. MCC students volunteer to wear Dr. Seuss character costumes, involve the kids in Dr. Seuss crafts, and lead a tour of campus. The children enjoy a show in the planetarium, a story in the library, and visits to the life science creature displays. In addition, through MCC's fundraising efforts, each young child will leave campus with his/her

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very own new scholastic book. For many children, it is the first book they have owned for themselves, and it is great being a part of the event. I help set up for the event, and I suggested many of my own college students look to the organization for service-learning opportunities. Dr. Seuss day provides a fun experience so children from the surrounding neighborhoods will feel a happy connection to MCC.

6th Grade Promotion Congratulations Cards

Mesa Public Schools holds sixth grade promotions across the district. This year our committee sent congratulation cards from Mesa Community College to all of the elementary school graduates as they prepare to move on to 7th grade. The message in the card encouraged the kids to keep studying and working toward their goals, and that we look forward to welcoming them to MCC in the fall of 2023. After consulting as a group, it was decided that an informative website address would be provided.

I loved being at the meeting when this congratulation card idea was brought to the table in April. There were four of us brainstorming ideas – two Latinas and 2 white women. We had not yet done any research on what other education leaders were doing to reach elementary school children and their families, so almost every idea seemed fun and exciting. Near the conclusion of our meeting, the Associate Dean of Community Outreach & Enrollment Development popped in to see how we were doing. We shared a few of the ideas we had been discussing, and she loved the card idea and explained why. “Oh, Hispanics save everything! I could go to my parents’ house right now and find boxes of certificates and special papers from every year of my schooling!” The two other Latinas in the room laughed and talked about how that was true; that it was a cultural norm to keep any form of recognition. With that, we knew the website address was an imperative addition to the written text so no matter the changes on campus, in 2023 these

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families could look back at the promotion card from six years previous and know where to go for college information.

I mentioned ethnicity above because when I began attending HSI meetings I quickly realized that I, a Caucasian, was in the minority – by a lot! In my mind I questioned if I would be able to offer anything of worth, because what does a white girl from Idaho know about the struggle of marginalized populations? However, situations like the one I described above made me grow in comfort and confidence. By sharing our own cultural teachings and by comparing perspectives, our committee has built a pluralistic little community of respect and trust. It reinforces the idea that being “color-blind” is not the noble pinnacle of social achievement. Instead, seeing others’ race or ethnicity and sincerely wanting to learn about and understand their experience is what makes for productive and effective relationships.

Communication with Principals

During summer months, elementary school principals have more time to meet with community members and to build new programs, so in July representatives from MCC met with principals from four elementary schools that have a high population of Hispanic students in Mesa. The leaders of these schools quite easily listed a variety of activities, events, and programs that would benefit from the support of Mesa Community College. As written and presented in visit summaries written by MCC early outreach representatives and put into our committee Google drive, here are some principal perspectives:

- Outreach to parents: To reach the parents, you must go through the kids. Focus was on events/activities that draw family participation such as Pizza nights, carnivals, etc. This may include student, staff and faculty representation.

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- The principal mentioned that she would love to have more bilingual volunteers, as there is a great need for Spanish speakers, especially to act as interpreters for families.
- Principal mentioned that they have two new classrooms and one could be designated an MCC room and be themed around MCC, which would be super cool. They already do this for other schools.
- We told the principal we could send some MCC swag and bling to the school, and she said she'd be happy to share free items with students and classrooms.
- Reach out to Parents/Community: 1) Science night; 2) Curriculum night; 3) Community fair; 4) Diversity day
- Programs that bring MCC students to campus to work with their students because they want role models of successful students who look like them, race and identity. The principal was very keen to the idea that these students are predominately Latino and surrounded by predominately white adults.
- There's a *Coffee with the Principal* once a month during which she meets with parents and she would welcome someone from MCC to come and present during that time.
- Leadership and support for Coding Club, Art Club, Choir, and Student Council. They also need help for large events: Large Events: Meet the Teacher Night, (could use translators/presenters on college readiness, going to college) Day of Service Activity, Parent/Teacher conferences and book fair, (could use translators and book fair workers) Breakfast with Santa, MLK Day of Service, Taste of the World Family Culture Event, School Carnival / Community / Health Fair, (could use volunteers in a variety of roles) Global Youth Service Day

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After reading and discussing the comments from the principals, it seems the schools are willing to accept any and all volunteers. The need for community outreach is so strong; I just hope MCC employees can become more selfless to step up and help meet that need. I found it incredibly powerful that one of the schools in the lowest socioeconomic areas has multiple school-wide community service projects during the year, and they would love to have the MCC campus community join in those service events.

Middle School Outreach

College Starts Now – Summer Bridge Program

The *College Starts Now* program provides an opportunity for 8th grade students to immerse themselves in a leadership development program designed to equip them to maximize their high school experience, and prepare them for college and career opportunities. *College Starts Now* also includes workshops designed to assist parents with navigating high school and postsecondary educational opportunities. During the two-week summer bridge program, students are exposed to the college campus with a curriculum that includes personal assessment and leadership style, team building, visioning frameworks, mental models, situational leadership, and a culminating project that represents a pathway from aspirations to actualization of their college and career goals

(<https://www.mesacc.edu/intranet/recognitions/college-starts-now-wins2017-diversity-advisory-council-award-excellence>).

The program summary above prompted me to contact *College Starts Now* leadership to inquire about participating in the production of the event as part of my Master of Professional Communication Capstone project. I began attending committee planning meetings in April and

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within a couple of weeks I was fully engaged as a major contributor to this program. Below are descriptions of a few key elements of the program and my involvement with them.

- **Agenda:** MCC provided soon-to-be high school freshmen with eight six-hour days of information and activities. The agenda provided an overview so the committee could get a broader view of plans (see figure C1). The agenda was essential, yet we had to be flexible a few times because some activities ended quickly while others demanded more time.
- **Lesson Plans:** From my understanding, I am the first faculty member to be a part of the *College Starts Now* planning and presenting team. I felt I became a trusted resource because of my experience teaching in the secondary public schools for six years before moving to the college level. Additionally, I earned a master's degree in Education, Curriculum & Instruction. Because of my background, when I looked at the agenda I saw activities and my brain jumped to make full content lesson plans. As previously mentioned in the "Applying Knowledge" section of this paper, the development and design stages of this year's *College Starts Now* were flawed. While bringing more content was welcomed, the activities that were executed previously were not really adjusted, so it often felt like we were trying to force the older established plans together with the new teaching ideas. No matter the construction, I was excited to take the lead. The topics of my instruction included: 1) conversation development; 2) self-concept and self-esteem development; 3) languages of appreciation; 4) leadership awareness; 5) parent to child communication information; 6) activities and games with a correlating reflection lesson (the lessons I created and/or presented can be found in appendix C2).

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In addition to the lessons that I taught the high school students during the program, I prepared a curriculum extension document that I believe can help families interact more effectively by recognizing different methods of expressing love and appreciation. I intended the packet to be distributed directly to parents on the night of the closing celebration. While all of the students enrolled in *College Starts Now* could speak English – with no accent at all – we knew that half of the parents spoke Spanish as their primary language. Accordingly, to reach all families I asked a bilingual employee in the Outreach Center to translate the document so I could provide information in two languages.

Some photographs were taken during the 2-week summer bridge program (see figure C3). At the conclusion of the program, a video was created and shown during the Celebration of Completion. The Celebration of Completion was a ceremony held on MCC campus in the evening, and entire families were invited to attend and enjoy refreshments. I learned another Hispanic cultural tradition through this element of the program. Indeed all forms of recognition are appreciated in Latino homes, and families love to gather together and food is an appreciated motivator. A link to the video is provided: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2YjPh7U0HKqVGFSRXFMelpPYms/view>

- Plus/Delta. This term, Plus/Delta, was used frequently on campus, yet I did not know its meaning. Fortunately, Google provides a basic answer. “A Plus Delta evaluation is a formative evaluation process that provides feedback on an experience or event and collects ideas for future improvements”

(<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/plusdelta-evaluation/22865>). The evaluation of *College Starts Now* included both individually written contributions and committee discussions. The evaluation is continual and is guiding our steps forward. This process

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has been effective and I am impressed with the group's ability to examine the outcome objectively, without committee members becoming defensive (see figure C4).

College Connections

In order to create an efficient education pipeline between K-16; all levels of schooling must interact and communicate. No longer can intuitions of higher learning represent something detached and separate. Enrollment in the community colleges is declining, so an effort must be made to enroll a different population of students. In the past, many faculty members viewed Mesa Community College as a mini Arizona State University. Some instructors simply viewed themselves as the college option for those who were working toward a bachelor's degree, but needed a lower tuition for the general education credits. This singular-thinking paradigm must be abandoned in order to meet the needs of the changing community our college was created to serve. MCC employees cannot wait for students to find us, and it cannot be left to the Outreach Center alone to increase enrollment. For job security, faculty must see the vision and put an effort into connecting with families in the community.

Volunteerism Survey for Employees

As demonstrated in this paper's "Parent Involvement" section, parents have indicated the need for communication and education. To meet that need, the resources that can be found within Mesa Community College's campus must be identified and utilized. As part of my involvement in HSI Early Outreach, I brainstormed, wrote, and created a Google survey that will be distributed to every MCC employee (see figure D1). The survey will identify those staff and faculty who are willing to extend the work day to connect with community members. If recipients of the survey will respond, we can create an impressive list that could not only be

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referenced by the Outreach Center, the names of willing volunteers could be given to elementary school principals.

Creating the survey for college employees was incredibly intimidating. I am aware of the levels of intelligence and success of those who will be asked to complete my survey, and I also know of their ability to dissect and demean others' work. To build confidence, I first presented my survey to my familiar committee. With their overwhelmingly positive response, I asked others in a larger sub-group to edit, suggest, and change the Google survey. After a few alterations, in mid-May the survey was ready to be sent to the college administration. Currently, the survey sits at the ready.

The survey will strive to match employee desires with community needs. For example, one of the questions that will assist in our design of outreach asks if the employee would rather volunteer in elementary school classrooms during the day, or help with workshops with parents in the evening. While faculty members might consider themselves teachers, some may not be interested in teaching younger children. Additionally, if an employee indicates an interest in being in a classroom, then would he/she like to assist the regular classroom teacher or would the employee like to prepare and present his/her own lesson plan to "hook" students and encourage college thinking? Also, the respondents will indicate if they would like to work with another employee on the assignment, or if they would be confident completing the outreach event alone. Some questions ask about comfort level with public speaking, small group discussions, and one-on-one interactions. In addition, short answer responses will indicate areas of employee knowledge and skill. Here is the direct link to the survey:

<https://goo.gl/forms/biCffyMRQ1xK5ftF3>

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Service-Learning

As a communication instructor, I have incorporated service-learning into my curriculum for more than 15 years. In small groups, my college students connect with nonprofit agencies in the community to make a difference while learning about the elements of effective group work. While my students are free to choose the type of service they will perform, many want to work with children. The elementary schools that are closest to Mesa Community College are all Title I schools, meaning the majority of students qualify for free/reduced lunches. Not only is there an economic need in most of these schools, the populations tend to have a high percentage of Latinos. These circumstances provide wonderful opportunities for our college to connect with the community.

The 2017 spring semester provides a great example of an effective partnership. One of my groups chose to serve in an elementary school whose student body is 92% Latino. After connecting with the principal, my small group of students worked with the classroom teacher to create a rewarding experience for everyone. Because some of the college students had a passion for science, they proposed science lessons for the 5th graders which included hands-on experiments. While hesitant at first, the college students returned to my classroom with a new energy and excitement for learning (see figure D2). The pipeline of education was open and both ends benefitted from the experience.

To watch the video of the college students reporting on their experience with the elementary classroom, visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_FahOlFje0

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Hola MCC Blog

Hola MCC is a blog that I personally created as part of the curriculum of Amber Schow's social media course at Southern Utah University. I am grateful for the unplanned sequencing of my professional communication coursework. First, during Dr. Smith's communication theory course, I discovered gaps in communication with the community and provided suggestions for reaching potential first-generation Hispanic college students. Then, the following semester, I put my ideas into action through the blog I chose to create.

All of my posts strive to reach potential students to create additional college knowledge. Through a more personal tone, outside of the structured and monitored official MCC website, connections can more easily be built. The content of my blog could inform any interested student, but there is an emphasis on the Latino population. I feel the posts became more engaging as I improved as a blogger over the semester, and one of my favorite posts is titled "You are Not Alone" (see figure D3). The concept for this post is a direct result of interviews I completed for Dr. Smith. One of the conclusions of my research was that short, personal videos created by Hispanic students could motivate others who may be considering college enrollment, and a couple of my interviewees offered to participate. Itzel, the student shown in the video, explains how even though she came from a single-mother household, had very little money or family support, and lacked the direction to enroll in college, she reached out and many educators helped her become the successful student she is today. To see the video embedded in the blog post, go to Hola MCC at: <http://holamcc.blogspot.com/2017/03/>

Government/Organization Outreach

Mesa Counts on College

Mesa Counts on College is a program that has actively reached out to the Mesa, Arizona community. My first contact with *Mesa Counts on College* was through pencils, folders, and string backpacks. I was impressed with how committed they were to becoming a household name, but it wasn't until I met a student who successfully worked with *Mesa Counts on College* that I saw its all-encompassing mission to help citizens improve their lives and positively contribute to the community. According to its website, "*Mesa Counts on College* is an education partnership between the City of Mesa, Mesa Community College, and Mesa Public Schools. Our mission is to increase college and career readiness and completion in our community...We are guided by the philosophy that anyone can go" (<http://www.mesacountsoncollege.org/about>).

I met Latina at the close of spring 2017 semester when a discussion of my first-generation videos with a faculty member resulted in a list of students whose powerful stories needed to be told. Latina is a grandma who dropped out of high school in the 9th grade and began working to support her new family. She sacrificed much for her children, but always felt embarrassed that she was in no position to help them with schoolwork. Latina became determined to earn her GED, and *Mesa Counts in College* helped her achieve that goal by supplying needed textbooks and a calculator, by paying for the practice GED tests, and by helping her with the transportation costs of getting to the class location (see figure D4). After receiving her hard-earned GED, *Mesa Counts on College* helped Latina enroll in college, choose classes, and pay tuition. Latina did not have to make the decision whether or not to go to college because *Mesa Counts on College* simply took the next steps after she passed all of her GED tests. Now a college student, she returns to *Mesa Counts on*

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College for free tutoring and friendly support. After being out of school for thirty years, Latina earned a 4.0 her first semester at Mesa Community College. To see the amateur video of Latina telling her story on the last day of classes, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vria9kwKu-s&t=33s>

GED to MCC

Kenneth taught me about the value of the GED to MCC program that is taught in both English and Spanish (see figure D5). Using community resources, this method of outreach eases the transition into college for those did not receive a secondary education. The website states, “The GED to MCC program is specifically designed for community college-bound learners. ...The traditional GED preparation coursework will be enhanced with students receiving tutoring services, academic and career advisement, and financial planning assistance” (<https://www.mesacc.edu/outreach/get-yourged-hse/ged-mcc-program>). As a first-generation Hispanic college student whom I interviewed the previous semester, Kenneth wanted to share his story because he wants to motivate many other Spanish speakers to earn a degree that will lead to a better career. Kenneth’s sister’s encouragement, support from his GED instructor, and connections on campus have made him into a confident and committed student. Kenneth was interested in video production, so I arranged for his video to be filmed in the campus recording studio. His video can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfe4B9PaHzI&feature=youtu.be>

Latino Town Hall

All MCC employees were invited to attend Mesa’s Latino Town Hall in October. The event is planned to align with dia de los muertos and a celebration of the Hispanic culture in our community (see figure D6). The Hispanic Citizens website states, “The Mesa Association of Hispanic Citizens” (MAHC) has convened and organized the annual Mesa Latino Town Hall for

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more than a decade. This half-day conference brings together 300+ Latino community members, elected officials, civic leaders, educators, students and parents to discuss issues affecting the Latino community while celebrating its diversity and ways to create positive change”

(<http://www.mahcarizona.org/lth/>). The conference assembled hundreds of people who want to make a difference in the community. Many of the participants were from the police department, fire department, public schools, and city government. While MCC employees thousands, there were only a handful of employees in attendance who were not paid to be there. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues missed an opportunity to see a larger vision and to celebrate those who love and serve the community. Events that bring together like-minded organizations provide the motivation to continue in our efforts to make a difference.

Conclusion

Mesa Community College is initiating early outreach efforts that build college knowledge in underserved communities, and my capstone project contributes to the growing pool of applicable information. The results of my research of co-cultural and diffusion theories can provide the school's administration a theoretical background to support the outreach department's goals and objectives. For example, Orbes' co-cultural theory is seen in programs where the college goes into the neighborhood elementary schools to interact with families and build relationships of trust. To apply co-cultural theory personally, I needed to directly network with the population I strive to serve. By taking a position of leadership in the *College Starts Now* program and connecting with Hispanic families, I gained greater cultural insight and understanding.

Additionally, I participated in frequent meetings to discuss best practices for communicating with the Hispanic community, creating observable displays of diffusion theory. Multiple channels of communication were implemented in the Mesa area to spread college knowledge throughout the K-12 education pipeline; to encourage college enrollment and the benefits of subsequent completion. Our continuing goal is to spread information to a larger group – reaching whole organizations and communities. Elementary school leadership is reaching up, community organizations are reaching out, and institutions of higher learning are reaching down to ensure that communities with college knowledge are built to support families and post-secondary education.

The coursework in my Master of Professional Communication at Southern Utah University set me on a path of discovery. For the past year I have studied and worked with first-generation Hispanic college students and their communities. I am now more able to develop

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plans and create an environment that improves my teaching in a diverse classroom. I was blessed to be raised by two public school teachers, and now it is my pleasure to share that passion for learning with those who may not otherwise have the knowledge or support to become a college graduate.

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Appendix A

Annotated list of Early Outreach Programs

The following is an annotated list of some of the other programs that have been developed and published to help other education leaders create stronger links with underserved populations.

Parent Involvement

- College Summit – New Haven Schools
 - “Parents of students in grades K-8 will be given college-ready checklists...(to equip the parents, starting in those early years. As a way to involve the broader community, volunteers from businesses, churches, universities, fraternities, and other organizations will be trained and deployed as a ‘college corps’ to go into neighborhoods to promote college awareness and build mentoring programs to help students.”
 - http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/12/08/14colleges_ep.h30.html
- Counselor’s Guide – College Board Advocacy and Policy Center
 - “Teach parents to support their children’s participation in enrichment and extracurricular activities and instruct how to develop...portfolios to highlight student accomplishments. Assist families in locating free and low-cost academic enrichment, and also extracurricular programs that provide opportunities for students to receive praise, encouragement, and guidance.”
 - https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/nosca/11b-4383_ES_Counselor_Guide_WEB_120213.pdf
- Kids to College – The Sallie Mae Fund

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- “Take-home materials are used to facilitate family discussion. To conclude the program, students and parents participate in a group visit to a local college campus to cement the college experience.”
- <http://www.thesalliemafund.org/initiatives/kids2college/>
- Kinder to College - University of Washington
 - “When asked if kindergartners are too young to benefit from the experience (of spending the day on a college campus)... ‘For us, that’s where the parent piece becomes so important...What’s interesting about our parents who participate, at least half of them say it’s been their first time on a college campus. It also addresses the first-generation barrier. For our parents to be involved in the college conversation, we also want them on a college campus.’”
 - <http://www.washington.edu/omad/2015/07/01/early-outreach-visits-encouragestudents-of-all-ages-to-think-about-college/>
- Padres de Accion – Westside Pathways Project in Salt Lake City
 - “We actively engage parents through family advocacy weekend workshops and continually seek feedback to ensure that we continue to improve the program by addressing priority issues for parents and the local community. We assisted parents with starting their own organization, called Padres en Acción (Parents in Action), to become stronger advocates.”
 - <http://www.ihep.org/guidebook/collegereadiness/chapter/one>

Elementary School Outreach

- Adelante Program - Westside Pathways Project in Salt Lake City

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- “As we were moving forward, we quickly realized that we needed to have teachers on board. By the end of the first year, we met with the first grade teachers and said, “Here’s what we’ve been doing. How do you want to change it?” When the first group of kindergarteners moved up to first grade, we brought in the new kindergarten class and their parents. So, every year, we would bring the next group of teachers and the new kindergarten families to the table to establish co-ownership and buy-in. Today, we’re working with all elementary school grades, both dual immersion and non-dual immersion.”
- <http://www.ihep.org/guidebook/collegereadiness/chapter/one>
- College Success Board Game - designed by Next Steps Academy at Independence Adult Center & National College Transition Network
 - A template for a college success board game, with the overall objective of graduating. It will build students aspirations, encourage self-assessment, and reinforce college knowledge and awareness.
 - <https://www.scribd.com/document/283990321/NCTN-College-Success-Board-Game>
- Counselor’s Guide – College Board Advocacy and Policy Center
 - “Develop positive engagement in school and build high aspirations. Hold events at a variety of times and locations (community or recreation centers, places of worship, civic centers, or malls) to accommodate a range of schedules. Use materials written in parents’ and families’ native languages.”

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- https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/nosca/11b-4383_ES_Counselor_Guide_WEB_120213.pdf
- Is Your First-Grader Ready for College? - Johnsonville Elementary School in rural Harnett County, N.C.
 - “The age-old question is: ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ You always ask kids that.”...“We need to ask them, ‘How will you get there?’ Even [in] preschool, the word ‘college’ has to be in there.... [the teacher]wants students to know what she did not: the effort, cost and planning required to earn a degree. ‘They have to understand there are lots of steps, that you can’t all of a sudden be a teacher.’”
 - https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/education/edlife/is-your-first-gradercollege-ready.html?_r=0
- Kids to College – Course Curriculum Outline
 - “Over the course of six in-classroom sessions, sixth graders learn about different careers and the importance of being college ready. The curriculum uses age appropriate and interactive activities that reinforce the importance of setting students' sights on college. Student handbooks and a companion teacher's guide help facilitate the program in the classroom, and related take-home materials are used to facilitate family discussion. To conclude the program, students and parents participate in a group visit to a local college campus to cement the college experience.”
 - http://www.kids-2-college.org/K2C_Curriculum_Outline.pdf

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- Pinterest
 - “Dozens of elementary schoolteachers share cute activities that make the road to college as clear as ABC. One cut-and-paste worksheet has students using circles and squares to sequence the steps. There are four: mail your application, get accepted, graduate high school and “move in, go to class and study hard!”
 - “College weeks” have become as much a staple of elementary school calendars as the winter band concert. And campus tours are now popular field trips.”
 - https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/08/education/edlife/is-your-first-gradercollege-ready.html?_r=0

Middle School Outreach

- College and Career Readiness Software – Naviance
 - “The company began selling software that lets students as young as fifth grade explore career interests, majors and the colleges that offer them... it is part of a larger shift toward making students mindful sooner about consequences of course selections. When they get to middle school, it is the first time they are asked which math class they want to take, which science, whether they want to take a foreign language. Choices can really change their trajectory as a student.”
 - <https://www.naviance.com/solutions/parents-students>
- Counselor’s Guide – College Board Advocacy and Policy Center
 - “Invite representatives from local college and career and technical schools, to meet with

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students and families to discuss early college planning and goal setting.” ○ “Develop community connections to increase student exposure to jobs/careers that reflect their likes and interests and begin to create awareness of their state, national and global communities.”

○ https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/nosca/11b-4383_ES_Counselor_Guide_WEB_120213.pdf

- Mapping Your Future – A Non-Profit Organization

○ Learn How To Learn: “Now is the time to concentrate on improving your skills as a student. If you practice the following tips, you may find you enjoy your classes more: sit close to the front, join in class discussions, ask questions, keep up with class assignments, ask for help, sharpen your basic skills, learn keyboarding skills, learn to take good class notes, learn to proofread/correct/rewrite, and develop test-taking skills.”

* Outside of School Counts Too: “Develop habits now that will help you succeed in high school, in education after high school, and in the world of work: quiet place to study, daily homework schedule, ask your family or friends to read your written work, use your local library, read newspapers and magazines, use your new words in writing and talking, ensure your social media presence is suitable, talk with your family about career plans and what you want to do in the future.”

○ <https://www.mappingyourfuture.org/collegeprep/afterschool.cfm>

- Promise Pledge – Long Beach College Promise

○ “Middle school students sign a ‘promise pledge’ to ‘take school seriously’ and ‘prepare for my future by behaving like a scholar.’”

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- <https://edsources.org/2015/starting-early-on-college-and-career/75316>
- Study Habits - ThoughtCo, Lifelong Learning
 - “The middle school years are so important for a student's academic career! This is a time when habits are formed that will remain with students through high school and college. It is important to lay a solid foundation: time management with a homework timer and a planner, learning about learning styles, getting organized with color coding, and learn to concentrate longer.”
 - <https://www.thoughtco.com/study-habits-for-middle-school-students-1857208>

College Connections

- Adelante Program - Westside Pathways Project in Salt Lake City
 - “To maintain the connection between school visits and classroom content, we worked with numerous departments and units, such as the medical school; law school; science, engineering, and dance departments; as well as students groups including MEChA, student government, and campus newspapers. We’ve kept a roster of faculty and staff contacts in each department.”
 - <http://www.ihep.org/guidebook/collegereadiness/chapter/one>
- College Club – University partnership with Marina del Mar Elementary School, and shared in Education Leadership
 - A pre-service teacher started The College Club: a series of seven hourlong lessons that are taught weekly to a 6th grade class.

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- “Me Collage: a simple four-square grid in which students drew images *representing who I am, what I want to be, how I will get there, and why I want to do this.*”
- “Created a chart on the board with columns for four-year, two-year, trade school, and four-year plus. Give definitions of each kind of school and some local examples so that the students understand the differences. Then, ask students to call out his career choices. Students enjoy trying to guess which career goes where and are often surprised that even those careers that require four years of education or specialized training can go in the two-year column first. Explained that beginning higher education at a two-year college rather than a four-year school could save money.”
- “Bring in a panel of college students whose backgrounds matches those of the students in the class. The 6th graders ask questions so they can really connect with the panelists. Some questions might be, "How do you eat in college?" Other students might ask about scholarships and paying for school. 6th grade students should be able to confidently use terminology you have been studying.”
- “Invite outreach specialists from nearby higher education schools to speak to the 6th grade students. After the college outreach visits, many students may be interested in different options instead of only thinking of the big name schools they recognize from the media. They should understand they had a broad range of options.”

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- “The culminating activity for the College Club is a field trip to the university for the students and their families. It won’t just be the students who are touched by this experience; parents will seem as excited about the trip as the students. Parents will enjoy getting to really see where their children could be in the future. “
- <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educationalleadership/jun11/vol68/num09/Going-to-College%C2%A2-It's-Elementary!.aspx>
- Promise Pledge – Long Beach College Promise
 - “A partnership with Long Beach City College and Long Beach State, the initiative offers a free semester of tuition at the city college and guaranteed admission to Long Beach State, for students who meet the minimum entrance requirements.”
 - <https://edsources.org/2015/starting-early-on-college-and-career/75316>

Government/Organization Outreach

- Arizona College Application Campaign Initiative - collegegoal.az.gov/ ○ “The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education (ACPE) is dedicated to expanding access and increasing success in postsecondary education for Arizonans. ACPE not only serves as a forum for all sectors of higher education to come together to address opportunities and challenges, but also to increase student financial assistance, identify and implement strategies to help students' and families plan, enter and succeed in postsecondary education.”
- <https://collegegoal.az.gov/college-application-campaign-rationaletheory-change>

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- College Student for a Day – Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
 - “5th graders got to be college students for a day. When they leave campus at the end of the day, no one says anything other than, ‘I am going to college.’ That message is especially important outside of Anchorage, where students in small communities may not have role models who went to college. It’s about planting just enough of a seed.”
 - http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/12/08/14colleges_ep.h30.html
- Counselor’s Guide – College Board Advocacy and Policy Center
 - “Collaborate with community members to introduce students to the world around them and connect their likes and interests to their community. This access is critical for students with limited exposure.”
 - https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/advocacy/nosca/11b-4383_ES_Counselor_Guide_WEB_120213.pdf
- Parent Institute for Quality Education - California State University
 - “An organization that helps parents of Latinos and other underserved students prepare their children for higher education. Parents complete a nine-week class about how to help their children succeed in school and prepare for college. When they finish, the children of the participants get an ID card showing that they are conditionally admitted to a CSU campus, as long as they complete the college requirements.”
 - <https://www.agb.org/trusteeship/2010/novemberdecember/building-theeducational-pipeline>
- Super Sundays at Churches - California State University

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○ “Local communities gather at churches to send the message from the pulpit about the lifetime value of higher education and the need to begin preparing for college while in middle school and high school. Following ‘Super Sunday’ services, college outreach staff and church education counselors provide information about applying to college and financial aid.”

○ <https://www.agb.org/trusteeship/2010/novemberdecember/building-theeducational-pipeline>

Appendix B

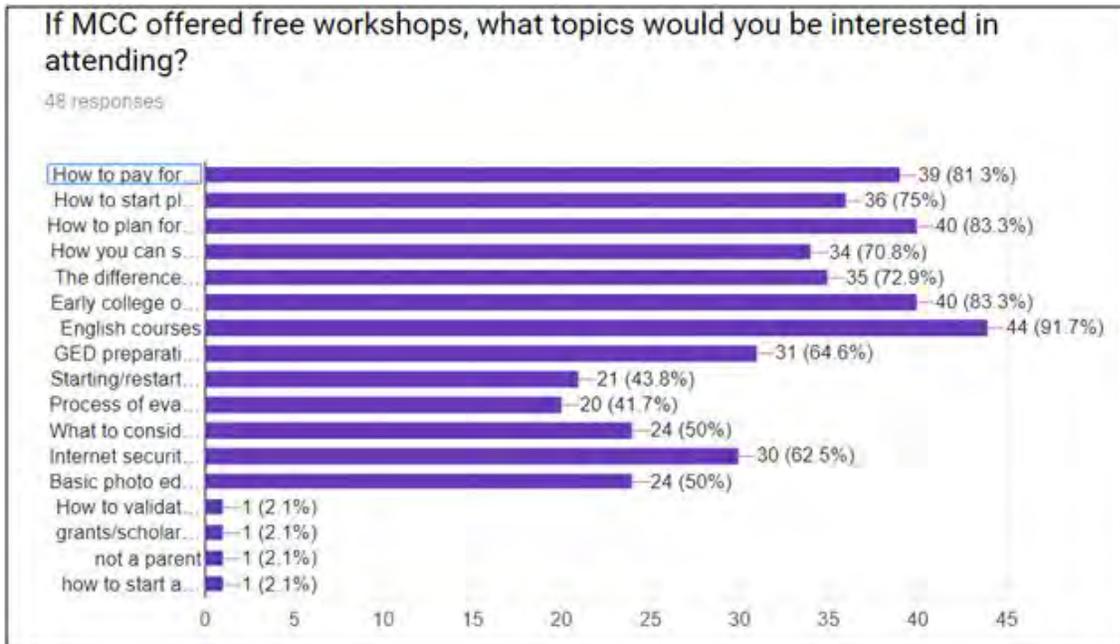
Parent Survey Results

Figure B1:

The screenshot shows a survey form with the following sections:

- Header:** Mesa Community College logo and a blue bar.
- Question:** "If Mesa Community College offered free parent workshops, what topics would you be interested in attending?"
- Section 1: Workshops to prepare you and your children to go to college:**
 - How to pay for your child's college
 - How to start plan for college, beginning when your child is in 6 grade
 - How to plan for your child's college education when he/she is still in middle school
 - How you can support your child's preparation for college while he/she is still in high school
 - The difference between college and university - terminology you need to know
 - Early college opportunities (earning college credit while attending high school)
 - Other: _____
- Section 2: Information sessions/workshops for you as parents:**
 - English courses
 - GED preparation course
 - Process of evaluating your earned credits and college transcript from another country
 - What to consider when buying a home
 - Internet security at home
 - Basic photo editing with free software
 - Other: _____
- Section 3: When delivery method do you prefer?**
 - In person at your child's school
 - In person at Mesa Community College
 - Online learning
- Section 4: What grade is your child (age)? (if you do not know)**
 - 0-4 grade
 - 5-6 grade
 - 7-8 grade
 - 9-10 grade
 - 11-12 grade

Figure B2:



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Figure B3:

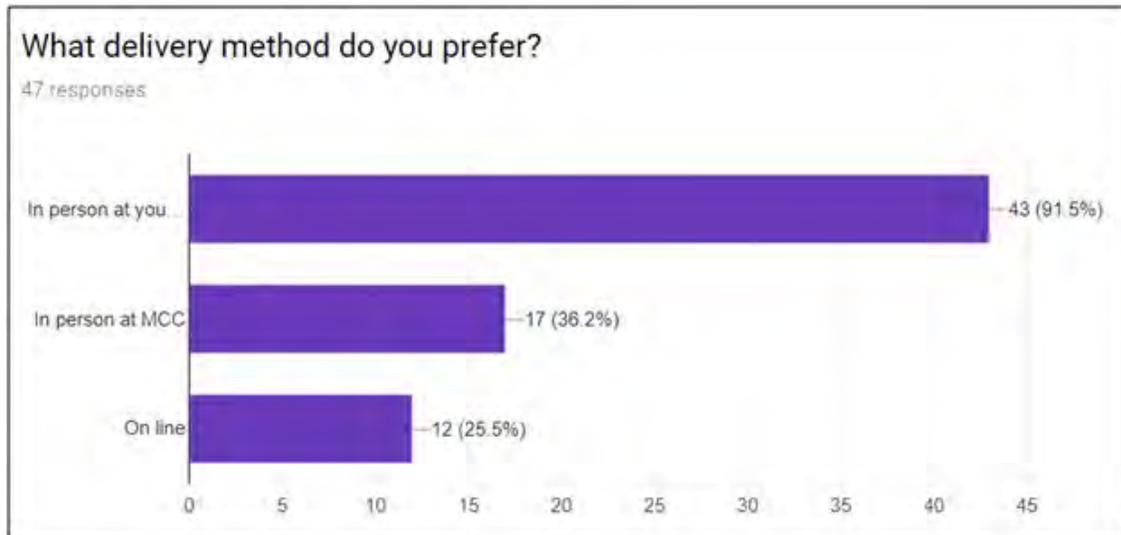
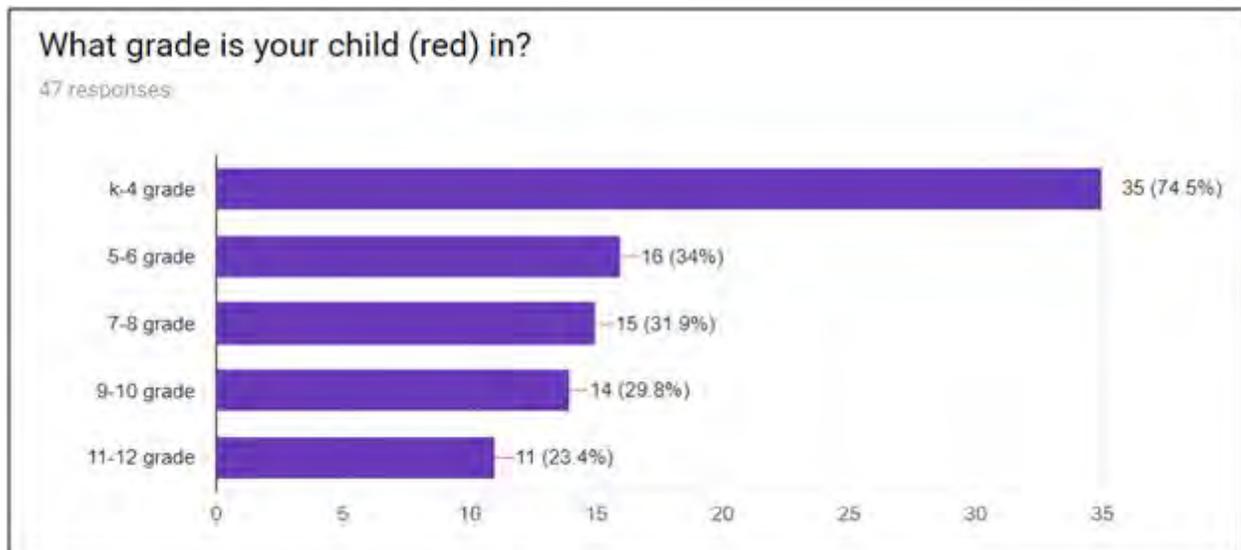


Figure B4:



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→ Conversation Development

Building Small Group Productivity

- **Appropriate topics?** _____
- **What have you done to earn money?** _____
- **Favorite movie, TV show, or book?** _____
- **Where would you most like to travel?** _____
- **Any baking/cooking stories?** _____
- **Best/Worst classes @ school?** _____
- **Where have you lived?** _____

My small group members are:

--	--	--

Each person in your group must ask the speaker at least one question.

The thinking involved when coming up with a question to ask:

- Questions of **attention** → "That was interesting and new. I want to know more about that." / "You done something like that, I wonder if she has heard of..."
- Questions of **clarification** → "I don't know what/where that is." / "Wait, when did that happen?" / "So you really..."

How to Magically Connect with Anyone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4cV8yfgNvI>

Face-to-Face Interaction Acts Like a 'Vitamin' for Depression, Study Suggests

LEARN HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION



If you're feeling depressed, hanging out with friends or loved ones face-to-face is better for your emotional health than a phone call or texting to meet, according to new research.

Developing an effective support network, particularly through face-to-face interaction, is crucial for people with depression, as face-to-face interaction has been shown to be more effective than other types of social contact affect our mental health.

"It's not that emailing or calling on the phone is bad or that you should cut them out of your life. The message is that they are not a substitute for face-to-face contact, which acts as a sort of vitamin for depression prevention. I am trying to make sure I am spending time face-to-face. Having face-to-face conversations at a cafe, because I really think meeting up with someone brings something special, something magical, for our mental health."

Volunteers who met with family and friends at least three times a week had the lowest risk of developing symptoms of depression. The study also states it is possible to be in touch with more people more of the time. There is a question about the quality of these contacts. Long, sincere, face-to-face conversations are also important.

That doesn't mean they will replace other modes of communication, Yang says. "They may help," he adds. "They just won't take the place of direct human contact."

→ Small Group Consensus Building

College Starts Now

Small Group Assignment

75 Invitations – Blue Group

Your small group is responsible for creating 75 invitations to the College Starts Now Celebration. You will have access to a computer, and we can print and copy anything you need. You may also be creative and use art supplies that you can request from MCC.

As a small group, you must come to a **consensus** about how the invitations will look and what format they will take. You cannot simply divide up and say, "Let's all just make 12 invitations on our own." The group must be unified in theme and design.

The information that must be included in some way on the invitation:

- College Starts Now Celebration
- Participants and Family Members are Invited
- Mesa Community College Navajo Room, next to the clock tower
- Thursday, June 15th
- 6:00pm-7:00pm
- Snacks will be served

Small Group Assignment

Nominal Group Technique

1st – Open at MCC on Tuesday, June 15th with two class ready to share with the rest of your small group:

- Idea _____
- Idea _____

2nd – On Tuesday, June 15th, go around and present a time with about seven group members. Each member needs to make a list of all group ideas. If ideas are duplicated (mentioned more than once) you do not need to write down the same idea each time. P.S. For you 10 and 11th graders... before starting, it would be good for "number" or "you've" ☺

- Idea _____

3rd – After all of the ideas have been written down, talk about each of the ideas in more detail. Ask questions about how things would work, if you would have enough time to complete the idea, if you could do it without a lot of things/supplies, if the families and teachers would like the idea etc. Then, rank your list (again). The idea that you like the very most should have the highest # and the idea you like the least should have # 1. The highest # will be the number of ideas written down. For example, if there are 15 ideas, and the idea you favor the most has 15, then it would be #1.

4th – Now it is time for each addition. Look at the first idea written down, and find out what each group member gave the idea. Add all of the group members' votes together for a grand total. Discover what 2 ideas got the highest score.

5th – Then to research! Each group member should take an assignment for homework. Each idea needs to be broken down and researched. For example: How much would your idea cost? Is there computer software to help? Do you have any people of the idea to bring and show ideas? Be clear how large or small the idea is, every group member should take a responsibility to fully follow meeting goals. Invitations

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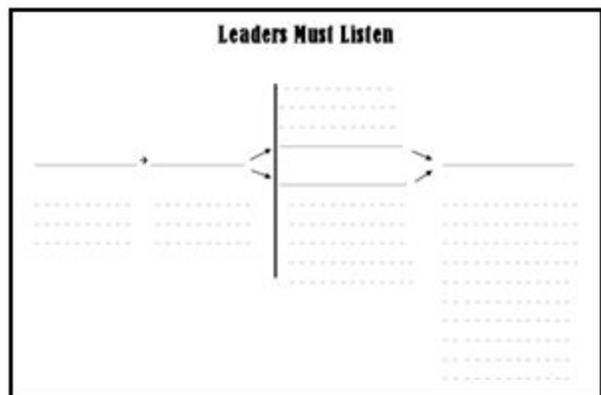
→ Self-Concept and Self-Esteem Development



→ Languages of Appreciation

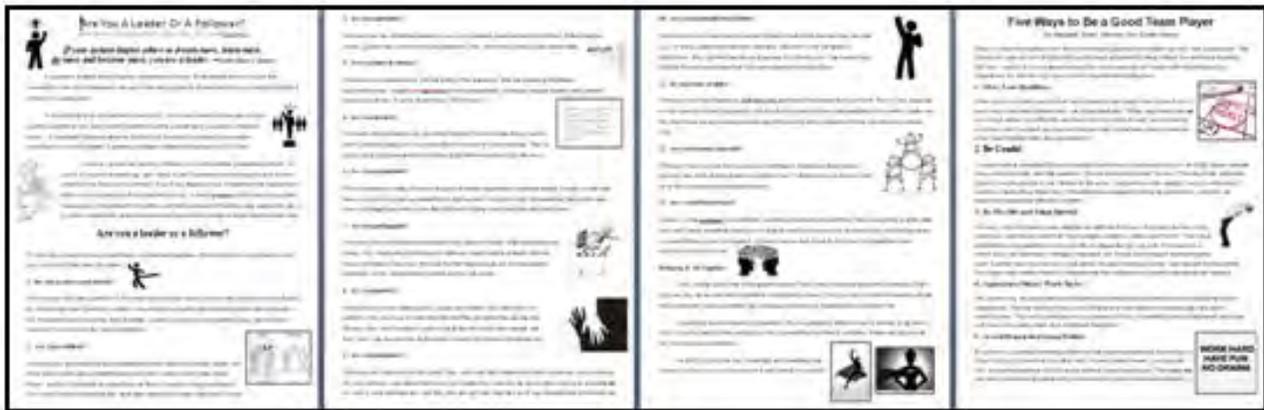


→ Leaders must Listen



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→ Leadership Awareness



→ Activities and Games with a Correlating Reflection for Possible Downtime

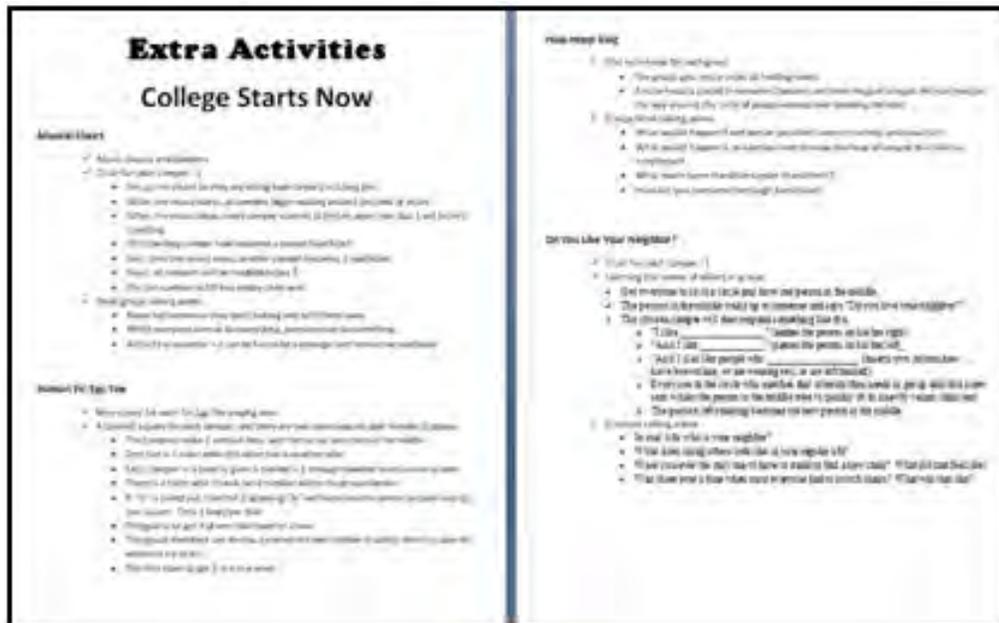


Figure C3: Photographs



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Figure C4: Plus/Delta

Item	Plus	Delta	Recommendations
Recruitment Process Parent workshops	male vs female ratio was better sixty students (reached goal)	Rely on junior high staff, selection was done at the last minute, parent participation, students were not aware why they were selected, students that did not apply.	Advertise as a leadership program?
Busses	Bus drive was on time, size of bus is good, AC, space for lunches, bus for the two schools are good, having volunteers at the school.	Attendance sheets, access through phones, MCC responsibilities after 3:30 pm, student showing up with out applying, consistency on attendance what do to. Students were asked not to play music but still did. Students did not listen to bus driver. Ambassadors report arguments among students. Incidents happened but were not reported.	Take a picture of students. Find out what bus rules are in place for the school district using a bus and follow them.
Rhodes Check-in Process	Parents were good with showing their ID's, went smoothly, having a bilingual person, sheet included was helpful.	adults that were not on the list to pick up/drop off. Concerning on picking up time	Have sign in books by school.
Room Set-Up	divide the room in a classroom room ix play time area, students got to see more of the campus.	challenge with the big group	be in a classroom in different groups Going back to LB145
Table Assignments	color by school	everyday a new student/lack of connections.	College students at each table adding training prior of the event.
		Students didn't learn responsibility by not having.	Table, go into each day, review previous day's materials, color code by topic, or day. Ambassadors all feel students would not bring binder.

Appendix D

College Connections

Figure D1: Volunteerism for Employees

→ Survey Creation



Community Involvement Survey

With a decrease in enrollment at MCCCD, community colleges, and with more higher education options available, Mesa Community College must attract, engage, and retain our students and become a more family-like, understanding, and trust.

In order for Mesa to become a community that creates a culture of presumed college enrollment prospects for first-generation college students, MCC must reach out to families using all levels of education.

This survey will provide a foundation for MCC's Outreach Services to build upon. Not only do we need to know what individuals, organizations already doing for us we need to gain information on opportunities and actively plan future programs and activities.

The information gathered from this survey will be used for promotional purposes only and will remain anonymous to the MCC organization.

Do you currently volunteer your own time for any activities at an elementary school?

Yes

Yes, but I would like to participate more

No, but I would like to get involved

No, I do not participate, nor do I want to

NEXT

Are you bilingual? If so, include the language(s) you speak:

What would you be willing to volunteer? (Check all that apply)

Tutor (working with students and teachers in their classrooms)

Manage the parent help center signs, posters, parent e-news, etc.

Would you feel comfortable... (Check all that apply):

Working with diverse MCC employees

Working alone

In which department do you teach?

Communication

What are your content areas of strength, missing skills that could easily transfer to, and benefit, members of the community? (i.e., developmental reading, financial planning, interviewing, child development, budget management, drawing, sustainability, etc.)

If faculty and you would like to volunteer in the future, what role would you like to play? For example, would you like to create and present your own lesson plan to the children during their class time or attend elementary school events and present a curriculum-based "hook" demonstration or experiment?

Figure D2: Service Learning



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Figure D3: Hola MCC



Figure D4: Mesa Counts on College



Figure D5: GED to MCC



Figure D6: Latino Town Hall

