

Assessment of Hispanic College Student Adjustment within the Teaching and Learning Communities Program

Executive Summary

Purpose

The goal of this study was to assess the impact of participation in the Teaching and Learning Communities (TLC) program among Hispanic students on non-cognitive factors. These non-cognitive factors included (a) perceptions of the college environment, (b) acculturative stress, and (c) student adaptation to college. In previous research, each of these factors has consistently demonstrated the ability to predict Hispanic student retention and academic achievement.

Method

Data were collected from 132 Hispanic students attending classes at Pasadena City College. Of these, 70 students were participants in the TLC program and 62 were non-participants (non-TLC). Participants in the TLC program were more likely than non-TLC students to be first generation immigrants, and non-TLC students were more likely than TLC participants to be second generation immigrants. In addition to providing demographic information, participants completed the college environment scale, which assessed student comfort with the college, as based on several factors, including their perceptions of support from faculty and belief that minority students are valued on campus. They also received an acculturative stress inventory, which assessed the difficulties associated with adjustment to a new culture. Finally, they completed a student adaptation to college questionnaire. This assessed social adjustment, which is the extent to which students are able to manage the interpersonal-social demands of college, and academic adjustment, which is the extent to which student can handle the educational demands of college. It also assessed personal-emotional adjustment, which is students' feeling of psychological well-being, and it assessed commitment to stay in college.

Principal Findings

- College Environment. Participants in the TLC program demonstrated more positive perceptions of the college environment than non-participants. For example, they were more likely than non-TLC students to feel faculty were available outside of class and to feel PCC staff were warm and friendly.
- Student Adaptation to College.
 - ◆ Social Adjustment. Participants in the TLC program demonstrated greater social adjustment to college than non-TLC students. For example, they experience greater general social adjustment, such that they report greater participation in and comfort with social activities on campus, and they report greater adjustment to other people, such that feel greater comfort interacting with students, faculty, and staff on campus.
 - ◆ Personal-Emotional Adjustment. TLC students reported greater feelings distress, such as greater feelings of stress and concern over college expenses, than non-TLC students.
 - ◆ Academic Adjustment and Commitment to College. TLC students and non-TLC students reported similar levels of academic adjustment and commitment to stay in college.
- Acculturative Stress. Although TLC participants were more likely to be first-generation immigrants, and thus less acculturated, than non-TLC students, TLC and non-TLC students reported feelings similar levels of acculturative stress.

Conclusion

The TLC program appears to be beneficial for program participants. Overall, those that participated demonstrated levels of college adaptation, perceptions of college environment, and levels of acculturative stress that tended to be equal to or better than non-TLC students.