COUNTERSTORIES OF TRIO LATINO STUDENTS AT A NORTHERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: TRANSFER CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

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DISSERTATION

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A Dissertation

by

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SPRING 2013
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Student: Eva Margarita Munguía

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University
format manual, and that this dissertation is suitable for shelving in the library and credit is
to be awarded for the dissertation.

___________________________________________, Graduate Coordinator
Caroline S. Turner, Ph.D.                  Date

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and best friend Obdulia P. Munguía. Without your unconditional love, support, encouragement and wisdom this degree would not have been possible. Thank you mom for teaching me the value of serving and giving back to the community. I love you and admire your dedication to our community.

Esta disertación está dedicada a mi mamá y mejor amiga, Obdulia P. Munguía. Sin tu amor incondicional, apoyo, ánimo y sabiduría, este título no habría sido posible. Gracias mamá por enseñarme el valor de servir y dar a la comunidad. Te amo y admiro tu dedicación a nuestra comunidad.

I also would like to dedicate this study to all Latino students and their families who come to the United States for a better future. You are my inspiration and fuel to continue my journey in education. Dreams can come true if you believe in your abilities, talents, and most importantly, in YOU. I am a living proof that despite challenges and obstacles, one can reach his or her goals. ¡Sí se puede!

Prayer to St. Joseph Calasanz (1556-1648)

Sublime Master Joseph, remove all obstacles in my mind, give me tranquility that the help of your example and of your charity to assist me in every step of the way to the truth.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I want to thank the Latino students who participated in this study. Without you this would not have been possible. I appreciate and respect each one of you for standing tall in the face of obstacles and challenges. I am honored that you shared your voices with me so that I can share your experiences with the world.

I thank my brother Carlos Munguía and his wife, Maria Elena, for taking care of Osito and for all of your support and prayers. I thank my sister Elizabeth Munguía for inspiring me to continue my journey, and my brother, Luis F. Munguía, for checking in with me.

A special thanks to my friends and mentors, Dr. Rick A. Ramírez and Donna Davies, for always believing in me despite the challenges I faced. I have much appreciation, respect, and admiration for the transformative work you do daily to assist students. A special thanks to Dr. Caroline Turner for your guidance and support throughout the dissertation process. I admire and respect you greatly.

I also want to thank my wonderful committee members: Dr. Frank Lilly, Dr. Francisco C. Rodriguez, and Dr. Francisco Reveles for your guidance, support and understanding, which kept me going and prepared me to complete this mission. Thank you for believing in me as I look forward to embark new challenges in my professional career. I have valued your knowledge, expertise and I am eternally grateful.
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Community College
Abstract

of

COUNTERSTORIES OF TRIO LATINO STUDENTS AT A NORTHERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: TRANSFER CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

by

Eva Margarita Munguía

Latinos are now the largest ethnic group in the United States and will continue to grow. However, the severe underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education is evident from research showing that the majority of Latino students who enroll in the California community colleges intending to transfer to four-year institutions are not being successful. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenology study was to: 1) examine the experiences of transfer-bound Latino students primarily in one TRIO program, Student Support Services (SSS), 2) identity factors that hindered or facilitated a transfer culture, 3) illuminate the voices and testimonios of Latino students, and 4) corroborate recommendations for change in policy, institutional practices and TRIO advocacy to support students of Latino ethnicity transfer from two-year college to four-year public institutions. Nine self-identified Latino students who completed at least two years as TRIO participants and transfer-bound were selected. Four research questions guided this study to examine the influence of the advocacy of leadership when supporting students and creating a transfer culture. The researcher incorporated CRT and LatCrit frameworks
to examine factors that challenged or supported the experiences of Latino students. The analysis took into account the community cultural wealth to identify and illuminate the unrecognized assets of participants and a transformative leadership approach identified by TRIO practices. Findings revealed that major hindrances came from the K-12 system in which students encountered negative experiences and exclusion based on their ethnicity and socio-economic status. Overall, the findings revealed that despite the challenges encountered during their K-12 years, the participants’ cultural wealth assets helped them achieve transition from high school to college. Finally, the TRIO SSS played a critical role in preparing students to transfer by validating the student’s cultural wealth. The study concludes with future research recommendations as well as a transfer climate model influenced by existing frameworks and based on study findings to support students in their transition to four-year institutions.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Freire, 1970, p. 34)

Community colleges nationwide are under a public mandate and vocal challenge declared by President Obama to increase the college graduation rate of Americans to an ambitious 50% in the next eight years. A vast number of college students, primarily from underrepresented populations, continue to face access, matriculation, retention, and completion inequities in higher education. These phenomena are particularly alarming in light of a national and statewide demographic transformation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b).

Latinos are currently the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S., with California’s public school system educating 50.4% of all Latino students (California Department of Education [CDE], 2011). Within the last five years, Latinos have come to represent a full one-third of California Community College (CCC) enrollment and this number is growing, making them the single largest ethnic group of college students in the single largest public postsecondary system in the nation. Meanwhile, the Latino presence in the four-year university segment is severely under-proportionate to their California representation at large, and degree completion and transfer rates in CCCs remain dismal and disappointing (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011). In Figure 1,
the rates of completion and transfer by race and gender demonstrate this is a continuing problem. Too few Latino students are transferring to four-year institutions, and completion rates spell a potential disaster for Latinos and thus, the California economy.

Furthermore, according to the Campaign for College Opportunity (2012), of the 70% of Latino students who enroll in CCCs, only 2 in 10 of these students complete a degree or certificate or transfer after six years compared to 37% of their white counterparts. The California Master Plan in 1960 was intended to create a three-tiered system of higher education, University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and California Community College (CCC), to provide all students with equal access through multiple pathways to postsecondary education. However, the notion the Master Plan was a step forward in equalizing higher education and providing “access, affordability and excellence” is an assumption that has not yet been fulfilled because of policy initiatives, budget issues, and student fee increases (The Regents and the State
Board of Education, 1960, p. 11). Selectivity by universities using cap enrollment criteria in admitting students continues to severely compromise California’s ability to provide access to education for all students.

California is experiencing a surge of students seeking higher education with the majority being people of color. However, the demographics across California’s public four-year institutions are disproportionate. For example, the UC system enrolls about 226,040 undergraduates across its 10 campuses, but Latino students compose only 13% of the UC student body compared to its white counterparts who comprise 35%. Although enrollment of students in the CSU is about 437,008 at the 23 campuses, Latino students compose only 23% of the total in comparison to their white counterparts with 36%. In the California Community College system, the demographics are similar to those of the CSU with the largest proportion of Latino students comprising 38% (Martinez-Wenzel & Marquez, 2012).

Figure 2 illustrates the importance of community colleges as an entry point for Latinos into postsecondary education due to the percentage of California’s public high school graduates enrolling in state public higher education in 2007.
Figure 2. Percent of California’s 2007 public high school graduates enrolling in state public higher education in fall 2007.

According to the National Community College Demographics (Community College Survey of Student Engagement [CCSSE], 2007), almost half of undergraduate students in public universities and colleges in the United States are enrolled in CCs. Two-year public schools play a significant role in the future educational development of this country. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct best practices when creating an environment encouraging the success of students, specifically Latinos, since more than 60% of all undergraduate Latinos attend CCs (Tovar & Simon, 2006). As a result, factors influencing the experiences of transfer-bound Latino students become significant in the
educational pipeline. Ensuring an effective transfer requires CCCs to maintain a commitment to access and diversity in postsecondary education, specifically to the Latino community, as displayed in Figure 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>California Higher Education System</th>
<th>Total Transfers from CCC</th>
<th>Bachelors Degree Recipients who Transferred</th>
<th>Total Latino Transfers from CCC</th>
<th>Percent Latino Transfers from CCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of California (UC)</td>
<td>14,690</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2,145</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State University (CSU)</td>
<td>37,651</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>9,240</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from CPEC (2009-2010) and Sanchez (2012)

*Figure 3.* Transfer from the California Community College (CCC) to University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) campuses.

As California seeks to fulfill its mission, it is important to recognize how educational opportunity programs like TRIO SSS play an essential role when transferring students to higher education. Hence, this study examined the experiences of Latino students at a CCC TRIO Program as a means toward transfer to four-year institutions. The Federal TRIO is a set of programs created to address the social and cultural barriers to education in the United States. TRIO refers to the first three educational opportunity programs created – Educational Talent Search (ETS), Upward Bound (UB), and Student
Support Services (SSS) – as part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. TRIO was created to assist low-income students, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities as a vehicle to access higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The above programs were designed to bridge the gap between high school and college and increase enrollment in higher education while decreasing disparities for students from diverse social and economic backgrounds to provide equal opportunities. TRIO programs are available in over 1,000 colleges, universities, community colleges, and agencies throughout the nation.

UB is the largest U.S. federal government program designed to assist high school students in attaining postsecondary education; it targets first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students from various ethnic backgrounds. UB is housed in community colleges, universities, and in social service and education agencies (Pitre & Pitre, 2009). The mission of UB is to increase higher education enrollment rates and increase the number of graduates from institutions of higher education. SSS programs provide college students with basic college requirements for academic and personal development and motivation to help make the transition successfully into four-year institutions and to increase the retention and graduation rates of disadvantaged communities as they transition from one college level to the next. Services include: academic counseling, financial assistance, transfer preparation, study skills, test taking, university visits, workshops on majors and career exploration, cultural and arts activities, and tutoring.
Yet, research on the effectiveness of UB programs, are fairly abundant; but this is not the case for SSS programs in CCCs.

**Problem Statement**

The Latino population represents the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in California with over one quarter (26.0% in the 2008-09 academic year) making up CCC enrollees (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011). However, too few Latino students are transferring to four-year institutions, and low completion rates continue to exist. The majority of Latino students who enroll in CCCs intend to transfer to four-year institutions upon entry; however, most of these students do not (Ornelas & Solórzano, 2004). To provide a more detailed perspective on the numbers, 34,156 Latino students enrolled in 2008-09 in California community colleges. From the fall 2009 enrollment in CCCs, only about 2,428 (33%) transferred to a UC and 10,032 (1.4%) transferred to a CSU (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011).

**Nature of the Study**

A qualitative phenomenology study was conducted to investigate and gather data about the experiences of Latino students primarily in one TRIO program, SSS. The participants were selected from a pool of SSS students at least in their second year of postsecondary education and transfer-bound. Ten participants in this study were originally chosen from a larger population; however, only nine agreed to be interviewed and these students were selected through purposeful sampling from SSS. This study used the counterstories approach to conducting interviews as a means to analyze the
experiences, institutional reactions, and advocacy of leadership perspectives of transfer-bound TRIO SSS Latino students. The purpose of the study was to examine the experiences of transfer-bound Latino students currently participating in TRIO SSS and to identify factors hindering or facilitating a transfer culture as a vehicle to address the low transfer rate phenomenon.

**Research Questions**

1. How has TRIO SSS shaped the experiences for Latino students at a community college?

2. How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of leadership at a community college?

3. What are the Latino students’ perceptions of success while preparing to transfer to four-year institutions?

4. How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?

The research questions guided the interview and field note data collection used to uncover the testimony and experiences of Latino students who participated in the SSS program.

In this study, critical race counterstorytelling was used to elucidate the Latinos’ experiences, institutional perceptions, and leadership experiences as they navigated education via the TRIO SSS program. Voices and testimonies from interviews were analyzed through Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race lenses to bring direct
minority student testimony and cultural wisdom/perspective to the forefront. Counterstories also helped serve the benefit of calling out and dispelling the majoritarian assumptions and cultural deficit myths about students of color and/or poverty after 50 years of educational expenditures, reform attempts, and policy reaction to the deteriorating achievement gap (Ramirez, 2011). Narratives and social action research bring student and community voices and stakes to the forefront while engaging them for discourse and service in a diverse democracy and illuminating and fleshing out the more subtle, complicated, and sometimes threatening realities. Therefore, the counterstorytelling approach was used as a qualitative research methodology to explore narratives, solutions, and recommendations to be considered by TRIO leaders and institutions, as they highlight the Latino student experiences and give voice to a traditionally underrepresented community.

**Theoretical Framework**

Latino students bring a diverse set of cultural and personal experiences to school as they enter community colleges. To capture and illuminate these experiences, this study was grounded within the following theoretical frameworks: Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit). These frameworks provided a theoretical perspective to understand how both notions of race and practices of racism are active contexts in current practices of higher education institutions (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002). CRT and LatCrit originated from legal studies and are important tools that help identify the understanding of issues and practices related to racial inequality in post-
secondary education (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). The theories further analyze the institutional environments and social constructs affecting the Latino students in community colleges, constructs such as gender, socioeconomic status, class, and language.

Along with CRT and LatCrit, Yosso’s (2006) Community Cultural Wealth Theory was used to interpret and illustrate the unrecognized assets of TRIO Latino students as they intended to transfer to institutions of higher learning. Latino communities have various forms of cultural capital supporting their educational aspirations and assisting them to make deep connections to their environment. For this reason, maximizing opportunities to bring forth their cultural knowledge into their learning environment is crucial as well as to help combat the deficit thinking often associated with Latino students” (Fernandez, 2002, p. 214).

Transformative leadership theory emerged in various forms in the counterstories analysis, as it challenges, deconstructs, and acknowledges the inappropriate uses of power and privilege that create practices of inequity and injustice in learning environments (Burns, 2000; Foster, 1986; Freire, 1970, 1998; Quantz, 1991; Shields, 2003, 2009, 2010; Weiner, 2003). Transformative leadership was used as a means to explain students’ perceptions on how TRIO SSS foster advocacy of leadership in a system that interferes with Latino students’ rights and ability to receive the best educational opportunities available based on their community cultural wealth.
The transformative leadership framework may often be confused with the transformational leadership theory. Yet, Shields (2010) stated there is a distinction that needs to be emphasize because transforming leadership, as Burns (1978) described, occurs when the leader “recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower, … it looks for potentials motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4). The transformational leader, he stated, “is more concerned with end-values, such as liberty, justice, equality” (p. 426). Figure 4 illustrates the distinctions as both focus on the moral purpose of changing or transforming something (Shields, 2010).

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<tr>
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<th>Transformational</th>
<th>Transformative</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Starting Point</strong></td>
<td>Need for the organization to run smoothly and efficiently</td>
<td>Material realities and disparities outside the organization that impinge on the success of individuals, groups, and organization as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foundation</strong></td>
<td>Meet the ends of complex and diverse systems</td>
<td>Critique and promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis</strong></td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Deep and equitable change in social conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Processes</strong></td>
<td>Understanding of organizational culture; setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program</td>
<td>Deconstruction and reconstruction of social/cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequality, acknowledgement of power and privilege; dialectic between individual and social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Values</strong></td>
<td>Liberty, justice, equality</td>
<td>Liberation, emancipation, democracy, equity, and justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Organizational change; effectiveness</td>
<td>Individual, organizational, and societal transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power</strong></td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
<td>Positional, hegemonic, tool for oppression as well as for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leader</strong></td>
<td>Looks for motive, develops common purpose, focuses on organizational goals</td>
<td>Lives with tension and challenge; requires moral courage, activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Related Theories</strong></td>
<td>School effectiveness, school reform, school improvement, instructional leadership</td>
<td>Critical theories (race and gender), cultural and social reproduction, leadership for social justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adapted from Shields (2009, 2012) and Hoover (2012)

*Figure 4.* Distinctions between two different theories of leadership.
Operational Definitions

Advocacy of Leadership

Transforms and empowers the individual to raise human consciousness, build meaning, and inspire the source of power within.

California community colleges (CCC)

The California community colleges are one of three segment of public California higher education that consist of 71 separate districts and are composed of 112 campuses. CCC, with approximately 2 million students, is the largest postsecondary education system in the United States. Its primary mission is to provide vocational education, transfer curriculum, basic skills, and personal development.

Community Cultural Wealth

A model that brings together the various forms of capital (listed below) and validates the cultural assets obtained from Latino communities and challenges the deficit-thinking model.

- Aspirational Capital – From the Community Cultural Wealth Theory. The ability to uphold future dreams with hope regardless of barriers faced (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

- Familial Capital – From Community Cultural Wealth Theory, this form of capital refers to cultural knowledge Latino students bring with them as it refers to their
cultural competencies nurtured among families to build a sense of community, history, memory, and cultural intuition (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

- **Linguistic Capital** – From Community Culture Wealth Theory, this form of capital Latinos possess includes intellectual and social skills attained through discourse experiences across more than one language and/or style (Yosso 2005, 2006).

- **Navigational Capital** – From Community Culture Wealth, this form of capital refers to the skills Latinos have learned to move through social institutions. Historically, this translates into navigating through institutions not created for people of color (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

- **Resistant Capital** – From Community Culture Wealth, this form of capital draws from the legacy of resistance to oppression or subordination people of color have encountered by challenges of inequality (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

- **Social Capital** – From Community Culture Wealth, this form of capital comprises the community resources and networks of people as they overlap and are shared in local context. Social networks assist people of color with the movement through social institutions and provide emotional support (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

**Counterstory (or Counterstorytelling)**

Counterstory or counterstorytelling is a qualitative methodology to uncover and voice the stories of those individual experiences not often told, with the voice generally being one that is underrepresented. Counterstories and
counterstorytelling are tools for examining and challenging the dominant stories of those in power and whose stories are commonly accepted and differ as realities.

**Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

CRT is a theoretical framework originating from legal studies that examines institutional practices and polices systemically excluding people of color from access and opportunity.

**Cultural capital**

This form of capital addresses student access to resources, opportunities, related with family legacy, peer, and community: primarily attaining knowledge of college-going processes and skills to move through institutions of education (Yosso, 2005, 2006)

**Cultural deficit thinking (or deficit thinking)**

This framework of thought is centered around the belief that minority students and their families are at fault for poor academic performance because they enter school without normative cultural knowledge and skills (Ramirez, 2011; Yosso, 2006).

**Latino (or Latina/o)**

This term identifies Spanish-speaking people of Latin American heritage to include those from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. In the late-1980s, *Latino* became a more inclusive term as immigrants from Central and South America began to arrive (Ramirez, 2011).
Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit)

LatCrit is the theoretical framework serving as an extension of CRT. It examines the numerous dimensions of subordination and oppression Latinos face in higher education institutions such as gender, class, number of generations in residence in the United States, English language acquisition, and immigration status.

Majoritarian stories

These stories are those of privileged Whites, middle and/or upper class, whose perspectives are the normative points of reference. Stories are drawn on scheme facts among the people in the dominant group to distort and silence and oppress the experiences of the dominated individuals.

Transfer

The process a community college student who desires to earn a baccalaureate degree must undertake involving fulfilling transfer admissions requirements. California State University and University of California campuses require transfer students earn a minimum of 60 specific semester (or 90 quarter) lower division baccalaureate units completed at the end of their last term (Ramirez, 2011).

Transformative Leadership

Transformative Leadership is a process to connect directly to the work of educational leaders to assess its promise in practice for a more inclusive, equitable and deeply democratic education (Burns, 1978; Freire, 1998; Shields, 2003, 2009, 2010).
TRIO

Federal-funded outreach and student services programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds as a vehicle to address the achievement gap in educational attainment.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include the following:

- The role of the author conducting the study is a TRIO counselor in one of the SSS programs at a community college in Northern California and potential bias during the process of data analysis may need to be addressed by using a member checking technique for validation purposes (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002).

- The sample size is small and, therefore, limited in its ability to capture all the experiences of TRIO Latino students as they transfer to four-year institutions. Yet qualitative methodologies allow individual stories to emerge as themes often not accessible in quantitative methodologies.

- The sample size is small to generalize the entire Latino student population. Although the author is aware of these limitations, there are also some benefits to this research because this study identified participants from a Northern community college campus.
Significance of the Study

As the Latino population continues to grow, it is clear post-secondary attainment will be in high demand to ensure academic and economic success for all Latinos. Latinos make up over one quarter (26.0%) of the CCC enrollment, yet California four-year institution data suggest a significant disparity in those students who are enrolled, those who transfer, and those who graduate with a baccalaureate degree.

TRIO programs have been federally funded since 1964 and President Johnson’s War on Poverty to address the cultural and personal barriers to access higher education among disadvantaged communities. Therefore, findings from this study can be used to improve, guide, and implement new strategies for TRIO SSS programs at CCCs that may contribute to success and advocacy to leadership for Latino students as they intend to transfer to four-year institutions. Additionally, results of this study could be used in combination with other community college transfer practices to retain Latino students in college. Information gathered in this study will help contribute to existing research pertaining to challenges faced by college Latinos to attain and retain them in higher education by valuing their cultural wealth and support advocacy to leadership provided by TRIO programs.

Remainder of the Study

This study examined the experiences among Latino students enrolled in SSS and who desire to transfer to four-year institutions. Five chapters comprise this dissertation. Chapter 1 introduced the background of the study and described the problem statement,
nature of the study, methodology, theoretical framework, operational definitions, limitations, and the significant of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature about the underrepresentation of Latino students in higher education and community college TRIO programs. Chapter 3 explains the study methodology in-depth including information about the sampling procedures, ethics, data collection, data analysis, and issues of validity and reliability. Chapter 4 presents the findings by reporting the data evolving from the interviews in thematic narratives. An overall analysis is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 explains the themes that emerged from the data collected with a conclusion giving an interpretation of the findings and recommendations.
Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the history and practical issues that are applicable to this study and the experiences that may impact Latino students’ educational aspiration to transfer to a four-year institution as participants in a community college TRIO SSS program. The topics covered include: a) historical context and system factors; b) an introduction to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) frameworks and application to higher education; c) CRT and LatCrit Counterstories methodology; d) a description of cultural deficit thinking models that have haunted people of color in education, specifically Latinos; e) Yosso’s (2006) Community Culture Wealth Theory and its application to postsecondary education; f) an overview of the CCC transfer mission and its relation to the TRIO SSS access to postsecondary education; and g) the current status of Latinos in K-12 and higher education.

This chapter examines the historical perspectives and perceptions of scholars in education whose work is relevant to the Latino community as it pertains to access, success, and equity in a TRIO SSS program at a CC. Even though Latinos are expanding at large in numbers in the public K-12 schools, the underrepresentation of Latino students in postsecondary education continues to exist because a high number of CCC students do not transfer and only few matriculate to either a UC or CSU.
Historical Context

The importance in understanding the historical context and experiences of Latino students as they moved through the educational pipeline of higher education is crucial for community college educators. Latinos have continuously lagged, falling behind in completing a baccalaureate degree. Since the 1970s, Latinos’ and other people of color’s access to post-secondary education has been hindered by state and federal higher education policies. A few policies include: a) the end and elimination of Affirmative Action program goals to address racial discrimination after the 1978 case, *Bakke v. UC Regents*; b) in 1998, California passed Proposition 209, a ban on race-based admissions for the CSU and UC; c) anti-bilingual education and anti-immigrant initiatives (Ramirez, 2011; Valencia & Bernal, 2000); d) competitive requirements for admission and the increase in selectivity into CSU and the UC systems; and e) state budget cuts to the funding of higher education have led to a decrease in course offerings and transfer programs meant for disadvantaged communities (Shulock & Moore, 2005).

All the aforementioned issues are severely and negatively impacting Latinos directly from high school with regard to having access to four-year institutions, thus forcing them to enroll in community colleges (Ramirez, 2011). Challenges faced by Latinos and other underrepresented communities are grounded by a socially constructed dominant ideology in which race and racism intersect to create and show the superiority of one race over another. To better understand the following theoretical frameworks that guided this study, racism needs to be defined. Racism is defined by Marable (1992) as “a
system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-American, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color” (p. 5). CRT and LatCrit were used to examine the experiences of TRIO SSS Latino students who attended a community college and desired to pursue a baccalaureate degree for the following two purposes:

1. Validate and bring forth the testimonies and voices exemplifying the TRIO Latino community college transfer journey
2. Assess and challenge institutional myths, practices, and policies that may hinder the transfer success of Latinos.

Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) were used as frameworks for analyzing the experiences of transfer-bound Latino students who were participants in TRIO SSS. Through a CRT and LatCrit lens, the voices and stories of Latino students who were part of the community college TRIO SSS program were used to evaluate and challenge the institutional assumptions and practices that may impede Latinos’ transfer to four-year institutions. CRT and LatCrit originated from legal studies to understand the issues relevant to racial inequality in education (Delgado, 1995; Solórzano et al., 2005). Additionally, CRT and LatCrit required the investigation of institutional assumptions, policies, and practices that interfere with Latino students receiving the best education opportunities in postsecondary institutions as their white counterparts. Academic scholars found that CRT and LatCrit frameworks can assist
educators in higher education to analyze various forms of racial segregation against
students of color as policies and practices take place in the form of racial inequalities.

Both theories, CRT and LatCrit, challenge the majoritarian assumptions
contributing to the cultural deficit model utilized in today’s educational practices, thus
explaining the unsuccessful achievement of Latinos in the educational pipeline. Even
education scholars have adopted to understand CRT and LatCrit in the K-12 school
process (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1997; Solórzano,
1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) to examine the racialized barriers against the
communities of color. Although CRT and LatCrit acknowledges race and racism are
embedded in the American society and in the structures and policies, LatCrit intersects
other dimensions of Latinos identity crucial to understand, such as class, gender,
language, and generation status (Taylor, 1999; Valdez, 1996; Villalpando, 2002; Yosso,
2005, 2006). These various forms of subordination and oppression in the Latinos identity
can be detrimental on their experiences because it promotes cultural alienation and
isolation while in college. Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Race Theory
(LatCrit) are fundamental to the work toward achieving social justice. These frameworks
address the various forms of racism by challenging the status quo to promote social
justice and legitimize the experiences of people of color. They illuminate and flesh out
important elements of the stories not told.
**CRT and LatCrit Counterstory Methodology**

Counterstories from TRIO Latinos can bring forth the realities to the forefront and provide a rich phenomenological data to be analyzed to assess their participation in the TRIO transfer mission relative to the California community college transfer objectives. Further, the stories heard may reveal factors that may influence the experiences of transfer-bound Latinos and reveal whether advocacy of leadership from the TRIO SSS program was used as a vehicle to address the low transfer phenomena and provide access to higher education. Counterstorytelling can serve in various pedagogical functions to build community among those marginalized in society; challenge the perceived wisdom; open new windows of reality; educate from different elements that construct another world richer than the story told; and provide an awareness, understanding and transforming established belief systems (Delgado, 1989; Mack, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In Counterstories, CRT and LatCrit were used as frames to gather data to communicate the experiences and realizations of traditionally marginalized communities. The United States has a legacy of marginalizing people of colors’ perspectives and stories because they are generally non-majoritarian; therefore, they are often dismissed, overlooked, or simply not taken into consideration based on the status quo or norm. Majoritarian narratives are not just stories of racial privilege, they constitute stories of gender, class, and other forms of subordination (Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, & Solórzano, 2008). The majoritarian narratives promote layers of assumptions that
persons in positions of power bring with them in oppressive discourse of classism, sexism, and racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). By using counterstory or counterstorytelling, the stories and voices of people of color can challenge the cultural deficit thinking to claim social justice and address educational inequities.

**Cultural Deficit Thinking**

Since storytelling can strengthen the cultural survival and resistant experiences of underrepresented populations, being able to utilize the counterstory methodology to challenge the cultural deficit storytelling based on beliefs that students of color can only be successful if they assimilate to the mainstream culture is critical. Latino culture and language are often misconceived by educators and in American society who perceive deficits instead of strengths (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992). Deficit models continue to blame Latino students for lacking certain attributes, thus causing them to not be academically unsuccessful. Nevertheless, little evidence exists to maintain such deficit models (Yosso, 2006). Unfortunately, this cultural deficit model finds fault in Latino students’ values and minimizes the importance of education in their social environment (Chavez, 1992). The dominant ideology of color blindness acts as a mask for self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups to deposit assumptions and oppress the voices of people of color (Calmore, 1992; Delgado, 1989; Huber et al., 2008; Villalpando, 2004; Yosso, 2005, 2006).

Over the last 30 years, cultural deficiency models have been reinforced around the idea of cultural “underclass” and used terms such as “at risk” and “disadvantaged” to
represent students and groups (Ramirez, 2011; Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Because Eurocentric perspective and white privilege are deeply embedded in the way western culture constructs a reality of the world and one’s experiences (Delgado Bernal, 2002), many people continue to believe in the deficit understanding that covert and overt assumptions of superiority in “American” democratic ideals, such as objectivity and individuality, purport (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ramirez, 2011). Yet, the voices of students who have traditionally been marginalized illuminate the various worldviews about what is considered to be valid knowledge. Latino students’ home knowledge can be translated into their bilingualism, biculturalism, and commitment, to communities in order to navigate through educational barriers, go on to college, and make a difference by helping out other people (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

**Community Cultural Wealth**

Challenges in Latino students’ cultural capital and cultural deficit thinking are all concepts put forth by Yosso (2005) in the Community Cultural Wealth Theory. These perspectives acknowledge the unrecognized assets students from Latino descent bring from their homes and communities into the institutional environment. From a CRT standpoint, students of color cultivate certain cultural wealth through social, navigational, aspirational, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital (Delgado Bernal, 1997; Yosso, 2005).

As mentioned in the definitions, cultural wealth in Latino communities includes various capitals and each is briefly described here. For more in-depth definitions, please
see the Definition of Terms section in Chapter 1. Cultural capital refers to accessing resources associated with family, culture, and community to navigate educational institutions obtained from community knowledge and/or family (Cheshire, 2012; Yosso, 2005). Social capital includes networks of people and community resources to provide influential and emotional support for navigating institutions (Yosso, 2005). Navigational capital is skills navigating through social institutions successfully (Yosso, 2005, 2006).

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to continue hopes and dreams for a better future despite barriers and obstacles (Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Gándara, 1982). Linguistic capital includes the intellectual and social skills achieved through discourse experiences in more than one language (Yosso, 2005). Familial capital refers to the commitment to community well-being and support for the extended family as forms of family connections and culturally competency (Yosso, 2005). Resistant capital refers to a set of knowledge and skills nurtured and acquired through behavior to challenge inequity and social injustice (Freire, 1970, 2009; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005). Resistant capital has been passed on from generation to generation through being raised with and exposed to various acts of political blame, civil demonstrations, and civic right affirmations (Cheshire, 2012; Ramirez, 2011).

**Latino Participation in K-12 and Higher Education**

Much attention has been dedicated to why Latinos do not perform well and drop out from secondary education more recurrently than their White and Asian-Americans counterparts (Ramirez, 2011). The result of this may be due to the funding structure in
the K-12 sector compensating high performance schools with additional funding but negatively impacting the underfunding of resources in schools predictably set to be low performance yet still required to achieved their basic functions (Ramirez, 2011; Rodriguez & Rolle, 2007). Students who intend to go to college require academic programs that will get them ready for college and oftentimes their schools are less funded and have a large number of minority students (Solórzano & Tejada, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2000).

A report from Harvard University (Civil Rights Project, 2005) found that a large number Latinos attend high schools where the absence of a graduation culture is the norm and fewer than 60% attain high school diplomas (Chapa & Schink, 2006). This phenomenon has added to the disproportionate number of Latino students who attend four-year institutions relative to the general population along with higher enrollments at community colleges (Ramirez, 2011). Even further, the high dropout rate threatens an upcoming state wide crisis with great fiscal and social cost to California. According to the Harvard University report, adult citizens lacking high school diplomas are the highest rank of California’s, unemployed, incarcerated, and underemployed (Chapa & Schink, 2006; Civil Rights Project, 2005; Ramirez, 2011). Since Latinos continue to fall behind in terms of educational attainment, it is critical to note that only 52% of Latinos complete high school, compared to 72% African American students and 84% of whites (Solórzano et al., 2005; Sullivan, 2007). Relevant, a report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2005) notes that only 27% of Latinos attend college right
after a high school diploma compared to 49% of their white counterparts (Sullivan, 2007).

Latinos are now the largest ethnic group in the United States and will continue to grow. However, the growing population of Latinos continues to face barriers related to access and retention in college (Turner & Garcia, 2005; Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Nora, 2003). The severe underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education is faced at a time when Latinos represent more than 16% of the U.S. population because baccalaureate degree attainment continues to obscure Latinos access to America’s higher education today. Yet, in California, Latinos make up 37% of California’s general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a, 2011b). Several factors contribute to the huge racial disparity among those who complete baccalaureate degrees. In California, the percentages between the proportion of whites who attain a bachelor’s degree is 27.9% compared to only 11.8% of African Americans, and 10.1% of U.S.-born Latinos, not considering all Latinos who are not U.S.-born (Chapa & Schink, 2006).

**CCC Transfer Mission and TRIO Post-secondary Access**

The intended role of community colleges in California’s 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education is to act as a means of educational and economic advancement to “established community college transfer as a core mechanism and institutional deliverable for providing broad educational opportunity; and as a measure to distribute postsecondary resources when student demand exceeded capacity at four-year public institutions” (Ramirez, 2011, p. 49). Since the inception of the Master Plan for Higher
Education, the primary function of it is to provide the state with a postsecondary education system governing, which students will be eligible for admissions to UC, CSU, and CCC. In the California Master Plan for Higher Education, community colleges are key two-year public institutions ensuring open access and acting as a critical path to attain a bachelor’s degree for numerous students that come from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Chapa & Schink, 2006). In spite of this, Latino students who wish to transfer from community colleges to UC or CSU are not being successful.

Community colleges by design are viewed as two-year institutions to bridge the gap for many students trying to attain a bachelor’s degree by way of transferring to four-year public institutions (Ramirez, 2011). For students ineligible for admissions, the community college path provides numerous of opportunities. For example, CCCs offer developmental courses that include basic skills in writing, reading, and math, vocational or technical programs, financial affordability, and lower division courses equivalent to four-year institutions.

Factors impacting Latino community college transfer students are generally associated with being first-generation and low-income students and include access to resources, mentoring, financial aid, and leadership opportunities. Research has shown educational opportunity programs have been successful in addressing those factors impacting the success of underrepresented ethnic minority students whose desire is to have access to higher education. Since 1965, TRIO programs have graduated more than
2 million students and remain one proven pathway for ensuring college readiness and access that marginalized students deserve (Council for Opportunity in Education, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Nearly half a century ago, the Higher Education Act passed in the U.S. and the U.S. Department of Education to support three federal supported programs designed to increase college enrollment and completion rates of socially and economically underrepresented populations (Pitre & Pitre, 2009).

TRIO refers to the first three federal programs created: Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Student Support Services. Born out of President Johnson’s War on Poverty and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the primarily goal was to provide first-generation, low-income, and people with disabilities access and student participation beyond high school (Pitre & Pitre, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Based on the perceived status quo, educational opportunity programs practice reverse discrimination by excluding the dominant ethnic and racial groups or higher income status from educational services that have been reserved for disadvantaged communities (Pitre & Pitre, 2009).

TRIO programs’ missions tie back to the CCC’s mission by providing access and bridging the gap from high school to college and increasing higher education opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged students. Nationally, according to Pitre and Pitre (2009), there are about 2,700 TRIO programs serving almost 866,000 low-income Americans between the ages of 11 and 27. From this data, the majority of TRIO participants belong to ethnic minority groups who are low-income and first-
generation. To put numbers into perspective, 37% of TRIO participants are white, 35% are African American, 19% are Latinos, 4% are Native American, and 4% are Asian American, along with 22,000 students with disabilities and 25,000 veterans (Council for Opportunity in Education, 2007). However, since the growing Latino population continues and will continue to exist, the number of Latinos in TRIO SSS may rise.

Furthermore, the importance of continually improving TRIO SSS management of programs and improving educational outcomes of students is critical in both the two and four-year institutions. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the success of TRIO SSS is measured by performance and efficiency results. The following data provided by the 2009-10 annual performance reports submitted by grantees demonstrated that the number of participants who received associate’s or bachelor’s degrees, transferred to another institution, stayed enrolled at same institution, or completed the program in 2009-2010 had a success rate of 85.5% at a two-year college and 91.9% from a four-year institution.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study to identify the experiences of TRIO Latino students who attended a two-year school and wished to transfer to four-year institutions. The methodology was also used to see if advocacy of leadership emerged as part of the TRIO SSS transfer mission to address the low transfer phenomena and provide opportunities to attain a baccalaureate degree. Chapter 3 covers the method used in the research design section, the role of the researcher to describe the involvement with the participants, the research questions guiding this study, the setting and sample to describe the participants and collection of data, instrumentation and materials needed to collect data, methods for data analysis, and the measures taken to protect participants.

Setting and Context

The study took place at a Northern California Community College public school. The campus is part of the 72 college districts and 112 campuses in California (Napa Valley College, 2011). In Summer 2010, total enrollment was about 10,418 community college students. In terms of gender, an average of 56% were female. The demographics consisted of 44.8% whites being the largest group. The next largest group was Hispanics accounting for 22.7% of the student population, followed by 10.3% Filipino, 6.4% African American, 3.7% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Native American (Office of Institutional Research [OIR], 2010). In Summer 2010, the last facts accounted 69% of
students attended part-time and 30.5% were full-time students. First-time transfer students made up 33.6%, followed by 16.2% first-time college students, and 12.5% returning students (OIR, 2010).

The demographic profile of TRIO SSS participants at this particular college consisted of 25% being male students versus 74% being females. Figure 5 provides ethnic breakdown for the total number of TRIO students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one race</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Participants</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from TRIO SSS Annual Performance Report (2010-2011)

*Figure 5. Participant Distribution by Ethnic Background*

**Participant Selection**

The target sample from participants in this study consisted of ten current SSS Latino students from a Northern Community College. A purposeful sampling criterion was used to contact current TRIO SSS students that completed at least the second year as TRIO participant, at least 18 years of age, five females and five males, self-identified as Latinos and were transfer-bound. The researcher contacted the SSS office and formally requested the assistance of the Director with a letter of Intent (see Appendix A). As way
of inviting participants to participate and maintain confidentiality of student emails, the letter was sent out in an introductory e-mail after the selected participants were identified.

Once the student body was identified by the TRIO SSS office based on the purposeful criterion sampling requested, only nine participants agreed to be interviewed, and of those nine, only two were male. In the end, the sample consisted of more females, ages 18 and over, identified as being Latino and reported an interest in transferring to a four-year public institution. Students who responded to the e-mail indicated they were willing to participate and were contacted via phone to set up interview times and locations with the assistance of the TRIO SSS administrative assistant. It should be noted that second e-mails and follow-up calls were made to ensure a variety of participants in terms of gender, as initially stated. Using this process, only nine agreed to be interviewed.

As noted before the total number of males participating in the TRIO SSS program was significant low versus their female counterparts. This gender gap coincides with existing literature that the future of Latino male student population is at risk. Latino male representation in college and attaining degrees continues to decline relative to their female peers (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Research suggests that in recent years, high school completion and college enrollment show significant disparities in success rates between Latino males and females. For example, according to Saenz & Ponjuan (2009), “62% of bachelor’s degrees earned by Hispanics were earned by females, up to 50
percent in 1990” (p. 9). The gender gap in overall educational attainment continues to grow and requires much attention from all stakeholders.

Purposeful sampling in a qualitative study is appropriate because it centers upon the researcher’s ability to collect information significant to research questions based on the narrative and experiences of the TRIO participants (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990, 2002). Purposeful sampling adds credibility and reduces bias in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). In qualitative investigation, sample size has no significance to validity, for the participants’ counterstories are meaningful and provide rich phenomenological data to illustrate the real experiences of students relevant to the research questions. However, to ensure validity, the researcher will use strategies described by Creswell such as member checking to provide validity to the voices of the participants, researcher potential bias, peer review, and reports of discrepant information

**Instruments**

The data were collected from semi-structured one-on-one interviews by using a standard protocol to provide consistency among the interviews conducted and to ensure student privacy and confidentiality. Before interviewing students, the researcher provided a copy of the consent form to participate that explained the details of the study, the right to refuse or volunteer in the research study, and measures taken to protect interviewees’ identities (see Appendix B). The consent form was read aloud so each participant would follow along. Participants were asked if they had any questions or concerns. Before each interview, the researcher made sure to ask permission to audio-
record the interview and assure confidentiality of records. Each participant was then asked to sign the consent form before proceeding. All interviews were conducted in a TRIO private office and campus library. Interviews varied approximately from 60 to 80 minutes in length. Each interview was recorded in its entirety and transcribed by a professional transcriber within a week. Transcriptions ranged in length from 10 to 25 pages.

**Research Design**

The intent of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of Latino students in the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) at one Northern California Community College using the CRT methodology of counterstorytelling. Counterstorytelling incorporates CRT and LatCrit to bring the student experiences to the center of the analysis. This researcher used semi-structured one-on-one interviews; participants shared their experiences in TRIO SSS, perceptions on success as they prepared to transfer to four-year institutions, and factors contributing to advocacy of leadership as part of being in the program. The interview included semi-structured open-ended questions to document the composite stories drawing on rich forms of phenomenological data (see Appendix C).

**Research Questions**

This study illuminated the experiences of TRIO SSS Latino students using their personal testimony and experiential knowledge and discovered whether SSS in a community college fostered advocacy of leadership as a means to transfer to four-year
institutions. Using CRT and LatCrit, Community Culture Wealth and Transformative Leadership, student counterstories were gathered and analyzed from interviews to create rich phenomenological data examining the factors and perceptions of Latino students in TRIO. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How has TRIO SSS shaped the experiences for Latino students at a community college?
2. How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of leadership at a community college?
3. What are the Latino students’ perceptions of success in preparing to transfer to four-year institutions?
   a. How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?

**Procedure**

The proposal was approved and considered “exempt” by the Institutional Review Board of California State University, Sacramento in Fall 2012. The researcher made sure the following protection measures took place: a) an introductory e-mail requesting participants for this study to be selected through a purposeful sampling, b) the participants’ right to privacy and safety were protected to ensure that only the dissertation chair and the researcher had access to data, c) the researcher made sure student anonymity was of highest importance, and d) participation was completely voluntary. Pseudonyms were given to all participants in this study. Additionally, consent
information were provided in written form and attached in the introductory e-mail to given participants opportunities to view it prior to the interview.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection for the current study consisted of in-depth interviews, getting them transcribed, and reviewed for accuracy. The next step was to analyze and code data. Since according to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), the “central idea of coding is to move from raw text to research concerns in small steps, each step building on the previous one” (p. 35), the staircase coding process was used to move the researcher from a lower to a higher, more abstract level of understanding. The process described by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) is a grounded theory coding process that is simple and clear to understand using the seven basic steps: a) raw text, b) relevant text, c) repeating ideas, d) themes, e) theoretical constructs, f) theoretical narrative, and g) research concerns.

Once all data were fully transcribed in raw text form, the researcher began by reading each transcript carefully various times. As the researcher read through the first screening, the objective was to obtain a general sense of the information provided by each interviewee and the situation (Creswell, 2009). The second phase of the coding process was to cut the text down to be relevant to the research concerns and paste data by creating a new document labeled relevant text. For the information to be thorough, the relevant text was arranged and grouped by each of the four research questions. The third phase of the coding process was to analyze selected relevant text to find similar words,
phrases or thoughts across participants or in a single manuscript, called repeating ideas, to shed light on the research questions. The next step required paying special attention to recurring ideas across interview transcripts and finding common themes or categories (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Creswell, 2009). Once reviewing and analyzing ideas, the researcher grouped themes under the four research questions.

Data reduction occurred in large amounts to identify recurring patterns and themes. From the themes, sub-themes were then organized into larger more abstract constructs. The next step was to organize the themes into theoretical narratives that helped the researcher learn about the research concerns. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) described this process as, “the narrative is the culminating step that provides the bridge between the researchers’ concerns and the participants’ subjective experience” (p. 40). The purpose of bridging the researcher and the participants’ experiences was “to bring together the two very different worlds” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 40). Direct quotes from the transcriptions were used to illuminate how each theme and sub-theme corresponded with each respective question.

**Reliability and Validity**

In qualitative research, reliability and validity have different implications as they do in quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). With qualitative reliability, the researcher approaches need to be consistent and reliable, including the following two suggested reliability procedures: a) checking for transcription mistakes and b) making sure codes are consistent via crosschecking (Creswell, 2009). To make sure this procedure was
carefully followed, the researcher reviewed each transcript and spot-checked the transcriptions done by the professional transcriber against audio recordings to ensure for accuracy. To further the reliability of the transcripts, the researcher asked a colleague in the field of education to review the transcripts for concurrence in the coding process.

Validity, on the other hand, is a significant procedure to make sure the researcher checks for accuracy of the findings. For this reason, the following eight strategies for establishing validity recommended by Creswell (2009) were considered: a) triangulation of data from different data sources, b) member checking, c) use of rich and thick description, d) clarification of the researcher potential bias, e) reports of discrepant information that runs counter to themes, f) peer review, g) prolonged time in the field, and h) use of an external auditor (pp. 191-193). Creswell recommended the use of these strategies to increase credibility and accuracy of the findings. The researcher used four of Creswell’s verification strategies in this study: a) clarification of researcher bias, b) presentation of discrepant ideas, c) peer review and d) member checking.

**Clarification of researcher bias.** Self-reflection is critical to provide an open and honest interpretation in qualitative research. Thus, in a qualitative study, bias is almost inevitable because the researcher’s past experiences and beliefs are involved in this systematic process. For verification purposes, the researcher used theoretical sensitivity while drawing upon her cultural intuition, two aspects of researcher positionality (Ramirez, 2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) that brought special insight and typically enhance the capacity of the researcher to interpret and give meaning to data
(Straus & Corbin, 1990). Being sensitive to the interpretation of the participants’ responses also provides the opportunity for the researcher to accurately read and interpret the participants’ meaning (Delgado Bernal, 1998)

**Presentation of discrepant information.** To validate the experiences of all participants, quotes were pulled from transcripts to support and illuminate each emergent theme. Ideas from multiple participants were highlighted and evaluated. Then the researcher included other important themes that ran counter to other individual ideas, thoughts or experiences to validate the unique story and experiences of all the participants. The least common themes were still used by drawing from the findings into sub-themes. It is important to note that participants’ unique experiences shaped them in ways different from other participants.

**Peer review.** This process involved another person reviewing data and asking questions that resonate with people other than the researcher. It also served to enhance the researcher’s interpretation of the data for accuracy and to verify that findings are congruent with raw data (Creswell, 2009). In this study, a colleague of the researcher, as previously stated, reviewed the data to see if the researcher’s understanding seemed reasonable based upon the data. Also, the researcher’s supervising chair was critical for data accuracy on the interpretation of the findings because of his extensive qualitative research background.

**Member checking.** This last strategy was conducted by sending participants study findings via email. They were asked to read data analysis and check for accuracy,
Background of the Researcher

Particular preparation was taken in consideration when applying critical race counterstorytelling for guiding the researcher into a process of racial and cultural awareness as she conducted interviews with subjects. It was extremely critical the researcher paid close attention to her understanding of cultural systems and racism that others bring to recognize, express, and experience the world (Milner, 2007). Throughout the study, the researcher occupied a position relative to TRIO participants that included the following: TRIO counselor and instructor, a first-generation college graduate, and a Latina from a working-class background.

The connection to the Latino participants provided the researcher with access to the community and post-secondary educational institutions. The researcher is a counselor educator with over seven years of experience working with marginalized communities, specifically with Latino students in counseling-related programs within the education pipeline. The range of her experiences includes summer transition programs to college, high school transfer and outreach, independent study services for educational disadvantaged students, instruction in the TRIO human career development courses, and retention services in other educational opportunity programs. Therefore, the researcher conducting this study primarily interacted with the participants solely for the purpose of conducting interviews to gather data.
Protection of Participants

To ensure the participants knew their information would be kept confidential, those who participated in the study signed consent forms informing them of the anonymity and confidentiality of the study. Pseudonyms were used to distinguish the participants from each other. No identifying information was retrieved regarding the participants, including names, birthdates, initials, or other related data. The data collected from interviews and transcriptions were kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home office and on the researcher’s personal computer under password lock and encryption to be destroyed within six months upon completion of the research.

Conclusion

This study was designed to provide a better understanding of the experiences of Latino students who participated in the TRIO SSS program at the community college level and to reveal how the TRIO program cultivates advocacy of leadership and provides a transfer culture as a vehicle to address the low-transfer phenomena. The goal was to fully explore the TRIO Latino student experiences to identify particular factors hindering or facilitating their transitions as they navigated the educational system.

According to Nevarez and Wood (2010), the percentages of students of color are growing at the community college, as it is growing for the Latino population, in general. It is critical and logical to understand the various factors necessary to prepare two-year public institutions to serve the needs of these students with help of programs like TRIO that serve as focal points and access to higher education.
Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The underrepresentation of minorities, low-income and first-generation college students continues to exist in higher education as the inequities contribute to the achievement gap in American. Since California Community Colleges (CCCs) play a pivotal role in college access, the low-transfer phenomena of Latinos is particularly alarming in light of a national and statewide population shift (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

Restated, Latinos are currently the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S., with California’s public school system educating 50.4% of all Latino students (CDE, 2011). Within the last five years, Latinos represented a full one-third of California Community College (CCC) enrollment and growing, making them the single largest ethnic group of college students in the single largest public postsecondary system in the nation. Yet, this population’s presence in the four-year segment is severely under-proportionate to their California representation-at-large, and degree completion, and transfer rates in CCC remain dismal and disappointing (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011).

This chapter reports the findings of this phenomenology qualitative research with counterstory methodology. The study incorporated CRT and LatCrit as frameworks with which to examine the experiences of TRIO SSS students, particularly factors facilitating or hindering a transfer culture and advocacy of leadership as a vehicle to address the low-transfer phenomena. By counterstories, the researcher means the stories or testimonies of
students bringing forth the voices of those not typically heard challenging the values and
perspectives of the majoritarian voice as Latinos navigate the educational pipeline and
higher education. Thus, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted to
answer the following research questions:

1. How has TRIO SSS shaped the experiences for Latino students at a
   community college?
2. How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of
   leadership at a community college?
3. What are Latino students’ perceptions of success in preparing to transfer to
   four-year institutions?
4. How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture
   for Latino students?

The CRT and LatCrit lens enabled the researcher to analyze patterns of racial
discrimination and exclusion to highlight hindrances of Latinos’ success in community
colleges and for transfer. This analysis took into account Yosso’s (2006) Community
Cultural Wealth Model to interpret and illustrate the unrecognized assets of SSS students
as a guiding framework to identify and explain the assets present in participants.
Additionally, transformative leadership theory emerged in the analysis by recurring ideas
students explained as perceptions on how TRIO SSS cultivated advocacy of leadership to
receive the best educational opportunities available based on their cultural wealth.

In the following chapter, the researcher:
1) provides a profile of participants,

2) describes the process by which the data were gathered, recorded, and analyzed,

3) presents the findings related to each research questions with discussion and recurring themes,

4) discusses findings related to the theoretical frameworks, and

5) summarizes the process.

**Participant Profiles**

Participants not only shared common characteristics by being in the TRIO SSS Program for three years, with the exception of one, who was in her second year as a TRIO participant, but other commonalities emerged from interviewing students. Seven of nine participants will be transferring to a four-year institution in Fall 2013 and the last two will in Fall 2014. Not one of the participants went to the same school district from middle school through high school. All nine students are the first in their families to go to college and all, with the exception of one, were born in the United States. All interviewees’ parents are immigrants, with the exception of one participant’s father. Most of the participants were of Mexican descent, with the exception of one participant who was Salvadorian and another student who was both Mexican and Salvadorian. All nine students stated they were proud to be Latino. At the time of the study, all nine resided with their parents. The following section introduces a narrative description of all nine participants to present the readers with the participants’ backgrounds. Names have been changed to protect the identity of the students.
Table 1

**Participant Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>U.S.-born</th>
<th>Primary Language</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Overall GPA</th>
<th>Transfer School</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Hrs Per wk</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Communication Media studies</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>UC Berkeley Or UC Davis</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorena</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Mix Spanish/English</td>
<td>Viticulture &amp; Enology</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>UC Davis</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>UC Berkeley</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>International Development Studies-Economic in 3rd World Countries</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>UCLA Or UC Berkeley</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>CSU, Humboldt</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irma</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>CSU, San Jose Or Sac State</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Ethnic Studies &amp; Film</td>
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<td>UC Berkeley Or UCLA</td>
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<td>20-25</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Spanish</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>UC Berkeley Or UCLA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carolina

Carolina is a 20-year-old female who identified herself as Mexican-American, “ni de aquí ni de alla,” a statement of not being considered from the U.S or from Mexico because she is not Mexican enough for people in Mexico, but she is not White enough, even though she was born in the states. She described the experience as “You’re not Mexican enough because I don’t really like Mexican music so I can’t hang out with those people and I don’t have blonde hair and blue eyes to hang out with those people.”

Carolina grew up in St. Helena and currently lives with both of her parents and two siblings in Napa, California. Both her parents were only educated to the sixth grade. Her father works as a vineyard foreman and her mother works at a chocolate factory in Napa. Her primary language is Spanish and she graduated from St. Helena high school. Despite the challenges Carolina faced from being excluded by her white peers, she did well academically by maintaining a 3.0 GPA and taking IB as well as AP courses. She participated in the AVID program and felt more connected going to this class because it was mainly Latinos. Her desire to pursue a four-year degree came from participating in the AVID program in high school. However, she described very emotionally that her father did not allow her to attend a four-year university away from home and stated, “that gave me a block in my education.” She talked about how much it hurt as her peers talked about what colleges they were going to attend. Thus, she does recognize her mother supports her desires to transfer and with the assistance of her older sister, she will fulfill
her dream to transfer to a four-year institution and major in communication with an emphasis in media studies. The participant joined the TRIO SSS program at the community college because of a friend’s referral and due to the similarity to the AVID program her friend described. *Transfer School – UC Berkeley or UC Davis*

**Lorena**

Lorena is a 21-year-old Mexican-American female. Lorena was born in the U.S., and growing up, she mixed both languages, Spanish and English. At home, she spoke her parents’ first-language, Spanish, but in school, she spoke English. Both of her parents were born in Mexico and had a third- and fifth-grade level of education. Her father works as a Manager in a Vineyard and her mother works as a retail assistant. During middle school, Lorena referred back to an experience she encountered as she was placed into a lower math class because her teacher did not believe she could pass and needed to be placed down one level. This occurrence has always been her motivation to work harder in all of her classes because she does not want to have another teacher/professor to believe she cannot make it through. Lorena realized she doubted her potential as a result of her experience. “I’m always having doubts. I doubt myself in everything and in a way I feel like I haven’t found who I really and yet because I am always questioning myself.”

Lorena attended St. Helena high school and stated that most of the students who attended this school were the sons and daughters of the winery owners. She described her high school experience as not diverse and by senior year, felt separated from her American peers, as she reported in her interview “the rest of us were all in the cafeteria
and that’s how we noticed that there was pretty much a borderline.” Her desire to go to college was positively influenced by her high school counselor, who motivated her to go to college and make a difference to be a role model to others and set an example for her niece. As she entered college, she felt lost because she did not know what to expect. She stated, “I feel like I was running around with my head cut off. Supposedly that’s how you’re supposed to feel. You’re the small fish in a big pond now.” For Lorena, entering this college was a shocking but positive experience with regard to the various ethnicities on campus as she describes in her own words, “you don’t feel divided by ethnicity because everyone just comes together.” And also once she joined SSS, she described:

I got into CHAC, The Chicano Hispanic American Club. So I started getting into that and I did every major event that they did like Dias de los Muertos, Cinco de Mayo, we did fundraisers and make baskets for Thanksgiving for families who didn’t have the money to buy food. I noticed that I started getting involved because people from SSS were inviting me to different clubs, come and check out this club, come over here, will show you, will help you.

Transfer School – UC Davis

Irma

Irma is a 20-year-old female student. She was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. at eight years of age. She learned English as a second language. Her parents’ education was at a second grade level and elementary school. Her mother works at Napa Valley Cast Stone making bases for pots of clay and glass. Her father works at the same company making chimney parts. Irma participated in the Educational Talent Search (ETS) in middle school, and in high school, she was in Upward Bound (UB), both TRIO
programs. In addition, she was part of PUENTE, a support transfer program for low-income and first-generation college students. She attended Napa high school and stated that her motivation to move forward and get a better education was gained through being part of the ETS, UB and PUENTE programs. As she described, “I think if it wasn’t for the programs I don’t know, I think I would be here, but I wouldn’t be with the mentality of transferring, just getting an AA.” However, she stated that before high school graduation she had applied to Sonoma State and was accepted, but she ended up saying no because she did not feel prepared to leave and did not know what she wanted to major in.

Irma took AP courses in high school, such as AP English, but continued to doubt her ability to speak English well, saying:

In freshman year I took AP English, I don’t know how I got in there, but I got in there and I worked very hard in that class and was able to pass it with a B. There were all whites and only two Latinos and I was thinking what I’m doing here? I should be in a regular English class and thought it was a mistake. Sometimes I have seen that my language is not that good, my English and sometimes I see it as a barrier but I know I have to work my way up there.

Throughout her educational journey, Irma discussed how she had a hard time answering the question about self-identity. She stated that she did not know who she was. She is still trying to find her identity. She mentioned that her older siblings were all married, they all had kids, and that was one world to her. Another world for her is exactly what she is doing, pursuing higher education. She said that it is almost like a totally different world and she was not sure which world to choose. Part of her identity was figuring out how to juggle these two different cultural worlds, the education and
home, being a mother, being a wife, and starting a family, and doing what she has been used to seeing culturally. *Transfer School – CSU, San Jose or CSU, Sacramento*

**Manuel**

Manuel is a 20-year-old male who identified himself as both Salvadorian and Mexican. He also identified as American because he was born in the U.S. His primary language is Spanish, and he learned English by watching cartoons. He lived in Napa, but at the time of the study resided in Fairfield. He works at a hotel as a banquet server, working weekly between 30 and 40 hours. His is a full-time student taking 15 units. His mother graduated from high school in Mexico and works as a housekeeper. His father completed third grade in El Salvador and worked as a courtesy clerk for Nob Hill Foods, a grocery store in Napa. Unfortunately, his father was diagnosed with terminal lung disease and was laid off from work. Miguel prefers not to work as many hours, but he feels a sense of responsibility to his family as he said, “they don’t say that I have to work but I do have to help them out. They’ve supported me throughout my life so I am going to try to give back to that.”

Manuel had positive influences from teachers in middle school as they pushed him to continue with school. Attending Napa high school, Manuel was part of the AVID class and referred to his teacher, “Mrs. Calderon was my AVID teacher and I was lucky enough to be in one of her classes and through that class I got more knowledge. She was one of the ones to push college onto me.” However, even with the information he obtained, Manuel said:
I didn’t know you had to take the SATs. I heard about the practice SATs through a friend, but I didn’t know what is was for and so I didn’t take the SATs. Then people were asking me what my score was and I didn’t have one so I went to take the ACT’s.

Manuel has always felt supported by his parents in continuing his education, but he repeatedly stated:

My parents had not idea what it took to go to college. Then senior year comes and I didn’t know what it took to go to college. They are supportive, but they lack knowledge so that conflicts with their support because they just don’t understand.

After graduation, he was not planning on going to college, but a friend who was going to register asked him to join him and that is where his journey began. “I came with her and that’s how and that’s where it all really began. I feel like my journey began there.”

Manuel is majoring in International Development Studies with an emphasis in economic development in third world countries. *Transfer School – UC, Los Angeles (UCLA) or UC Berkeley*

**Monica**

Monica is a 20-year-old Mexican-American female. She was born in the U.S. and grew up in St. Helena most of her life, except after middle school she moved to American Canyon. Eventually, she moved to Napa and went to Vintage High School. Monica said:

Growing up in St. Helena you were either White American or Spanish Mexican and then you would see in the classrooms in middle school because I did really good in math that was the only thing I was good at, there would be only three Mexican students and then the rest were White. It made me realize you were a good student because you were a rare breed in the mix and that you were good at something.
Her father’s education is at the sixth-grade level and he works as a supervisor at a vineyard. Her mother has a third-grade education and works cleaning houses. Monica stated that her primary language is Spanish at home, but growing up it was both, since she speaks Spanish to her father and English to her mother. Thus, she hopes to major in Spanish, as she currently takes Spanish courses at the community college to enhance her writing skills. At the time of the study, Monica worked 22 to 25 hours a week a small chain restaurant.

Monica remembered hearing, in her educational journey, about college for the first time from her third-grade teacher. As she reflected back to her first years of elementary school and how well she did, she got very emotional. She remembered being bullied because she had good grades and her friends made fun of her. As a result, she did not try her best. She also recalled her father taking them to Mexico in fifth grade for a long vacation away from school. The consequences of taking such a long vacation caused her to fall behind; she had to take extra-time from her free time to finish her work. Again, Monica referred back to her father by saying, “My father blamed himself for taking us to Mexico and giving us such a large vacation because we were doing bad in school.” Her experience in Vintage High School was a bit different because she was at the top of her class; she earned a 4.0 GPA and always had her parents’ support. In her senior year, she positively remembered her English teacher who also taught her Chicano American Literature. “She was persistent, like my TRIO SSS counselor, telling us to sign up for scholarships, to apply for FAFSA and to apply to schools.” Monica values
Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a 21-year-old female. She identified herself as Mexican, and Spanish is her primary language. Both of her parents finished middle school and were born in Michoacán, Mexico. She was born in Salinas, California, but moved to Napa when she was four years old. However, she moved to Fairfield, California because her parents lost their house in Napa. Her father worked in construction, but was laid off from his company. Mom stayed home because she was injured and could not work anymore. Elizabeth works at Pac Sun and works approximately 11 to 20 hours a week. Yet, last year she held a second job at a restaurant, but decided to quit because school is more important to her.

Elizabeth remembered that ever since she was in preschool, “my dad has told me to go to school. My mom wasn’t like that but my dad always wanted me to go to at least a community college and now he really wants me to transfer.” She continued to reveal her journey experiences through middle school to high school by saying, “In middle school and high school teachers didn’t really seem to care they just wanted us to pass our class and get out.” Even though she finished three years in Napa high school, she graduated from Armijo High, located in Fairfield, California. She said that at both Napa High and

and appreciates someone with the educational knowledge as she emotionally described, “it was really nice to have someone with the knowledge to get you through, that’s why it’s touch me, I thinks its weird because I’ve never cried about my TRIO SSS counselor, right now I have realized.” Transfer School – UC Berkeley or UC, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Armijo, “Counselors would never want to talk to us. They never told us you are doing a good job or that we should go to college, nothing” creating a sense of preference for the White students. She described, “I don’t want to say they were racist, but they were focused more on other races.” As a result, it made her feel like she was not going to make it and unconsciously triggered self-doubt in her abilities. In her freshman and sophomore years, Elizabeth maintained a 4.0 GPA. She described in her own words:

During my junior year I started to notice and I could see that they didn’t believe we could do it so I just gave up and stopped trying. That’s why I couldn’t go straight to a four-year university.” Despite challenges, she replies by saying, “three years ago, I wouldn’t have thought of transferring, but right now I feel completely different, I really want to transfer and I believe that I can do it.

Transfer School – UC Berkeley

Jose

Jose is a 19-year-old male. He was born in Vallejo, California, and his primary language is English. He identified himself as Mexican-American, but does not mind being referred to as Latino or Hispanic. Jose feels proud of who he is, but he reported:

It sucks because other people expect you to not to fit the picture. For instance the picture stereotypical male Latino is one that is a gang banger who has a couple of girlfriends that are pregnant and I don’t particularly like that image and I’m trying to get away from that.

He referred to it as “irritating because it’s harder to have a serious conversation to have an intelligent conversation and have someone take you seriously.” He continued describing the value in respecting other people’s perspectives to gain the same respect back. Both parents only finished middle school. His father was born in Los Angeles, California and his mother was born in Guerrero, Mexico. His dad works at a stonemason
factory in Napa, and his mom works as a supervisor at the Marriot hotel inspecting rooms. Jose is in his second year of community college and TRIO participant. He moved from Armijo High to Fairfield High School, and he reported how he enjoyed school, “I’ve always liked school. I’ve always been a little nerd and since I do life reviews, yes I came to the conclusion I was little nerd.”

Jose remembered his mentor William Cushion in high school who happened to be his Spanish teacher and the person who made him want to be an instructor. Jose stated he was eligible to be in the AP World History class at Fairfield High except that his previous teacher in Armijo high had actually reported a D grade instead of the B he had earned. Unfortunately, as he reported, “She got pink slipped and nobody knew her contact information and so I had to live with a D on my report card. Then when I came back to Fairfield they said I couldn’t be in AP.” Jose also encountered a personal challenged at the end of his junior year, as he fell into a depression and stopped caring about his work; grades fell from A’s to C’s. “I felt ashamed, I felt really ashamed” because his teacher knew his potential and how smart he was. He was also challenged by serious situations not explained in his profile to protect other individuals’ information.

Jose “did another life review” as he calls it; he decided to focus on his studies instead and regained focus in getting good grades. Jose’s parents worked long hours and he did not want them to worry so he decided to keep his depression away from them. His older sister knew, but she did not want to betray his trust, so she kept silent. The depression Jose went through had a positive affect on his growth as he recounted the
experience, “I think it really helped me develop my self-identity. It helped a lot because after the depression itself, it helped me grow; it knocked down everything that I was and helped me rebuild again.” Indeed, he shared:

    Coming to college helped me find pieces of myself that I thought I had lost. I’m not going to take advice from individual who doesn’t share their life or know their experiences. I’d rather take advice from a person who has been there, has done it, has seen people do it or has been impacted by people who have done it.

Transfer School – CSU, Humboldt

Margarita

Margarita is a 20-year-old Mexican female. She was born in the U.S., and her primary language is Spanish. Margarita comes from a single-parent household, as her parents divorced when she was six years of age. Both parents have an elementary-school level of education. Her mother has experienced different health issues and they have constantly moved as a result from this. Her mother has gone through two open-heart surgeries and is scheduled for her third surgery in March and is unable to work.

Margarita grew up in St. Helena, a very large white community where she did experience an economic difference, but eventually moved to American Canyon and then to Napa where she attended Vintage High School. Because of her constant moving from school to school, Margarita was switched to a different counselor and placed in ESL classes because she spoke Spanish. Margarita was confused as to why she was placed into ESL, as she reported, “Once I got to High school they put me in ESL classes for Spanish-speaking and I was really confused. I felt dumbed down in a way because I don’t have any trouble speaking English.” Margarita described her journey through school:
I’ve honestly have never enjoyed school very much as I do now. I’ve never really thought about why that was, but I always felt that even in elementary school, I just went to school, sat down, did what I needed to do, worked with my classmates and then came home.

She also shared the same feelings in high school:

That’s how I felt in high school, same old, same old, same old kind of thing. I would be doing sports, but school was just like you had to go and you had to get START tested, a packet of math, social studies and English, just to read a passage and then write and circle stuff about it. It was a big deal because of course it would reflect the distinguished school, so I never took them seriously.

That’s why she did not put much interest into her freshman year and she enjoyed hanging out with her friends and getting through school. It was not until her sophomore year when she started dating a Latino male who would take AP and honors classes with a 4.0 GPA. In her own words, dating him, “motivated me to do more and so I was able to get insight from him because he had graduated from high school and then was accepted to UC Berkeley.” Her interest in joining TRIO was through one of her friend’s sisters who came to the college and had a brochure that reflected unity and student testimonials about the transferring to different universities. She said, “it planted a seed of hope.”

Transfer School – University of San Francisco (USF)

Janet

Janet is a 21-year-old Salvadorian female, and her first language is Spanish. She was the first-born in the U.S and both parents are also Salvadorian. Both mother and father have some college education, but never finished school. Her family originally lived in Vallejo, California, but had to move to American Canyon to live in a better area and go to a better school district. Janet explained that her parents invested a lot of money
into their house at American Canyon, but they lost it anyway, along with her father losing his job and her mother quitting hers by only living off her father’s veteran salary.

Janet ended up in Vintage High School in Napa. Janet explained how difficult it had been for her family after having a steady income and being considered upper middle class and now having financial difficulties and having to be living off her father’s military retirement. Janet shared that while attending Vallejo high school she was not doing well, but taking a Chicano Literature class altered things for her. She described her teacher as a “game changer” because she changed her whole perspective about school. Further, she expressed how passionately her teacher taught class; it made her “super passionate” as she described it, “passionate about it even if you’re not” and this is “where I got the fuel to go to college.”

Despite the positive experience in the Chicano class, Janet did not feel confident about her ability to be successful. She stated, “I did good work but it didn’t reflect in my grades and my teachers would say, you’re smart but why aren’t you getting the grades?” Interesting to note is that Janet’s lack of confidence may have occurred from attending school in Vallejo, which she then stated, “there in Vallejo weren’t enough people influencing us.” To Janet, this felt like they did not care and students were not giving opportunities to resources.

As the result of her family circumstance and people encouraging her to apply, she found the opportunity to be part of the TRIO SSS. Janet works at six-flags, working about 20 hours while taking 14 units and working full-time when she is out of school.
Her major is Liberal Studies, but when she transfers she wants to major in Ethnic Studies and Film. *Transfer School – UC Berkeley or UC, Los Angeles (UCLA)*

**Data Collection and Analysis**

This study is phenomenological in nature. According to Merriam (2009), the study examined the individuals’ lived experiences to share meanings or seek commonalities that may assist in interpreting the phenomenon. The data was particularly chosen based on a purposeful sampling criterion. Using this collection method served to select all participants who had a common characteristic, including ethnicity, gender, transfer-bound status, and number of years in the TRIO SSS.

Once all interviews were conducted and transcribed, the data were then analyzed and coded in its entirety using Auerbach and Silverstein’s (2003) staircase grounded theory-coding process to uncover any repeating ideas among participant responses. The recurring ideas were organized into key themes and later into sub-themes from the counterstories addressing the literature. CRT and LatCrit lens were woven together with Yosso’s (2006) Cultural Wealth to analyze findings. In addition, the transformative leadership theory was used by the researcher, while keeping in mind its relevance to detect unequal and oppressive use of power.
Key Findings: Research Questions

The primary research concern for this qualitative phenomenology study was to examine the TRIO SSS Latino experience at a CC. The study served to better understand how the TRIO SSS program addressed the low transfer rate phenomenon of Latino students and further examine student-institutional factors facilitating or hindering students’ goals. The interview questions along with secondary questions served to elicit answers to the research questions.

The findings that follow provide a CRT and LatCrit analytical counterstory from each of the four key questions summarized in both narrative and table form for four topic areas: a) advocacy for access and leadership, b) perception of success, c) transfer conditions, and d) supporting TRIO students. The table is included to provide the reader an outline of the emergent themes and subthemes that resulted from responses related to the four key questions (see Table 2). In addition, figure 6 has been included to display a visual of theoretical framework and emergent themes.

Latino students’ counterstories are presented throughout the discussion in this next section. Direct quotes are taken from the interview transcriptions to best illustrate the student voices about their experiences in TRIO SSS and prior to arriving at the community college. A list of all interview responses are also noted in table at the end of dissertation.
# Table 2

**Guide to Themes & Sub-themes**

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Question 1. How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of leadership at a community college?

This section covers the participation of Latino students and the opportunities presented as TRIO SSS cultivated an environment that advocates for growth, empowerment, and transformation (advocacy of leadership). Interwoven in the TRIO program leadership style, as identified by the researcher, is the use of a transformative theory, which “owe[s] much to the work of Freire (1970, 1998) who used the terms, transform, transformation, and transformative to describe the changes that occur as a result in education” (Shields, 2010, p. 565). An examination of the data revealed that most students expressed various levels of being motivated and encouraged to participate, as it provided a new venue for accessing information and participation. Upon analysis, student responses to this question fell into two key themes: a) cultivating access to opportunities and b) mentorship relationship (see Appendix D).

**Cultivating access to opportunities.** What became clear to the researcher is that most students took the opportunities TRIO advisors offered them. The access provided was key for their sense of building confidence, awareness of their abilities and talents, and experiential experience (transformative leadership). Six out of the nine participants said they were encouraged and motivated as they took advantage of what TRIO offered.
The positive sentiments expressed from these students had a significant impact on how they viewed themselves. As Monica described:

> Always encourage us to participate in events where we help other freshman this year when they have their gathering during the summer they encourage us to come out and give advice, information and speak about SSS. This has definitely given me more confidence. (Monica)

Further, her advisor made a point to let her know he noticed a changed in her personality since her freshman year in college to reinforce her personal growth and to validate her potential to become a leader of which Monica spoke:

> My counselor told me that I have changed since I was a freshman and am less timid. Now I feel more confident with what I have to say and definitely communicate more with him. I take more opportunities seriously. I recognize that I can be a leader to someone or like a guidance guardian to someone especially at this community college. (Monica)

In Elizabeth’s excerpt, she explained the importance of the relationship she has with her advisor and the provision of opportunities new to her.

> He’s always reminding us of opportunities, there’s this and this going on, you should go, and you’ll really benefit from it. Let’s say there are speakers that come from the universities, that display Chicano’s story, how they succeeded. For me he always uses Berkeley because he knows that I want to go there, really motivating us and telling us we can do it and to believe in ourselves. Without that I don’t think I could have done it. I am just so thankful --- I don’t know how to explain it. It’s as though they’re your family. When I go with TM, or with PT, it doesn’t feel like it’s like a teacher, I should be scared or nothing. It feels like they’ve known you for so long. They know your entire life, they know everything and I’m just so thankful for them. The regular counselors are not the same, they just tell you to take this class, and they don’t really want to get to know you or your story or what you want to do. (Elizabeth)
Additionally, Elizabeth made a point about her advisor getting her to apply to Phi Beta Kappa, the honor society, and including tutoring as part of her experience. The following excerpts from Elizabeth, Jose, and Manuel are similar:

Tutoring and then the Phi Beta Kappa that they offer for. I wouldn’t have known about that if it wasn’t for them. Helping us with the universities and motivating us. For me, that helped me build leadership skills. (Elizabeth)

They have provided a lot of opportunities for me. The Wells Fargo Bank paid for my fee to get into Phi Beta Kappa, the honor society, I don’t think I would have been able to have earned that without being in SSS because they gave it to SSS students, I was excited about that, I even took a picture and sent it to my mentor, and he was geeking out, you are an honor society, it’s a big one too and he was very proud of me. (Jose)

My advisor encourage me to be a part of Phi Beta Kappa, it’s an academic honors society on campus. Through them I have met people and networking is what I’ve got through that experience. (Manuel)

Margarita indicated that once she started the SSS club, of which she is currently serving as president, she felt the need to shared opportunities to new students as a way to bridge them into a place of access and information and help them better transition at the college and to transfer.

Tremendously, I am actually the president of the SSS club, which was started last year, it was like why don’t we start a club and call it SSS. Since we all knew each other, it could be a great opportunity for students who don’t qualify for the program to at least have a bridge that could help them get into the program or that can give them the same experience as the program does. We decided to have the SSS Club, which is Students Supporting Success. We want to make sure we ease the transition from a two-year to a four-year institution. We do have networking alumni’s from SSS who are willing to share their stories and also be like network bridge to students here at the college. That’s really benefitted me and helped me to become a leader in some many ways. (Margarita)
Information about college opportunities and establishing relationships with peers and campus staff was valuable for Margarita. It gave her hope and the confidence to expand her social networks and social capital. It also credited TRIO SSS advisors for giving her the encouragement and information needed to share with other students.

For Lorena, being part of CHAC offered a place to feel connected and new educational adventures in which to be engaged.

Once I joined SSS, I got into CHAC, The Chicano Hispanic American Club. So I started getting into that and I did every major event that they did like Dias de los muertos, cinco de mayo, they do fundraisers and make baskets for Thanksgiving for families who didn’t have money to buy a turkey. I noticed that I started getting involved because people from SSS were inviting me to different clubs, come and check out this club, come over here, will show you, will help you. (Lorena)

The TRIO advisors recognized and validated participants’ qualities, as they provided a space in which to access opportunities to helped them with their leadership development.

This exhibited an important aspect regarding how, with the support to access new challenges, TRIO advisors helped them navigate the complex and unique environment of a community college. Of note is the fact that two of the seven participants expressed they did not utilize opportunities because they had to work more hours and were unable to either continue or take up the new adventure.

They have tutoring programs, I was lucky enough that on my first semester I was coming to the tutoring sessions and by the second semester I was a tutor for the program. Unfortunately, I had to work more and so I couldn’t continue with that, the tutoring. (Manuel)

I haven’t had very many opportunities being in leadership with TRIO because of the working and not being able to be at school as much as I want to. I had one opportunity, which was to set up a mini-banquet to say goodbye to our old
building before we moved into this one but it never happen because I didn’t have time.  (Carolina)

Mentorship relationship.  The accounts from the study participants described the meaningful relationships they established with their TRIO advisors. Seven out of nine students found a mentor who empowered them (transformative leadership) to succeed by supporting them and being accessible to their needs. The following excerpts demonstrate their consistency and dedication. In Lorena’s experience, her father shared common ground with her advisor, as she considered both important figures in her life.

I remember when I first had my meeting with my advisor to go over my ED plan and I told him, you know what? You remind me so much of my dad. My advisor reminds me so much of him because he is the one who pushes me. The way he talks to me about education, the way that he explains it. Since my dad didn’t have the opportunity to go to university or college, he pushes us and he is strict but it’s not like you have to do it but its more like okay if you want to succeed you have to do this. That’s how my advisor was and I went to my dad laughing and told him, he’s exactly like you. I feel like my dad is my counselor but that’s good you know because I needed here too [home]. If someone was to tell me very nicely, well you can do this if you want to. I probably wouldn’t get anything done. I’d be slacking off and would probably be failing all of my classes who knows, I could be kicked out and who knows what would happen if I had one of those counselors that weren’t very passionate about what there doing, helping there student. (Lorena)

For Jose, it was a positive experience because he felt he could walk into a respectful and highly supportive environment, and it was important to stay connected and trust his advisor as he described in this excerpt:

The support, the energy there, its a really good energy. It’s positive, they don’t judge, they don’t ask you any personal things unless you want to talk about it first. I know my advisor is pretty laid back with everything, do this and you will get into this school, get the good grades, I’ll do the plan, --- that’s how I see it, I’ll do the plan and will talk about what classes to add, I’ll make you the list and you register, I guarantee you will be able to apply there. I applied to SSS through my
sister, she was actually in the program and she encouraged me to join. The fact that they give you a counselor to talk to and to make an Ed plan with, to be pretty lenient with what you, want to do and where you want to go. --- we do all kinds of fun stuff like that and we get into it, It makes you want to not let them down, if you’re that type of person that doesn’t like letting people down then I encourage you to join the program to encourage you to be a better you regardless of what you decided to do, I think it’ll help. (Jose)

This study participant, who happened to be the second male, described circumstances similar to Jose’s regarding his interaction with his advisor. It was interactive, positive, and welcoming environment.

With my advisor, we not only talk about what courses we have to take, we talk about career goals and what school best fits me and especially what I’m looking for. He gets me pumped up and gets him pumped up and he gets pumped up too so it bounces back and forth. (Manuel)

As the mentorship developed, collectively the next four participants appreciated the consistency and caring interest their advisor demonstrated, personally and academically.

He has definitely supported me continuously by emailing me events or information about UC’s. I remember my first semester at the community college he would constantly contact me on the phone asking to meet up and about school and how were my classes. Just to meet up and to keep him updated with everything. Various times I was hesitant because I wasn’t sure why someone wanted to meet with me so much but now I realize he was just trying to help. Try to get to learn you more, help you transfer, to figure out what’s right with you. What I’ve heard from other students from in SSS, my counselor vs. their counselor, I feel like C. was very consistent in being there. Very consistent in trying to say that he was there for us and always saying that he was there, just email me, I’ll talk to your teacher; I’ll talk to your parents to make sure you can get to this event. You could see that your counselor he really cared - Just making sure he was there. (Monica)

Ever since my first semester here, I wouldn’t want to see him [advisor]. I didn’t feel like I had to so I would go to the normal counselors and they would just confuse me and after a while, then I started to go and see him and built a stronger relationship with him and he’s helped me so much. Without him, I don’t know
what I would have done, He says that it’s not me its you but me but I know how I am right now if it wasn’t for him. (Elizabeth)

PT has helped me so much. Since the beginning he has helped me with classes and it’s not just as if he just helps you and tells you what to do, it’s more like he gives you the options. He gives you the options to explore methods for example what the ED plan, okay you want to take a major, not only does he have you do it but if there’s a class that you’re interested in he pulls out the catalog and he reviews it with you…. to fulfill your “IGETC” Then we met every single time and he made sure that I was always on track. When it came to schools and different universities, he would make sure to pull up the university website, he would pull up the department, and he would have me read the department description on what they do and that really helped me a lot. Or else it would just be like, okay I want to go to Sacramento or I want to go to Davis and not actually focus on their program. So he definitely helps you but it’s also up to you if you want to do it…. He’s really, really helpful and by far the most amazing counselor that I’ve had on this college. (Margarita)

They push you and motivate you, take the hardest class and the hardest teacher to prepare you for a four-year university. (Irma)

**Question 2. What are the perceptions of success of Latino students in preparing to transfer to four-year institutions?**

It was evident from the data that participants experienced a positive and encouraging environment in TRIO SSS. TRIO staff served as advocates (transformative leadership) to access new opportunities for growth and they reinforced students’ community culture wealth. The next question explored how students’ previous experiences influenced their educational transition to college. It was aimed at learning about their perception of success in relation to the support and/or challenges students faced in education. The responses fell into two key themes: a) support and b) hindrances (see Appendix D). It is significant to note that, overall, participants reported more
challenges from prior school learning environments and that is why students reported more hindrances.

Support. Since Yosso’s (2006) Community Culture Wealth takes into account the assets Latinos bring with them along the higher education pipeline to counter the perceived culture deficit thinking based on stereotypes associated with racial, gender, identity, ethnicity, and privilege, the following three subcategories highlighted the counterstories of the participants to bring forth factors that are integral to them achieving their goals: a) family strength, b) self-awareness, and c) supportive experiences.

Family Strength. Like many Latino students, participants in this study exhibited distinct motivators that helped them get through challenges to continue their aspirations. The following excerpts demonstrated components of Yosso’s culture wealth that were significant. All nine participants’ responses were profound and serve to legitimize the familial capital from the community culture wealth as part of all the students’ assets in combination with navigational, social, cultural, and resistant capital.

Elizabeth and Monica’s excerpts illustrated familial capital and social capital to validate the relationship between family strengths and connections with friends, peers and the educational community:

Self-respect is the thing that’s helped me succeed because my mom always said that I needed to respect myself and for others to respect you. I know that’s really true because I know people who don’t respect themselves and other people don’t respect them and they just crashed down. Since my mom really insisted not everybody will respected me because obviously some are really rude, but the ones I need respect for them to respect me. With their respect I know that they do believe in me. That’s a value that I think has really helped me. There are other
cultures where respect isn’t that big of a deal but for us it’s huge. And to respect others, that’s the same, to respect yourself and others. (Elizabeth)

Family love and respect definitely because I respect my elders and other superiors such as teachers I acknowledge my role as a student. For example if someone didn’t have respect in a classroom and I was sitting next to them, I would probably learn more because they missed so many things the teacher has said. I would say that has helped me succeed in school. Family-love because it influences the way I form relationships with friends. Whether they’re unconditional love or just a friend and that helps me make connections and equally succeed in school. Family-love with them, they’re a group and the more I participated in events and was involved and sat inside of the SSS study rooms the more I made connections with other students. The more you relate to them and then realize that they’re kind of like family. (Monica)

Familial and Social capital are both elements that plays a key critical role in making meaningful connections with people and encourage students to persevere with the help of social networks.

In the next participants’ counterstories, the influence of familial and aspirational capital was evident. Being the only two Latino males in this study, both Manuel and Jose described the nurturing among kin passed on and both brought it as an asset to the learning environment. To be noted is that aspirational capital encouraged both students to persevere.

Both of my parents are very hard workers. That’s deep rooted within me, bestowed upon me. Just as having them as examples that they could achieve in such a short amount of time without knowing the language, the city, and not knowing the people. That’s something that has showed me that hard work pays off. I was lucky enough to have worked with my father at Knob Hill as a bag boy. He has a lot of respect at the store; everyone came to him because he had been there for twenty-five years. He knew everything there was that had to do with the in and out of the store. I came in and I saw that they gave him that respect and I did feel a pressure to live up to what he was doing and it made me work harder and That’s something that I’ve taken with me and applied it to education. (Manuel)
I’ve taken for granted my family throughout the years when I was in middle school and high school, but now I am all about it. They are what matter; they are the ones that will love you unconditionally. My mom says, son if you’re a crack head, I will love you to death but you’re a crack head. That always meant a lot to me. Just having that unconditional love and being very close to my aunts, uncles, and cousins, we are all very close, I started focusing on my youngest cousins because they look up to me and what I do, by trying to keep a good example by getting good grades and they know about the fun that I have but I will end it with, I got an A on my exam. (Jose)

Collectively, the following students, aside from their familial capital, aspirational and resistant manifested in the excerpts were centered on maintaining hopes and dreams for their future, even in difficult circumstances. The knowledge and skills influenced by transmission of the community cultural wealth served to help them not give up but continue to strive for their dreams.

My parents have always told me to never give up, to achieve for the greatest, and that’s what I’ve brought in myself when joining SSS. Even though at times it’s hard, I may be tired, I have headaches, I don’t want to do this; sometimes I even do think about giving up. I tell myself no, I have to do it, I have to suck it up and that I can do it. (Lorena)

Being Latinos we have siblings and you want to show that you need to get a higher education. I think that a lot of Latinos, more in Mexican tradition, end up getting a 9-5 helping their families out. Even though it’s good to help your family out, you have to pursue what you want, if you want to be a little more successful more so than your family. (Janet)

There’s such a motivation to continue, to keep going, my mom even reminds me when she sees me doing homework and says that it’s all going to pay off, its all going to pay off, I hope so mom. (Margarita)

My cultural values and traditions from my parents of always working hard, and reaching what you want to reach, and what you pushing to get to where you want to be. It is always at the front of my mind and it is something that pushes me. Especially having been part of SSS has helped me not only when I am here with people that are so nice and I like to be friendly which helps me with that
confidence. To be able to interact with people but also having in my mind how my parents showed me to be respectful, to be friendly, to never judge people. It is just definitely something that has not only helped me with SSS in education but it’s my life, my story, it’s easy but is also hard to talk about it (getting emotional). (Carolina)

My parents have always taught me that if you really want something you have to work for it and you’re not going to get it right away. You have to take the stairs, you are not going to just go in the elevator and go up there. I remember when I was going to graduate from High School I did apply to four-year universities and got accepted to Sonoma, but I ended up saying no because I wasn’t ready to leave and didn’t know what I wanted to be. Then when I decided to come here I was like, gosh I should have just gone but then again they told me that you can start from there and move your way up. But if I really wanted eventually I was going to move up to a four-year university. Also just being determined and basically going for what I want, that’s what they have always told me is that they will always be there for me. (Irma)

Since the resistant capital is rooted in the historic and modern legacy of resistance to oppression and domination of communities of color (Deloria, 1969; Ramirez, 2011), this topic is of particular concern, which is detailed under hindrances.

**Self-awareness.** Eight of the nine students interviewed indicated the positive and significant effect on how education can or has changed(d) and/or shape(d) their identities. Monica and Lorena described their experiences of going through school by understanding how learning through their educational journey has influenced or challenged their personal development and social skills.

I think it’s definitely impacted my identity because if you think about it, I have Mexican Spanish speaking parents, and I went to a school that spoke English, I definitely transformed the way I communicate and the way I believe. I think it’s very important to choose the right schools because they are the ones to teach you how to live life. In addition to your parents at home, you’re there most of the time of your life because you have to go to school and you learn these things. They definitely influence your character who you hang around with. My school
influenced me to be a kind person, to help others. From elementary to college, it has definitely had its ups and downs but I am satisfied where I am right now. (Monica)

College does that and it challenges you in different ways but then there are benefits at the end. You are going to see what you did, and see where it got you. Let yourself go through that experience and you’ve gained something from it. (Lorena)

It’s challenging [college] but it will challenge you in so many different ways that you will be able to see again, like finding yourself, you will be able to see your dislikes, your likes, what you’re good at, what you need to work harder at. Colleges does that and It challenges you in different ways but then there are benefits at the end. You are going to see what you did, and see where it got you. Whether it’s a junior college or university, you let yourself go through that experience and you’ve gained something from it. (Lorena)

In the following quotes, Jose, Carolina, and Elizabeth noted how school helped them find who they were and allowed them to reflect upon gaining their self-confidence back.

I think it really helped me develop my self-identity. It helped a lot because after the depression itself, it helped me grow; it knocked down everything that I was and helped me rebuild again. Coming to college helped me find pieces of myself that I thought I had lost. The educational system helped me realize that who I wanted to be and what I was always good at. That was psychology and people would always tell me that even back in middle school, I helped a lot of people out. In middle school people they would come to be for advice and in my opinion I would just tell them the truth and that they can’t run away from it. (Jose)

The shyness and not being comfortable, not having confidence, definitely had an impact on me during school but not an impact on my grades, it was the way I interacted. I think that was good for me because at least it didn’t affect my grades although it didn’t build my confidence as the later year or certain classes did. I think having those things going through my head and not feeling accepted and especially having my older sister being a strong Latina woman, she doesn’t look Latina but she is, made me proud of who I am. Especially here at the college, taking that Chicano studies class and always having some sort of support from my parents has built me from the ground to where I feel comfortable. (Carolina)

When I barely started coming here I didn’t really believe in myself. I didn’t really try, even though I got the grades that I needed, I didn’t try because I felt like I
would be no one in life. I felt very insecure and I felt like I couldn’t do it. Three years ago I wouldn’t have thought that I would be transferring, what I wanted was to just graduate from here and that’s it. Right now I’m completely different, I really want to transfer and I believe that I can do it. I don’t allow others to shape who I am by telling me that I can’t because I know that I can actually do it. I am completely different than I was when I started. (Elizabeth)

In Manuel’s response, he acknowledged the power in learning and the impact that had on the individual by placing the responsibility that comes with that knowledge on that person.

Through it all, I know that education is important and it’s a part of my life obviously otherwise I wouldn’t be coming to school. I know that and it’s not something that guarantees you a job. Education it supposed to give you knowledge and it’s knowledge that no one can take away from you. What you do with that knowledge is up to you. Personally, I have learned that I enjoy helping people. I do enjoy helping people with themselves and understand themselves. That’ something that I got from this program; being able to tutor students and then having them come back to me and tell me how I helped them, like I got good grade on my test, that made me feel good about myself and so I guess, through it all. (Manuel)

For Lorena and Janet, education has provided them a space for growth and change. The excerpts illuminate changes in personal growth and perspectives.

I took a Chicano Lit class in high school and that changed my perspective. She was a game changer. She changed my whole perspective about school. I was like wow this is so interesting and I love this. I would skip school during that year actually and even though I was doing good in all of my classes there would be some days that I didn’t want to go to a specific class so I wouldn’t go but I would always go to that class. (Janet)

In a way it’s, being here, deciding to go here first has really helped me. I feel like I’m maturing along with the whole semester, taking different classes, each semester and having different professors each semester has matured me in a way. To be like I’m ready to take this next step I think I am almost to that point where I can say; okay I’m mature enough to be able to transfer now, I think I can handle it now. (Lorena)
For these students, self-awareness was crucial to their aspirations to succeed as well as the knowledge gained through their personal and educational experiences. These elements of information were valuable in breaking through educational barriers. It demonstrated and validated each component of the cultural wealth to empower and inspire students to continue their dreams. In addition, participants found a way through school by applying their knowledge learned even though the educational system has not been designed for people of color but rather for a dominant ideology of color blindness and race neutrality from privileged groups (Delgado, 1989; Ramirez, 2011; Villalpando, 2004).

**Supportive experience.** As this sub-theme emerged, it was necessary to note that participants were asked to share their previous experiences in k-12, as is vital to understand events, circumstances, or behaviors before entering college environment. Since the educational preparation of Latino students in elementary and secondary schools is significantly linked to access and success in postsecondary education, it is critical to pay much attention to it. Additionally, particular of interest in this study was to identify stakeholders that supported students’ desires to obtain an education beyond k-12.

According to Nevarez (2001), Latino school success is influenced by two important factors: 1) the institutional commitment (of teachers, administrators, staff, and parents) to help students succeed academically (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Nevarez, 2001; Ramirez, 2011; Richardson & de los Santos, 1989) and 2) the presence of mentors and

Only four out of nine participants identified having some sort of support before entering college. The following excerpts illustrate the student voices as they revealed this significant factor.

Mostly High School, the counselor that I had, she always told us that we have to go to college and make a difference. We can’t sit on our butt all day and make a living of that. We have to go out there and make a difference. Be a role model to others and that’s also helped me with my niece, she's two years old and I want to set an example for her in the future. She sees me doing homework and she says that she is going to do homework. I know that that counselor has always told us that college is very important. That it will get us to our goals in the future. That is it important to go through. (Lorena)

Even through High School I didn’t really put that much interest into my freshman year, I just wanted to hang out with my friends and go through school. It wasn’t until I found someone who helped me who was motivating and who I wanted to be and who I looked up to. That was the guy I had dated in high school and he was getting 4.0’s every time and I remember like it was just yesterday. If it wasn’t for him helping me explore different schools, I don’t know where I would be or what I would have done. (Margarita)

In Irma’s case, she noted, on several occasions, that she went through the TRIO programs from middle school through high school. She was part of the Educational Talent Search (ETS) in middle school and in high school, she joined Upward Bound (UB) as well as the PUENTE project.

Through different programs that’s where I get my motivation. In middle school I joined the Talent Search and from there I went upward bound and then SSS. The motivation to move forward and to get a better education I am getting it from school. At home, yes they tell me to go to school from my parents and my sister as well but I didn’t really see the example. My sister just came here but when I transfer I will be the first one. I feel like I’m the first one going through all of the
steps on my own because I can’t go up to my sister and ask how she did this or that. Through different programs that’s where I get my motivation. Through work, in the Puente Program that I used to be in they tell you to get a mentor, my mentor is now my boss so she motivates me to do better and is flexible with my school and my work hours. It’s do-able you just have to work hard. (Irma)

Manuel, grateful to have been part of the AVID program, described his supportive experience:

Mrs. Calderon, from Napa High, she is a part of AVID. She is an AVID teacher and I was lucky enough to be in one of her classes and through that class I got more knowledge. She was one of the ones that did push college onto me, what there was after high school. (Manuel)

**Hindrances.** CRT and LatCrit frameworks were used to acknowledge that race and racism are still prominent in American Society and embedded in daily practices of public institutions (Ramirez, 2011; Villalpando, 2004). The following excerpts from CRT counterstories provide evidence that these students’ realities were subjected to various forms of subordination and racial discrimination. These hindrances fell into three-subthemes: a) exclusion, b) financial difficulties, and c) non-supportive experiences.

**Exclusion.** One of the most significant difficulties challenging Latino students prior to their arrival at the CC and being part of the TRIO SSS was being excluded based on ethnicity, gender, ability, language, and socioeconomic status. All participants detected, in some shape or form, racial microaggressions that were evident and some that were covert. Three student experiences illustrated how racial discrimination and deficit thinking played out in devaluing their abilities to be successful in school in k-12.
My junior year before I left Napa, I can’t remember the story that clearly but the counselors office would always have these signs that said to go to college but they would never tell us [Mexicans] anything. When there were rallies they would be calling the Asian and white people that would be going to college [college bound], put them on a board and say what university they were going to. My friend got accepted to Sacramento State and his name is Ricky [Mexican-American] and they never put his picture up there [not college bound]. But they have all the Asian and the White people & Some of them got accepted to the same university as he did and why wasn’t his picture up there I would ask myself, they [counselors] would talk to them [White and Asian], I would always see counselors and teachers with them [White and Asian] at rallies and talking with them. Every time I went to a counselors office there was always an Asian or White person and for me, what about my race? [Mexican-Americans] I just noticed it with my race, it made me feel like as if they [counselors] knew, we wouldn’t go anywhere in life. They didn’t believe in us, just in them [Whites and Asian], like they’re the ones that are going to succeed so let’s focus on them and not on us [Mexicans]. It made me feel almost like I couldn’t do it, like I was going to be nothing. (Elizabeth)

In elementary school they [counselors] put me in ELD, which is English Language Development or something like that but I didn’t need to be in that class, I really didn’t! I felt like I was put in there because I was Mexican. It was in elementary too, they gave a lot of people of color ELD and I didn’t think that was fair because I knew that I didn’t belong there. My god brother Marcos he belonged there, he had a speech impediment so he needed to be in that class. Even as young as I was, I didn’t need to be in that class. Things were very simple, some object like an egg and then you had to spell egg. I got done with my work before everyone else and I would ask to leave but they would tell me to read, so I stay in class; they wouldn’t let me get out of it. They told me that I needed to be in the class and basically said that I didn’t know how to speak English. (Jose)

I got switched to a different counselor because there was this exam they give all the Spanish speaking languages, the ESL, and I remember that in middle school I had moved from Saint Helena down to American Canyon, so they transfer me to different school and told me I wasn’t within the district so I needed to go & so I remember everyone was going through it but I had never took the test. Once I got to High School they put me in ESL classes for Spanish speaking and I was really confused, excused me!!! I felt dumbed down in a way because I don’t have any trouble speaking English. What’s going on? & I thought this isn’t cool!!! Like my friends were not in this class, so I went and spoke to the vice principal and asked him why I was being put in these classes and she’s like, oh you speak English? I said, yes! I do speak English. Then they said I had to take the exam and have a
whole year of preparation for this exam, so they were taking out classes that I
needed and putting in those ESL classes. I said no that I wasn’t going to do it and
so then she told me to take the summer school classes and I told them to sign me
up because I wasn’t going to miss this whole year. (Margarita)

Elizabeth’s narrative reflected the racial exclusion she faced during her transition
while in high school. The hidden microaggression from the counselors had a negative
impact on Elizabeth’s self-confidence, as was evident in her detailed example. She noted
that from being a 4.0 student in freshman and sophomore year, she stopped trying and
that was why she could not attend a four-year institution. In Jose’s counterstory, he made
reference to his placement in ELD because he was Mexican and that most people of color
indeed were placed into those classes. Important to note is that Jose’s first language is
English and he speaks a little bit of Spanish, but the existence of assumptions that all
Mexicans, or Latinos, cannot speak English was obvious. Additionally, Jose made
reference to his godson and his own assumption about ELD being for speech impeded
students. Why did Jose even make that assumption? Was he made fun of for being in
that class? These are questions that may not be answered now, but it leaves room to asses
the environment in which students are being placed when entering an ELD classroom.
Similarly, Margarita was placed into ESL even though she spoke English and Spanish
fluently and she felt excluded because she was Latina.

In the next student quotes, Lorena, Monica, and Carolina shared being segregated
because of their ethnicity and felt like they did not belong there. In her excerpt, Carolina
also noted the socioeconomic difference existed.
A lot of Latinos knew that it wasn’t diverse because we wouldn’t talk to many of the white students. We were very separated from them. Americans were part of what is called the Senior Stage so it’s the middle of the campus. It’s like a podium and that’s where they all were all of them. Some Latinos would go and hang out with them but it as mostly football players, Latinos who were in the Football team. The rest of us were all in the cafeteria and that’s how we noticed that there was pretty much a borderline. If one of them came into the cafeteria it was like, what are you doing here? We wouldn’t imagine you here? (Lorena)

In middle school because I had said that I lived in a very small town with mostly all white peoples and Latinos and I felt like the white people were more privileged. They lived in the towns, they lived in nice houses and parents had the money and we didn’t realize this when we were younger but in middle school they were more aware of materialistic. Going through school I had trouble connecting with those people. And most of high school as well. Maybe the last two years was a little bit better but in certain classes I just didn’t feel like I was comfortable. There were two classes, IB history class, I was in the one class that had a lot of those people that were just good friends. The white guys, the white girls, the white washed Mexicans guys, and me and my two friends. It was just a class that I just didn’t feel any connection with. Even with the teacher, he was more connected to the other students [Whites guys, white girls and white washed Mexicans] since they talked so much and they interacted with each other. (Carolina)

Growing up in Saint Helena, you were either you a White American or Spanish Mexican. I did really good in math that was the only thing I was good at there would be only three Mexican students and then the rest were White. And you were a rare breed in the mix that you were good at something and I kind of did feel like I didn’t belong there because I was Mexican. (Monica)

Manuel, like Carolina, stated there was a socioeconomic difference made him feel excluded and set apart from his white peers, as he described in his narrative.

I think if anything did make me feel excluded it would be the economic status of the students [Whites]. It might be in the demographics that in general most of us Latinos have a lower income. (Manuel)
Like Elizabeth, Janet felt whites had more opportunities to go to college than Latinos because she did not feel the support from any staff in high school, except for in the AVID program where an opportunity of going to college was visible.

I don’t know. I’d have to really recall. For a while I was kind of biter because I couldn’t get financial aid and I think that was mostly it but I did see it a lot when I went to High School, I felt like the White students had more opportunity, they would get more help to go to college and even though I had gone into this program called AVID, at the end, she was so down to help me but I didn’t feel that from a lot of people. (Janet)

Irma, being the only student born in Mexico and English being her second language, felt self-conscious because of her accent and made reference to a stereotype in her excerpt.

I don’t know if it’s just how I grew up or if it’s because there’s just stigmas between Hispanics and like at work we serve all ethnicities but for some reason, it’s not that I feel intimidated when I work with an all white family I feel self conscious of how I speak English and how I should be doing something. I still can’t figure out why. I think maybe because of how I was raised or since back then whites are on top of us. It’s just something that I’m still trying to figure out and I don’t feel out of place but I just feel awkward.” (Irma)

“I do feel like a Latino and they’re not striving to do better, I’m not saying they’re doing the wrong things, but I look at them and I want to do better. Whites have that thinking that Latinos are uneducated and lazy but us Hispanics do the hardest work. (Irma)

Unfortunately, the assumptions and stereotypes against the Latino communities continue to be of particular concern in the educational system. Therefore, it will be revisited later in this chapter taking into account the participants cultural wealth assets and its relevance to their success in college. These components are integral to their abilities to identity and leverage their assets as a means to challenge the majoritarian assumptions and cultural deficit theory intimating that Latino students lack cultural and social capital.
Financial difficulties. Five out of the nine participants felt the financial aspect was an obstacle and that it interfered with not seeing obtaining higher education as feasible. This generally manifested itself as fear of not being able to make it, questioning whether they could afford it, or simply scaring them into thinking they would lose this opportunity. Monica described how money had been a barrier growing up and why she felt it was an obstacle. While she shared this side of her story, tears became part of her reflection on this topic.

I think your economics, especially for me and the way the school system goes now I think the money is a barrier. Whether you want to go to a public school or a private school or a UC, I think that’s the biggest barrier. (Monica)

As I validated her emotions and how tough it was to talk about this issue, she answered:

Yeah that’s it I think because my parents are immigrants who didn’t get an education here. There work doesn’t get them at a financial... at that higher economic place so that’s a difficult one --- we lived in apartments and that’s where all usually the minorities lived. (Monica)

Monica continued describing how her parents’ aspiration to have a house for her brother and herself became a reality in American Canyon, but once again they had to move. They decided to move to Napa, but her parents could not afford to buy a house. Then Monica shared that her father would always tell them that every time they had to move, it was because they (mother and father) wanted to be closer to where they went to school.

As for Elizabeth, money is a challenge, as she felt it would be an impediment and a worry as she transitioned into a four-year degree or beyond.
I think about is the money aspect. How am I going to pay for it, it crosses my mind because obviously my parents can’t pay for all of it. The Money aspect, that’s what I feel will hold me back. I want do go on and do masters after but I just feel I will not be able to so I don’t think I can. How am I going to pay for it? (Elizabeth)

Janet feared losing the opportunity to go to a four-year university because of her socioeconomic status.

I think for me, especially, I think it’s money and a lot of students fall through the cracks. Especially those that are undocumented because they’re so scared they don’t want to voice that they need help and so out of fear they don’t. For me, there was a chance I wasn’t going to come to the college a couple of semesters because I was low on cash and next semester I don’t know how I am going to pay for my books. (Janet)

In addition, Janet feared having the same financial obstacles as her parents because they lost everything they had.

I was kind of scared because of the money. I mean, I do want to get my PhD and sometimes the money does come into play and after my parents losing the house, my dad losing his job, my mom quitting her job and we were all living off of my dads veterans salary because of that I didn’t know if I would have the opportunity to do this or if I am going to have to shelf my dream to do something. (Janet)

Margarita also recounted the fear of not being able to afford school, resulting in self-doubt about funding her education. For Irma, as she gets ready to transfer, money has been her worry.

Do see myself getting that Masters and continuing that. However there are some barriers like the cost of school and I kind of, don’t doubt myself but I think of well, what if one day something happens and I can’t afford it? (Margarita)

Since I’m going to transfer, money has been a weight. (Irma)
Non-supportive experience. The final sub-theme under hindrances is related back to the past personal experiences. Five of the nine participants indicated no support, whether emotional or academic, as well as no motivation from various stakeholders from middle to high school. These issues are illuminated in the next excerpts.

Middle school and high school teachers didn’t really seem to care they just wanted us to pass our class and get out. That’s how it seemed to me. They just wanted us to graduate and not even the counselors, they weren’t very helpful at all. At Napa High the counselors would never want to talk to us. They never told us good job or that we should go to college, nothing. I didn’t hear it one time, not from Napa High or Armijo where I graduated. They would just tell us what classes we needed specific classes to graduate from high school. I don’t want to say they were racist but they were focused more on other races. I could tell a lot of other people could tell. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth’s non-supportive experience had to do with her abilities not being validated or not being considered as a successful [college-bound] student. Noted is the issue of exclusion tied back to the racial discrimination student experienced as described in the previous excerpts. Janet briefly explained a similar passage:

My counselor was super air headed; I was like why is she counseling people to try to further their education? Sometimes what they would do was they would help the students that they knew would go farther. They would look at their grades and ask them to think about going to college. With me, because my grades weren’t reflecting, I never got that said to me. (Janet)

Circumstances for Janet demonstrated how staff in the school system continues to practice various aspects of racial oppression that are silent because of the cultural deficit thinking and exclusion practices.
In Margarita’s and Manuel’s passages, both mentioned no form of support as they described not obtaining any college information or even being talked to about any options after graduating from high school.

No, no … in high school it was just kind of on your own. You just took the classes that you needed just to graduate but it was never like college was. It was never something I thought about or it was never like oh have you thought about this in college--- It was just like you go to school, you do your eight hours, you come home do some homework and then go back. (Margarita)

Margarita also declared she never enjoyed school much until entering the community college:

I’ve honestly have never enjoyed school very much as much as I do now. I’ve never really thought about why that was but I’ve always felt that, even in elementary school went to school, sat down, did what I needed to do, worked with my class mates, recess and then came home. That’s how I felt in High School, same old, same old kind of thing. (Margarita)

Manuel made it clear that in high school, he was never told to take the SATs; he did not know what it was for or if he needed to take it.

I heard about the practice SAT’s through a friend. Maybe I’ll just do that, but I’m not sure what it does, but sure I took the Practice SAT and in fact, I did really well on it but I didn’t know what it was for, so I actually didn’t take the SATs. My senior year everyone was applying to colleges and ask me what my score was and I didn’t have one so I went and took the ACT’s instead. (Manuel)

For Carolina, the experience she encountered with her AVID teacher was significant as she described a realization she had. For an instant, the researcher felt this excerpt perhaps should have been placed in a different area; however, the emotional impact it had on the participant was significant because she did not feel the full support and encouragement she needed, resulting in feeling left out.
AVID teacher, I don’t have that connection anymore because she didn’t push me or help me (very emotional). I felt like I was in the middle of three groups: the people she knew would go to college, the bottom ones that needed to get pushed up and thrown in there and then me in the middle like you’ll eventually get there. I feel bad about it now and it’s probably why I haven’t gone to the high school even though it’s a twenty-minute drive. I never realized it until I had to talk about it and right now, its weird how I’m figuring out on my own while I talk to you. (Carolina)

Question 3. How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?

The third interview question was designed to obtain specific information on how this TRIO SSS program influenced a transfer culture through their practices. As many of these students did face various obstacles throughout their educational journeys prior to their arrival at a CCC, it is critical to differentiate how TRIO SSS assisted the students by creating opportunities for access to four-year institutions. Keep in mind that Latino students have historically been viewed as deficient or disadvantaged based on their ethnic, identity, class, language, and gender (Villalpando, 2004). Therefore, while identifying themes, it was important to analyze how the TRIO SSS program valued Latino experiential knowledge and aided them into self-transformation to empower them (transformative leadership) as they achieved their personal and academic success at the community college and into a four-year university. Upon analysis, student responses to this question fell into two themes: a) foster transfer mentality, and b) fear of moving on. Findings related to each of these two themes are also divided into smaller sub-themes (see Appendix D).
**Foster a transfer mentality.** Eight of the nine students reported the TRIO advisors indeed fostered and influenced a transfer mentality by providing passages illuminating experiential knowledge received from accessing opportunities offered by TRIO. The students reported that TRIO advisors had the greatest influence when it came to transfer because the participants had experiences that changed their whole transfer mentality.

My advisor has helped me in so much and so many ways, last semester he told me that I could apply to transfer and I was like oh really! I was surprised! and then he told me my overall GPA, which is a 3.9. I was so excited and happy and then he told me there was an opportunity at Berkeley to take a free class over the summer so I was so excited, oh yeah I’ll take it. My cousin just graduated from there and I have family that lives out in that area. So I lived in my own little place next to my aunts with Lupe. It was amazing experience. it was like you practically were a Berkeley student. You got your ID, your books; you had to register just as if you were a student. So it was showing us how it would be once we transfer. We spent seven weeks. I was there the entire summer practically so I lived over there. It helped me be independent a little bit, living there, taking the bus, It was so much fun having that experience as a student that goes to Berkeley. The class was challenging but it was so worth it. It was so fun, if it wasn’t for that, for my advisor, and showing us all the opportunities. (Elizabeth)

Various times I was hesitant because I wasn’t sure why someone wanted to meet with me so much but now I realize he was just trying to help. Try to get to learn you more, help you transfer, to figure out what’s right with you. What I’ve heard from other students from in SSS, my counselor vs. their counselor, I feel like my advisor was very consistent in being there. Very consistent in trying to say that he is there for us. Always saying that he was there, just email me, I’ll talk to your teacher, I’ll talk to your parents to make sure you can get to this event. (Monica)

The activities that they offer, the field trips to different campuses for example, I had never even in high school taken that initiative to visit a campus or know someone to go visit them on campus. Here they are giving us those activities to participate in which opens up a lot of great opportunities because it helps you make that decision to transfer and that desire to transfer. You become more motivated to continue doing things to further your education. (Margarita)
They also take us on field trips. I actually like the field trips because I like roaming around campus and seeing and knowing the spots. So they say to ask myself if I can see myself there. Ask yourself and see if you see yourself been there. You really have to visit the school because it’s going to be a part of your home, where you’re going to be for the majority of the day, so it’s important to figure out if you can see yourself there, walking through the classrooms the scenery, everything. It makes sense and we get an hour to explore and I would take that hour to just roam around and sit on the benches and just watch the students and see if I could see myself there. It presents itself with an opportunity….my advisor also says, you really have to visit the school because it’s going to be a part of your home, where you’re going to be for the majority of the day, so it’s important to figure out if you can see yourself there, walking through the classrooms the scenery, everything. (Jose)

Manuel, Janet, and Irma felt TRIO advisors cultivated transfer condition that served to plant the seed for transferring.

Obviously, through the SSS program, that has been the most beneficial program that I have been a part of. Coming into the community college, I didn’t know anything. I didn’t know anything about the college in the first place, what do I do, how do I register for classes, like or that kind of thing. Through SSS you learn about the transferring application, how to fill it properly, you learn about internships and they help you start picturing ourselves at a four-year institution level. (Manuel)

They have. With my counselor, at first I wasn’t sure if I wanted to transfer, I just wanted to get my AA from here but he told me it was a great opportunity to be the first one out of my family. He goes with me through each step. When I needed help with FAFSA he helps me, the classes that I need to take or if I had to drop it, he tells me to take it next semester but to make sure to take it. Stuff like that. He’s a good backup for me. (Irma)

They try to influence you to get you into that mentality where you are going to transfer even if you don’t believe that you are. I probably wouldn’t have applied to as many schools if I wasn’t in the program because I just wasn’t really informed. (Janet)

**Parent-transfer connection.** Three out of nine students’ testimonies revealed the positive effect they experienced when their TRIO advisors encouraged students to share
the transfer experience with their parents by going on the journey together. They noted the importance of having parents understand their challenges and support, prior and while in the process of getting ready to transfer to a four-year university.

There was this family thing at Berkeley and I just went with my mom. He [TRIO advisor] was actually there and he showed my mom around [UC Berkeley] because she is kind of scare not wanting me to leave --I didn’t know he [my advisor] was going to be there and I left to do what I had to do and he [advisor] showed my mom around. It’s not like they just help you, he helped out my mom understand and how its going to benefit me, made her feel comfortable because she thinks it’s unsafe. My advisor showed her all of Berkeley and she is now hoping that I get in. His helping my mom better understand many things and now my mom used to be like you need to come home, you cannot come home late from school, your not at school, but my advisor told her no she is at school, she needs time to study, now that especially during finals, she makes sure my house is quiet so that I can study. My advisor really helped her understand and helped me. (Elizabeth)

Talk to the faculty and try to get a sense of what Davis is and see if Davis is right for you. So I have done that and I’ve taken my sister and I want to take my parents so they can get a sense of it I’ve taken my sister and I want to take my parents so they can get a sense of it. My dad did it for my sister when she was going to Sacramento. I want this to be an opportunity for them to see what I’m going through and get into because they’re going through this for a second time and is going to be completely different because everything has changed in the education system has changed dramatically, especially in the UC. I just want them to get a sense of it. That has played a part with what my advisor has told me. Get your parents involved, tell them what your goals are, what you are struggling with -- take them to the universities that you want to go to so they can get a sense even though they have gone through this with your sister because you’re completely different so take them, show them around, get a student to show you around who speaks English and Spanish so they can understand too. (Lorena)

My advisor specifically, he’s my advisor, he really did help me, he actually helped bring in my dad and we did explain to him because I really wanted my dad to be informed. Of course it does stress them out, my mom is not too big on education and so she is not too involved in my life but my dad is more concerned and wants me to succeed because of things he was wishy-washy about me transferring but I think that my advisor really helped and it helped me to take those next few steps. (Janet)
**Fear of moving on.** Six of the nine participants (only one male) indicated experiencing the fear of transitioning into a four-year institution for various reasons, like not having the same advisor support, paranoia and self-doubt about the transfer process, the financial barrier, and not having TRIO services for encouragement and support.

Monica feared not having her advisor present because of the personal and academic support she has received. She also noted the meaningful relationship she established and hoped to find when she did transfer.

> It’s scary Moving on and not having JP [advisor] there Yeah, thinking about going to a UC. I’m hoping to like get with a group or someone that can help me get through that because obviously I don’t know. (Monica)

In Elizabeth’s passage, she described how the transfer process stressed her out and has created a sense of fear and self-doubt.

> I’m so paranoid with the application; I feel like I missed a question or my personal statement isn’t good enough. Or I’m going to get a C this semester and if I get a C I will not get in. I’m really stressed. I really do have a lot of pressure. (Elizabeth)

Jose shared that leaving his friends behind and not being there for them continues to be something tough to deal with as he prepares to transfer.

> What I see as a barrier is that I don’t want, me to fall into that. I don’t want to fall into something that I know I can’t get myself out of, I think that’s what’s scares me in achieving my education, its that fear. That feeling is always there, it’s always going to linger as long as I am connected to these people. I am connected to them because I love them they were there for me. All throughout middle school, if there was a fight if I was involved, and I didn’t like fighting and he would step in and help me with the problems, I love him to death, I love him a lot. My other friend is also still doing the same things that we’ve been doing since middle school and it makes me sad. I heard he was getting into meth and I got drunk that night. It made me sad and I didn’t want to believe it. The friend that
was with me through the depression, I tell him not to fall into that. Keep going to school, Do the school thing, work, do the school and work thing. It makes me worried knowing I am transferring soon because I want to see them okay. (Jose)

For Lorena and Margarita, the support system is critical for their success. As a result, they continued having a constant dialogue with themselves about whether they were going to receive the same assistance or not, creating a sense of uncertainty.

I just have to find the way to get the support that I need whether it’s physical, mentally, or emotionally, or financially to take that next step. (Lorena)

What if I don’t have the same services that I do now to help me? I think that’s one of the things I fear most now as I transfer. I am leaving SSS, which has always helped me. Who has tutoring services? Who’s going to take me on trips? To a university where I am going to have to do this all over again, to find those services, that scares me. That scares me to feel like I won’t have the same support or I won’t know how to get that scholarship or money I need to help to pay for that school. I always have to have that support. I always have to have someone in the back telling me to do it that I will be fine and that’s what I have with SSS. (Margarita)

Clearly the fear of transferring is present in various forms in the students because each of their experiences is unique and shaped by their social environment at school, home, and/or in relationships. Other student responses were around the sub-theme of self-doubt.

**Self-doubt.** Four of nine disclosed doubts or lack of self-confidence regarding their abilities to be successful in school, as they have experienced internalized discrimination throughout their educational journeys.

When I barely started coming here I didn’t really believe in myself. I didn’t really try, even though I got the grades that I needed, I didn’t try because I felt like I would be no one in life. I felt very insecure and I felt like I couldn’t do it. Three years ago I wouldn’t have thought that I would be transferring. (Elizabeth)

Before I came to any school in Napa, I really wasn’t confident. (Janet)
The shyness and not being comfortable, not having confidence, definitely had an impact on me during school but not an impact on my grades. (Carolina)

I’m always having doubts. I doubt myself in everything. I’m always saying am I going to pass this class --I don’t know, just little things, I always doubt myself --- so In a way I feel like I haven’t really found who I really am yet because I am always questioning myself. Is this the right major that I want to go into? Is this the right field I want to study? Are there other opportunities out for me there somewhere? In a way, I am trying to put the pieces together to be okay. This is who I am now and this is what I want to do. Until I find it then I will be happy with myself. But In a way I have began picking up the pieces while being here. I have told my parents a couple of times I feel like as if I wouldn’t have come here first, that if I hadn’t decided to come to a junior college, before a university I would have been lost. I would have probably forgotten who I was. It’s hard to explain but I just feel I wouldn’t know who I really was. In a way being here I have been able to pick up little pieces. (Lorena)

**Question 4: Supporting TRIO SSS Latino Students**

The final question asked interviewees to consider how TRIO SSS helped them achieve their goals despite the challenges they faced prior to their arrival at the CC or while in college. The responses to these questions were similar and the following common themes emerged: a) meaningful learning experience and b) feelings of gratitude.

**Meaningful learning.** The data revealed students found a meaningful learning environment in the TRIO program. Staff validated and encouraged participants’ assets to make connections with other individuals and achieve their goal to transfer. Six of the nine students’ (two males included) experiences illustrated how TRIO SSS shaped participants journeys through college by caring, trusting, and welcoming TRIO staff members. Both males, Manuel and Jose, reference the lack of college information they had prior to coming to the community college and how the SSS program counter to provide access to information once denied as described in their excerpts.
Through the SSS program, that has been the most beneficial program that I have been a part of. Coming into the community college I didn’t know anything. I didn’t know anything about the college in the first place, what do I do, how do I register for classes, like or that kind of thing. Through SSS you learn about the transferring application, how to fill it properly, you learn about internships. They have tutoring programs, I was lucky enough to the first semester I was coming to the tutoring sessions and by the second semester I was a tutor for the program. (Manuel)

The way they open their doors is amazing. I know for me coming into college I was lost, knowing about the program through my sister it was good form me. Since then they have provided a lot of opportunities for me. (Jose)

Monica and Carolina thought TRIO support was essential to engage in motivation to transfer as it provided an easier path by which they could pursue their education.

Important to note, these students both experienced a lack of confidence or self doubt as prior experiences affected them through this path.

At first I wasn’t really sure how powerful SSS was until now that I reflect on it, how powerful of a tool it is getting through college. I am really happy that I decided it joined it. My best friend also joined it because her sister was in SSS and another who didn’t join it and she’s lost. I encouraged her to join it and she says that she wishes that she would have joined it but I don’t know why she hasn’t still. She is definitely struggling and I am always encouraging her to think about what she wants to do and then I try motivating her to pursue her education. I think I would have been equally as lost without a set guide to figure it. (Monica)

I probably would fail here. Not my classes but I wouldn’t have, through high school I had AVID and it kind of helped me looked at colleges with my schedule but like I told you I had to look for my classes through a booklet, in IGETC. I know I would have continued but I don’t know how long it would have taken me. Thanks to them they helped with the ED plan and they understand you. I probably would have had crazy selection of classes in my transcript and nothing related to my goals, I probably would have hated the class. (Carolina)

Both Irma and Janet concurred that being part of the TRIO SSS allowed them valuable information about getting through the college experience and transfer process. They both
commented on the value of being informed and how it empowered them to believe in their potential and abilities to be successful.

Being in this program has led me to inform me about everything. My mom doesn’t know much about transferring. My sisters don’t know & it’s the information I have gotten from SSS has giving me, is what has made me realize I can do it, but sometimes I feel like how about I go and I don’t make it – because my sister haven’t gotten through it that haven’t been through it so it’s like, what if I don’t make it? I’ll just go ahead and try it, I want it so I should be able to go ahead and get through it. (Irma)

They’ve helped a lot because they have resources and so they can appoint you to somebody at certain colleges that you can go talk to. The people help you further stuff that you’re unsure about. You have a connection from campus to campus and you’re not going by yourself. A lot of students that aren’t in programs like this just go by themselves and sometimes they don’t see opportunities that people like we do because we’re in the program and were informed by our advisors. Sometimes it sucks for people who aren’t in SSS. I think in that way it’s really helped me. (Janet)

**Feelings of gratitude.** All the students interviewed reported they were grateful for the services and support TRIO provided for them. Only three of the nine suggested some additional support revolving around parents understanding the college experience.

Five of the students could not think of anything TRIO could add or improve on their services:

I think they have done a lot. I don’t know how they could improve. (Irma)

Not that I can think of. They do so many things for us. I don’t even know anything they don’t do. (Monica)

I think they have done a really good job. They have a great group; they’re sweet and support you. (Carolina)

There are a lot of things that they do for us. (Lorena)
Well, I feel like they do a little bit of everything. Through campus tours, they give the Latino community a chance to see different colleges to attend. (Margarita)

Two students suggested more resources, but it’s important to note that TRIO is a federally funded program and there are limitations as to how many students they can serve and how financial spending is distributed.

“I think they’re just great right now. Maybe just having more students but I know they need to have a limit but that’s it because they’re the biggest help” (Elizabeth)

“Probably have a bigger room. We just got his new one but I think it’s a bit smaller than the old one. Just a little bit more room because sometimes it gets packed in there. (Jose)

Lastly, Manuel and Janet recommended having TRIO support parent involvement, as well as creating some college and financial aid workshops for parents.

“I think they are doing a good job so far but maybe having like parent workshops. Stuff like that would be beneficial and getting the financial aid technicians to speak to parents about what type of support the student would receive when he/she goes to the next level because that’s what my advisor did with my dad. (Janet)

I think they’re doing a really good job. Just I feel possibly it would be important to have the parents understand. (Manuel)
Figure 6. Theoretical framework and findings visual

Summary

Chapter 4 analyzed the data collected from this study with the purpose of better understanding Latino student experiences while in TRIO SSS at a CCC and identifying factors that may hinder or facilitate a transfer culture and/or advocacy for leadership. The nine participants were selected through a purposeful sampling method and individually interviewed using semi-structured interviews to have them share their experiences as a TRIO participant. The profiles of each student provided an opportunity to compare similarities and differences among participants. All participants shared common characteristics such as being a first-generation college student, being 18 years or older, currently residing with parents, and aspiring to transfer and moving from different
schools in the educational pipeline. The data collected and analyzed served to answer the following research questions:

1. How has TRIO SSS shaped the experiences for Latino students at a community college?
2. How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of leadership at a community college?
3. What are Latino students’ perceptions of success in preparing to transfer to four-year institutions?
4. How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?

The findings revealed important information about participants’ assets as depicted by Yosso’s Cultural Wealth Model, challenges, fears, support, and a meaningful learning experience prior to and during their stint at the community college and as being part of the TRIO Student Support Services Program. CRT and LatCrit allowed the researcher to listen to the voices of Latino students as they shared their experiential knowledge to legitimate their cultural wealth to examine areas that challenged the majoritarian stories and assumptions of the most privileged. The counterstories offset the perceived cultural deficits that Latino communities are incapable of college success (Yosso, 2006). Thus, federally funded programs like TRIO SSS are vital for creating a learning community that supports and strengthens the underrepresented first-generation and low-income Latino students in education. TRIO programs complement and leverage the various
components of cultural wealth held by Latino students to create a meaningful learning environment. The participants in this study experienced the college as a welcoming environment with a much more diverse group of students. Overall, the participants felt more connected in college because there was a larger Latino population represented.

The participants in this study reported that TRIO cultivated access as a way to advocate for new opportunities to become connected and transform their college experience. The TRIO advisors exhibited leadership that transformed the students’ college paths to transfer. Most participants felt the changes that occurred in themselves were the result of having been given the opportunity for knowledge and growth. Using the transformative leadership framework, TRIO SSS offered practices that were more inclusive, equitable, and integrated commitment to values and outcomes (Caldwell, Dixon, Floyd, Chaudoin, Post, & Cheokas, 2011). Yet, some of the participants lacked confidence or doubted themselves because they had internalized racial microaggression experiences while in K-12 that resulted from being excluded based on their ethnicity, language, and socio-economic status prior to coming to college. In acknowledgment of the students’ adversities, their cultural wealth through aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital (Delgado Bernal, 1997, 2001; Ramirez, 2011; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005) helped them survive an ineffective education system that discourages, neglects, and defers Latinos dreams of college participation.

The majority of the students felt TRIO advisors created a trustworthy relationship that helped them develop further strategies to remain motivated, focused, and engaged on
campus. In K-12 most students felt no support or encouragement aside from their networks of people, such as peers and other siblings contributing to their social capital (social networks of support) and providing emotional support, thereby influencing their decision to continue with their education. Some of the participants reported coming from high schools where they encountered counselors and teachers who did not support or were not interested in their college aspirations. Nonetheless, all participants shared how their cultural knowledge (wealth) from their family, values, and beliefs were and are key components for their college success because of the motivation and empowerment to always strive for the best regardless of the struggles and adversities they have faced throughout their academic journey. The participants developed strong resiliency and perseverance as demonstrated in the community cultural wealth (forms of familial, aspirational, navigational, and resistant capital).

Students also felt the transformation of self was a consequence from knowledge gained through the educational and personal experiences (transformative) that contributed and guided their intentions and efforts to do well in school. Appreciating how access to college information could be transformative and a hope for a better future for them and their families became a critical component. This level of motivation to seek knowledge and become well informed helped participants find a sense of purpose and get out of their comfort zone to take opportunities offered by TRIO SSS. Since self-awareness illuminated significant aspects regarding how participants felt about education, it is important to point out that students continued to experience feelings of inadequacy,
reported consciously or unconsciously when sharing their counterstories. Of note is most participants grew up in an environment with Caucasian families who had a higher socioeconomic status as well as from a K-12 system where they felt excluded because of their ethnicity. Some participants described these inadequacies as feeling uncomfortable, not fitting in, feeling awkward, not good enough, and not feeling acknowledged.

Participants in this study found in TRIO SSS a place full of resources and highly supportive people, but felt scared of moving on (transferring). Students described a nurturing environment that enabled them to access information and support their desires to transfer. However, students questioned themselves about getting through a four-year institution because they feared not having the same support, were afraid they would be misguided, felt emotions of self-doubt, feared not being able to afford college tuition, felt they might not be able to make it, and most importantly for them, feared not having advisors such as in TRIO SSS. At the same time, participants continued to demonstrate a high level of optimism, openness, and courageous attitudes toward transferring and achieving postsecondary education in highly prestigious universities. Students shared how consistent and invested they felt TRIO advisors were in their academic and personal successes.

Finally, students described feelings of appreciation toward the TRIO SSS staff and for having the opportunity to attend a CCC. Through TRIO SSS, many students learned the transfer process; engaged in various campus activities; learned about internship and scholarship opportunities; found a place of belonging; network with other
transfer peers and campus staff; visited four-year institutions; enrolled in purposeful
classes toward achieving access to a UCs, private, colleges, or CSUs; learned techniques
and strategic decisions about college; and, in particular, participants established sincere
relationships in TRIO that influenced and empowered them to change a system that will
value their cultural wealth and aptitudes for success as they continue to be productive
contributors to California’s economic recovery and engaged in problem-solving for a
better future.

Based on the data collected and analyzed in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 offers
recommendations on how to address some of the issues and how to improve the Latino
student experience at the community college with the help of TRIO SSS programs related
to transferring and creating knowledge that is meaningful and transformative. The
information obtained from the data collected in this study suggests changes and
recommendations that will assist Latino students’ improvement of transfer persistence at
the community college.

The data also suggest advocating for educational opportunity programs such as
TRIO that struggle collectively to expand college access.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The achievement gap in educational attainment continues to exist between the highest and lowest income students. Unfortunately, Latinos continue to be on the lowest side of the income spectrum. Their income positions are critical, as Latinos continue to be the fastest growing population group in California, are projected be the largest ethnic group by 2016 and, by far, will be the largest group in the labor force by 2025 (PPIC, 2011). It is an urgent matter that institutions of higher learning and policymakers understand Latinos can become a powerful economic engine for this country, but only if it can provide an equitable and accessible education system.

Within the last five years, Latinos represented a full one-third of California Community College enrollment and still growing, making them the single largest ethnic group of college students in the single largest public postsecondary system in the nation. Meanwhile, the population’s presence in the four-year segment is severely under-proportionate to their California representation at large, and degree completion, and transfer rates in CCC remain dismal and disappointing (California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2011). The California Master Plan for Higher Education (The Regents and the State Board of Education, 1960) mandates that CCCs provide higher education access to all students, which includes the transfer component to the four-year institutions; however, the Master Plan has failed to provide Latinos with access and
opportunity and neglects other communities of color who continue to be marginalized within the educational system (Aldaco & Lundquist, 2006).

The overrepresentation of Latinos in CCCs is evident from research showing Latinos are more likely to attend a two-year college than universities (Gándara, O’Hara, & Gutierrez, 2004) because of the lower cost, being close to family, no prior knowledge about four-year institutions and other barriers hindering Latino academic persistence in postsecondary education. Hence, programs implemented to address access to college and student success, such as TRIO, are necessary to continue the battle of social justice, inclusion, and equity in our schools. These programs have been effective because they take a collective effort to maneuver the social and cultural capital of life of students before, during, and after college. Since the transfer function at the community colleges continues to be a significant issue and Latinos continue to transfer at a low rate from the two-year public colleges, TRIO SSS played a critical role in creating a transfer culture for the participants in this study.

CRT and LatCrit theories were used to listen to the voices and experiential knowledge from marginalized communities to examine the practices of educational institutions continuing to operate under the influence of assumptions, stereotypes, and cultural deficit thinking regarding social constructs that view and refer to Latinos as “cultural deficits” within the community. Additionally, the culture wealth described by Yosso (2006) helped extend both the traditional conceptions of cultural and social capital lenses by recognizing that familial resources and skills Latino students bring from their
home to school are invaluable to them attaining access and achieving hopes and dreams for a better future.

The critical race counterstories offset the perceived cultural deficit theoretical models that have labeled Latino communities incapable of academic achievement, suggesting they are lazy and not equipped to be successful (Yosso, 2006), or, in this case, incapable of aspiring to college access and attaining a baccalaureate degree. The findings presented in these counterstories validated the efforts of support programs, such as TRIO SSS, used to help students transfer and support Latinos who are low-income and first-generation students. The various levels of community culture wealth held by Latino students is recognized, valued, and interrelated by the transformative leadership approach used by TRIO staff to empower students as well as engage them in a dialogue regarding what is best for the them and not who’s best as they prepare to transfer to universities.

Many participants indeed survive an ineffective education system that neglected, discouraged, and deferred their dreams of participating in accessing college and their common link to transfer (Ramirez, 2011). It was evident the cultural wealth of Latinos was prominent to support their access to higher social mobility and higher educational attainment. The relationships, networks, knowledge, and resources they formed based on familial capital foundations are in fact social capital that is beneficial to students in an academic setting. Despite being first-generation and low-income students, TRIO SSS program acknowledged the resources these students bring to their peers and institutions.
The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenology study was to examine the TRIO SSS Latino experience and identify aspects in their educational pathway that may hinder or facilitate a transfer culture. Further it sought to better understand the role of TRIO SSS as a way to identify institutional factors that help or challenge Latinos’ desire to attain higher education. A goal of the study is to better inform policy and services for students, who attend a CCC and are positively influenced by the support of TRIO SSS.

There is a fairly abundant body of research around Latino students in pre-school, K-12 schools, and four-year schools; however, this was not the case for community colleges and, more specifically, in TRIO SSS programs. The work of researchers, such as Ornelas and Solórzano (2004), continue to study the Latino participation at CCC, but there are still few studies conducted on Latino transfer and their participation within the TRIO SSS program. Further, less research exists that is qualitative in nature and that focuses on students’ lived experiences as they desire to transfer with the support of SSS.

This study fills a gap in the literature sharing the narratives and explaining the reasons Latino students continue to face barriers to transfer from the community college; however, students in TRIO programs for whom the transfer process is a priority in their mission, successful transfer is achieved. Further, the lack of information not given to the Latino students prior to their arrival at the CCC is then offered by the TRIO support acknowledges the academic aspirations of Latino students as they enter college. It points directly to changes the institution might implement to ensure students culture wealth is
acknowledged and used to empower and motivate a transfer mentality that can lead to
greater opportunities of self-discovery and real transformation (transformative leader).

The use of CRT and LatCrit theoretical frameworks, counterstory methodology,
and a transformative leadership lens is critical because of their roots in social justice and
to acknowledge the voices and discourse of the people of color while illuminating their
cultural wealth depicted by Yosso (2006).

This chapter provides an interpretation and discussion of the findings presented in
Chapter 4. It includes the significance of the findings in terms of the literature and
practice, Key Objectives of the Educational and Leadership Doctorate Program at
Sacramento State University, Recommendations, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future
Research, Researcher Reflections, and Summary.

**Interpretation of the Findings**

Interviews were conducted to better understand the Latino pathway to education
while making transfer their primary goal. All nine participants shared a common positive
experience of being part of the TRIO SSS program that cultivated a transfer culture and
advocated for leadership opportunities to expand on their experiential knowledge. The
primary research question intended to examine experiences of students as being part of
the TRIO SSS program to pinpoint areas needed to support Latino transfer. The findings
were organized around four themes that mirrored the research questions: a) advocacy to
access opportunities, b) perception of success, c) transfer conditions, and d) meaningful
learning.
**Advocacy to Access Opportunities**

Latino experiences in TRIO SSS illuminated various strategies that cultivated an environment advocating for personal growth and empowering students to achieve their goals. Most participants in the study reported that TRIO SSS advisors helped them reach opportunities by nurturing their aspirations and persistence to college success. Seven of nine the students’ counterstories shed light on the benefits of being engaged in various academic or social activities relevant to transfer. Further, TRIO provided students with a sense of purpose and a preview of what college life may be like after community college. TRIO also provided Latino students an opportunity to further develop their social capital by connecting with individuals and networks inside and outside their TRIO community to access resources and important educational and personal opportunities for growth.

In addition, these participants found mentors in their TRIO advisors who inspired, and guided them throughout the transfer culture. TRIO SSS provided transfer knowledge in a caring, nurturing, and meaningful manner. Stanton-Salazar (2010) described the concept of “confianza en confianza” (p. 133) as bonds of trust in creating a respectful, learning, and mentoring relationship as a commitment to positively transform the students’ experiences. Unconsciously or consciously, TRIO advisors reinforced the participants’ existing cultural wealth as a powerful source of strength to make it through the transfer pipeline.

The findings reinforce and highlight the importance of institutional support programs to ensure Latino students see their potential in them and valuable assets that
integrate their cultural wealth as a component to a successful transfer process. Therefore, institutional agents at CCCs need to incorporate CRT and LatCrit measures in transfer discourse to validate the Latino culture wealth as being a valuable attribute that Latino student’s will use in four-year institutions and beyond post baccalaureate programs.

**Perceptions of Success**

Latino students need a consistent support from a college-going culture and an open-door learning environment as an entrance to postsecondary opportunity. While Latinos in this study reported more support while being in community college and in TRIO SSS, they clearly experienced by far more hindrances prior to their arrival to college and before applying to the SSS program. In the support category, Latino students indicated that family values, beliefs, and behaviors served as distinct motivators to persist with their aspirations to college and transfer access. Self-awareness was significant because it helped them understand the depth of meaningful knowledge that influenced their character to create a new of mode of civic courage and language of hope in their college lives. When reflecting back to the participants’ K-12 experiences, some students made references and observations about their interactions with a few teachers, counselors, and support programs such as AVID, PUENTE, TRIO Upward Bound, and Educational Talent Search (ETS) that were positive because they exposed them to college information and established relationships with program networks to further create social capital and access to college. As previously mentioned participant testimonies highlighted a number of hindrances or challenges to college access and consequently to
their desire to transfer. If it had not been for support programs like SSS that played a key role in making sure they were informed, valued, leveraged their cultural wealth, and were inclusive to all, most of the students reported they would have been lost.

By far, the biggest challenge described by student counterstories was forms of subordination and racial discrimination during their k-12 schooling. The challenge of being excluded based on ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and ability cannot be underestimated. Such a challenge is rather critical as students can be demoralized in an educational system operating on a deficit thinking model and majoritarian ideologies that are oppressive and non-supportive to the Latino population or to the communities of people of color, in general. Non-supportive experiences in K-12 stakeholders became an issue for some Latino students as they expressed they saw no indicators of support and felt academically lost when it came to understanding the concept of being college-bound. This is important to keep in mind when it relates to issues of cultivating a Latino transfer culture in the community college. The experiences of Latino students are also shaped by previous environments and this is reflective in the study findings as major challenges that came from K-12 experiences.

The financial difficulties also proved rough for students. Participants manifested the financial aspect interfered with seeing feasibility in obtaining higher education. As noted before, the participant experiences are influenced by previous climate changes that occur at home, school, or in the community. Participants shared that uncertainty about being able to pay for their education stemmed from seeing family financial struggle, as
most of the students in the study came from low-income households. Leaders in K-12 education, community colleges, and in TRIO SSS can play a key role by investing in providing transfer and financial aid workshops to inform parents and reinforce students about the transfer process and financial resources available through the educational pipeline.

The findings illustrate that even when students are being successful in support programs such as TRIO SSS at the community college on their path to transfer, Latino students continue to internalize microaggressions from previous experiences in the educational realm that must not to be ignored and need to be addressed by K-12 school practices and policymakers. Many students reported coming from high schools where they encountered counselors and teachers who were not supportive or were uninterested in their college aspirations, suggesting educators continue to see Latino students as unfit for college and inferior.

**Transfer Conditions**

Creating a transfer culture for Latino students at the community college is important to validate their aspirations for a better future. TRIO SSS foster a transfer mentality using their experiential knowledge to empower students. Important to note is many of the participants came from a K-12 system and were not exposed to college information and/or not encourage and motivated to access postsecondary schooling. A few students referred to pre-college programs as AVID, PUENTE, and TRIO Upward Bound/ETS, which target low-income students at underserved and under sourced high
schools. But most of these students faced an adjustment and change as they transitioned to the community college, specifically joining TRIO SSS because they did not experience internal support from their high school, described and characterized as discouraging, disengaged, lacking a college culture, and lacking counselor and/or teacher interest in their academic progress.

Findings illustrated participants shifted a transfer mentality from high school to college because TRIO SSS cultivated transfer conditions that planted the seed for transfer. Latinos in the study felt capable of breaking through the transfer process because they were informed about the opportunities available to them and TRIO staff reinforced their aspirations and persistence by giving them access to and knowledge of transfer information. The role of their TRIO advisors was crucial because they are culturally competent and recognize the power of accessing postsecondary education as a social justice issue for marginalized communities to change the system. Their ability to understand the challenges Latino students faced provided them with a transformative lens to truly practice the essence of democracy in education. It was evident from the data that students were empowered and challenged by opportunities that ultimately changed their transfer perspective. Additionally, TRIO SSS advisors understood the parent-transfer connections to be important for students whose parents were reluctant to create an easier transition from a community college to a four-year institution. Culturally, the Latino communities have strong ties with their family and since parents did not attend college,
they do not understand the benefits of and differences in obtaining a degree from a community college versus one from a four-year university.

A major challenge about the transfer conditions discussed in the students’ counterstories was the fear of moving on. From previous experiences, as noted before, students internalized the discrimination they encountered in middle and high school that created self-doubt in their abilities. Along with self-doubt, a sense of uncertainty became apparent in their narratives as they described the fear of not making it at the four-year school. They had to encounter additional consequences of financial challenges and non-supportive experiences during their educational journeys. All the aforementioned challenges factored in, as they feared being able to make it through at the four-year institutions, resulting in a sense of uncertainty.

The findings demonstrated best practices from TRIO SSS in achieving a transfer culture for Latino students as they effectively acknowledged the need to bring their cultural wealth and experiential knowledge back to the college learning experience to create transfer conditions. Looking through the CRT and LatCrit perspectives, the public K-12 school districts must eliminate the cultural deficit thinking regarding Latinos and train or hire counselors who are culturally competent and understand the socio-historical institutional inequities for marginalized communities. Similarly, two-year institutions are in urgent need for counselors who understand this role and possess the ability to encourage and empower Latinos and other communities of color as a liberating process to transform education.
Elizabeth and Oscar were two perfect examples. Elizabeth recalled:

Regular counselors are not the same, they just tell you to take this class, this class and they don’t really want to get to know you or your story. I would go to the normal counselors and they would just confuse me.

This statement illustrated the many voices of other students who, in fact, have encountered similar experiences in general counseling where there is no true connection or sense of acknowledgment, whereas in TRIO SSS advisors made them feel valued and showed interest in their cultural backgrounds. Oscar also recalled:

The general counselors aren’t very helpful, when I first started doing my things I came to them because I wasn’t in the program yet. I didn’t know anything about how anything worked and they didn’t really help me or provide me with much information.

**Meaningful Learning**

Students in TRIO SSS shared the importance of being part of the program and its effectiveness in establishing a transfer culture and connecting them with meaningful relationships. The program provided social capital in the form of personal connections with their advisors and staff with whom they seek support and reliable and valuable information. In addition, TRIO SSS provided Latino students’ further navigational capital in the form of educational plans outlining the coursework needed for transfer admission and experiential knowledge by the program activities to make a reflective and informed decision about the institution to which they intended to transfer. As noted before, in the program, participants found a valuable and reliable source of information and caring staff who identified and valued their cultural wealth (familial, aspirational, resistant, and cultural capital). The connection TRIO staff provided for these students
was also part of an extended family on campus that supported and encouraged them to achieve their highest potential and dreams to transfer to prestigious universities, such as UC Berkeley and UCLA.

The findings illuminated that despite the challenges the students encountered prior to their arrival at the community college, TRIO SSS validated their unique and valuable contribution to education through high expectations in advocating for leadership, course curriculum, events, and significantly to their success, empowering students by establishing connections with peers, staff, mentors and transfer campus communities. As this study illustrated, the community college for this study as well as the TRIO SSS program, absorbed the shockwave of discriminatory practices and lack of college information from some primary/secondary schools. There is an urgent need for open communication between K-12 school districts and community colleges to shed light on the challenges Latino students faced at their public schools. Also, the findings reported students felt TRIO SSS provided all the tools needed to transfer and were grateful for all their support.

Transfer Climate Model

Extracting findings from existing literature while integrating new findings in the study, a new transfer climate model was introduced. The transfer climate model (see Figure 7) illustrates the importance of empowering Latino students by advocacy of leadership while validating their cultural wealth. The relationship between empowering students and working from an asset model created a meaningful learning environment for
Latino students in the study that produced positive transfer outcomes despite negative institutional factors. The interconnected dimensions of the transfer climate model provide Latino students a place to inspire their source of power within. The connection between believing in the participants’ abilities and creating meaningful learning conditions became an important dimension in the study as a vehicle to transfer.

The TRIO elements in supporting transfer as well as the Latino personal experiences combined contributed to the participants’ success in retention, persistence and transferring.

*Figure 7. Transfer climate model*
Doctorate in Educational Leadership: Program Objectives

The implications for this study are significant because they raise issues of social justice consciousness and equity in education. That is why the CRT and LatCrit lens was critical to use; it allowed the researcher to listen to the voices of Latino students to examine educational institutions practices continuing to demonstrate a majoritarian narrative and assumptions about Latinos success in higher education. CCCs continue to face cuts to their budgets and anticipate being funded based on outcomes. As many Latinos enter community colleges and continue to be reflected in California, as more than 50% are now enrolled (Ramirez, 2011), the transfer for Latinos will be at the forefront of institutional goals. At this time, Latinos will continue to break through higher education. The need to affirm that community cultural wealth is legitimate to Latino educational success in transferring and achieving higher degrees is vital as we continue to support programs like TRIO SSS and use TRIO best practices in CCCs to effectively reform education as a deliberate process for creating a transformative change.

Leadership Implications

For this study, leadership that supports transfers and programs such as TRIO SSS have elements of transformational and transformative leadership styles. Transformational leadership is required to understand the complexities of the community college system and its importance in creating a vision utilizing a collaborative approach to address transfer issues. Leaders need to lead by example as they motivate, empower, challenge themselves and others to reach their highest potential (Nevarez & Wood, 2010).
On the other hand, transformative leadership is needed to critique social structures framing institutions that have oppressed and denigrated people of color. Transformative leadership is grounded by an activist agenda to deconstruct the use of power and authority in institutional practices and reclaim social justice. A transformational leader that incorporates a transformative practice is crucial in articulating a belief system that supports and values the rights and cultural wealth of the Latino community and supports programs like TRIO SSS that challenges the majoritarian ideologies and belief systems that Latinos are not fit for college and lack cultural capital. A transformational visionary is needed to institute proven educational reform, but most critical for a transformational leader is to be transformative, to have the courage to view all decisions through the lens of social justice that lead followers to contemplation of the status quo, and to voice the experiential knowledge of the Latino students to implement transformative changes in the transfer pipeline.

Policy Implications

Policies around Latino transfer require re-examination regarding reshaping the knowledge and belief structures based on disappointing outcomes because Latinos continue to be underrepresented in four-year institutions. The intent of the study was to illuminate how majoritarian stories assign blame to Latino students, their parents, and communities for lacking social and cultural capital with regard to being successful in education. Therefore, by incorporating counterstories to reshape belief structures around
transfer is critical for policymakers and to acknowledge the efficacy of TRIO SSS programs in their transfer mission and its correlation with the CCC’s transfer functions.

**Data-driven Implications**

The data reveal significant factors of Latino educational success as being part of an TRIO SSS program that valued their presence at their institutions and highlighted their cultural wealth as aptitudes for success. For this reason, suggested changes that include but are not limited to incorporating critical race counterstories as valuable data need to be disseminated to key stakeholders across public institutions. Many of the involved stakeholders are still unaware of the challenges Latino students continue to face and should at least understand their cultural wealth as a powerful tool to persevere and achieve equitable institutional support as they will contribute to California’s economic recovery.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher offers the following recommendations for TRIO SSS programs and community colleges.

*TRIO SSS Program Recommendations:*

1. Facilitate parent-transfer connection
2. Create student voice assessment

*Community College Recommendations:*

1. Create transparent and open communication between K-12 school districts and community colleges
2. Facilitate culturally competent professional development
3. Mirror the TRIO SSS best practices model for a successful transfer culture

**TRIO SSS Program**

**Recommendation 1: Facilitate parent-transfer connection.** The findings of this study revealed that some students were concern about having parents understand the college experience and what it means to transfer. It cannot be overstated that students need parent-transfer bonds to support their aspirations and take risks to explore other opportunities they might have never imagine were within their reach. Particularly important was that eight of the nine participants’ parents’ highest level of education was middle school. This was significantly critical for some of the students as they made it through the transfer experience. TRIO advisors encouraged students to include parents in the process of transitioning to a four-year. Once parents understood the transfer arena and were included in the experiential knowledge, their perceptions about transfer changed dramatically, which then helped the Latino student feel more confident about transferring. It is recommended TRIO SSS leaders at community colleges explore ways to support and improve the parent-transfer relation by providing bilingual workshops for parents and students to explain the transfer process and the benefits from obtaining a degree at the community college versus a four-year degree.

**Recommendation 2: Creating student voice assessment.** Effective student assessments of prior schooling experiences can become a key tool for TRIO SSS programs. The findings provided a critical topic as Latino students reported more hindrances than support that came from K-12 practices that included lack of college
information and discriminatory microaggressions based on their ethnicity, ability, and socioeconomic status. It is suggested that SSS leaders consider assessing the students’ prior experiences by allowing the voice of these students to shed light and have a more in-depth understanding of their reactions, perceptions, and most importantly, to restore self-confidence students continued to lack as a result of oppressive practices and misinformation. It is recommended TRIO SSS program leaders implement an early student voice assessment outlining prior experiences of students as they enter their first year in college. This can be done in various forms, such as in advising appointments, orientations to college in group settings, and/or student voice surveys.

**Community College**

**Recommendation 1: Re-examine communication between K-12 and CCCs.**

Overall, there is an urgent need to re-examine communication lines between K-12 school districts and community colleges to confront challenges with the dimensions of race and a lack of college opportunity. The study findings indicate most of the participants came from middle and high schools whose teachers and counselors were not supportive and/or were uninterested in their college aspirations. Most of the students were referred by a peer, family members, and/or friends about entering a community college and the TRIO SSS services. However, the limitations of the TRIO SSS programs being federally funded and a budget that restricts the number of students admitted into these programs are extremely important and worthy to note for community college leaders. Some Latino students find their way into the community college by chance, but many of these students
fall through the cracks because they did not received the proper preparation such as pre-college information, not enough college preparatory courses, remediation, mentoring, and pre-college counseling, thus impeding them from forming a transfer mentality and furthering their education. The CCC’s transfer function can better serve students; however, K-12 public schools can either help or hurt this mission. Therefore, incorporating a social justice and equity themes in the transfer discourse along the communication lines between K-12 and CCCs could assist in creating a conscious social justice effort to eliminate cultural deficit thinking and ideologies about Latinos. Creating a more transparent and open dialogue as students enter the community college is much needed.

**Recommendation 2: Facilitate culturally competent professional development.** An effective community college counselor is critical for the assessment of a student’s goal, assisting in exploring values and intellectual curiosities, mapping the career development process, providing course recommendations, and cultivating a transfer mentality by describing and laying out the transfer admission process guidelines. Access to information becomes the source to empower and transform the transfer mentality of Latino students and for recognizing their academic ability, social integration, and financial means to fund their education.

The findings of the study shed light on the importance of having their TRIO advisors as gatekeepers of opportunity for this Latino population. The study participants felt the positive responses from their advisors were created through caring and “confianza
con confianza” mentorship relationships. They were knowledgeable and seen as offering reliable and trustworthy information from people who took a personal interest in them. 

The recommendation to CCCs is to invest in creating culturally relevant professional development for general counselors to recognize higher education access as a social justice issue and remove antiquated societal perspectives that hinder the success of Latinos. In addition, training workshops should occur for current or newly hired counselors on the benefits of Yosso’s (2006) community cultural wealth Latinos bring with them to the environment in postsecondary education.

**Recommendation 3: Mirror TRIO SSS best practices on transfer culture.**

TRIO programs continue to serve all communities who are first-generation or low-income and students with disabilities; however, because of the growing population of Latinos at the community college sector, cultivating a transfer culture should be a top priority. The findings revealed that TRIO SSS effectively create a transfer culture, as all nine students will be transferring to a four-year institution. Seven of the nine will be transferring this coming fall 2013, and two of the nine will transfer the following year in fall 2014.

The students found the program to be extremely helpful and valuable because it provided them with further social and navigational capital to transfer. TRIO SSS promoted and supported academic and interpersonal growth to empower students and establish networks in and out of the college campus. Students were given a transfer culture message demonstrated by vision and high expectations from their advisor to do
well academically and personally. The transfer culture exhibited appropriate and plentiful transferable course offerings and a program climate that valued and engaged Latino students to utilize their cultural assets to break through higher education. The recommendation from this finding suggests CCCs should mirror TRIO SSS best practices by providing a campus climate that values and empowers Latinos to successfully transfer, break the barriers of poverty, and move beyond vocational and training programs.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the research process, the researcher uncovered areas that were interesting, but were unable to be included in the study. While this particular study focused on the Latino experiences in a TRIO SSS program at a community college to examine factors that hindered or facilitated transfer, it would have been interesting to have interviewed students who did not participate in the TRIO SSS program but had common characteristics, such as being Latino, transfer-bound, and a first-generation, low-income student. This would have allowed the researcher to compare and contrast the Latino experience transfer success for both the institutional transfer practice and TRIO SSS program that specifically targets minority students.

It would also have been enlightening to have interviewed students who had transferred from a TRIO SSS community college compared to students who successfully transferred without being part of the program. This would have allowed more in-depth CRT and LatCrit counterstory discussions about what other factors, strategies, or practices may have hindered or facilitated a Latino transfer culture to successfully
transition to a four-year institution. Also, a study comparing Latinas and Latinos who successfully transferred to a four-year public university could have been interesting to bring forth the differences in the successes of both genders, i.e., Latino and Latina students encountered in their journey through this oppressive educational system.

**Strengths and Limitations to the Study**

The data provided a rich description of the participants in the study, which strengthened the validity of the emergent themes. The themes provided a strong basis for the researcher’s interpretation and discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, the semi-structured one-on-one interviews contributed to the authenticity and accuracy of the data presented because it captured the participants’ counterstories. Also the data analysis process was found it to be reliable and valid.

The limitation to this study was present in the sample size, which was small and, therefore, limited in its ability to capture all of the experiences of TRIO Latino students as they transfer to four-year institutions. However, qualitative methodology allows for the participants’ stories to emerge as themes, such as is often not possible in a quantitative methodology. The purposeful sample size was too small to generalize to the entire Latino student population and the transfer successes. Lastly, addressing other issues of race, institutional negative or positive factors and impact on self-identity may have been better facilitated in small group discussions.
The author was aware of these limitations, yet there were also benefits to this research because this study identified and shed light on the lived experiences of Latino participants from a Northern community college campus.

**Researcher Reflections**

According to Patton (2002), understanding the researcher’s background experience and the way in which she processes and makes sense of the world is considered critical. The researcher who conducted this study is a former TRIO Student Support Services Counselor at a community college different from the campus used for this study. She has served in this position for 14 months. However, her professional experiences as a community college counselor serving first-generation and low-income students accounts for more than five years. She is a Mexican-American female, 36 years of age and was admitted as a participant to the CAMP program, a program at Sacramento State University that helps students from migrant backgrounds access higher education. She has worked with other support programs at the community college, such as Educational Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS), the PUENTE project, and in conjunction with working with TRIO SSS program; she also works counseling students from CalWORKs program.

She is the first and only one in her family to go to college and become a doctoral candidate. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Sociology with an emphasis in Human Services and a Masters Degree in Counseling with an emphasis in Career Planning. She was an English-language learner student who spent more than two years completing
remediation coursework at the university and all through high school. She was on academic probation her second year of college and eventually was dismissed from the university.

This study provided an opportunity to reflect upon her personal experiences as a Latina who immigrated to the United States at the age of 12. She grew up in a single-parent household as her mother strove to provide her children hoping for a better future. The researcher never understood why it took her so long to learn to speak and reasonably dominate the English language. Also, she felt discriminated against or isolated from the mainstream going through secondary school. However, this study provided an opportunity to reflect on those experiences and while many of the study participants’ experiences resonated with her, many distinctions also arose. Her mother tried to put her into regular English classes in high school, but for unknown reasons at the time, the school staff insisted on keeping the researcher in ESL classes, and she was never placed into a regular English classes.

Similar to the study participants, the researcher went to a fairly large white-dominated high school whose peers came from wealthy families. Additionally, the researcher remembers being isolated with her Mexican friends. She experienced similar racial discrimination and socioeconomic differences by her peers, counselors, and teachers.

One of the differences was the researcher never knew the community college system was even an option for her. However, she felt fortunate to have had a mother who
valued education and pushed her to attend a university. As a result, she found out about the CAMP program at Sacramento State for which she qualified because her mother worked at a cannery. Interesting to note is that the researcher now realized she would have benefited most from starting her college experience at the community college versus a four-year institution. Even though CAMP provided a home away from home, it only lasted for one-year. Through the researcher’s experience in working with students at the community college, she realizes the benefits of providing students with various support services programs.

This is how her interest began on researching areas in the community college that assist students who came from similar backgrounds. Her interest in TRIO was something that recently happened from working for the TRIO SSS program and having the opportunity to participate at a TRIO conference such as WESTOP, Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel for West Coast TRIO personnel. In reflection, attending a workshop full of people of color was shocking to see. She never experienced seeing a room full of people of color, specifically Latino males and females in positions of leadership. As she learned more about the mission of TRIO and its historic birth, it provided an opportunity for further interest.

**Conclusion**

California community colleges play a key role in our educational pipeline and as the Latino population continues to grow and occupy more than 50% of our students, there is a higher demand for community colleges to incorporate practices that support
programs, such as TRIO, EOPS, PUENTE, and or EAOP have in place to successfully help and value Latinos’ aspirations to achieve higher education. It cannot be overstated that Latino students are heavily enrolled in community colleges, yet they are transferring at rates much lower than their white counterparts. To explain some of these disappointing outcomes, majoritarian stories continue to blame Latinos, their parents, and their community for not having the cultural and social capital to navigate higher learning institutions. The purpose of this study was to examine the Latino experiences in a TRIO SSS program at the community college and identify factors that hindered or facilitated a transfer culture and advocacy of leadership.

The counterstories of nine Latino students shed light on those experiences prior to attending and while at the community college with the support of an TRIO SSS program. Institutions and leaders need to understand that Latino student cultural wealth challenges and offsets the perceived cultural deficits suggesting Latinos are incapable of retention and transfer to baccalaureate granting institutions.

This chapter outlined the implications related to the findings from a qualitative study about the transfer culture experiences of Latino students with TRIO SSS support. Since TRIO programs are federally funded, the advocacy for sustaining it can be based on data showing TRIO does work, which is crucial as we strive to transform education with the help of community colleges. It is time for a true transformative and democratic education that will deliberate and acknowledge the voice of our students to address issues and develop policies eliminating the disparity in obtaining and accessing higher
education for all. Hence, it is important to be critical and incorporate social justice practices to introduce a new transformative and true change for Latinos in education and for all communities who have been marginalized for centuries and are ready to be heard.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Human Subject Protocol Application

Protocol Number 10-11- _ _ _
(Assigned by Office of Research)

Request for Review by the Sacramento State
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Revised 06/2012)

Submit one original and 10 copies of this form with all attachments to the
Office of Research Administration,
Hornet Bookstore, Suite 3400, mail code 6111.
Completed forms must be typed. Handwritten forms will be returned without review.

Project Title: Counterstories of TRiO Latino Students at a Northern Community College:
Transfer Culture and Leadership

Name(s) of Researcher(s): Eva Margarita Munguía, Doctoral Student, Educational
Leadership and Policy Studies Department, California State University, Sacramento
(CSUS)

Funding Agency (if any): N/A

Mailing address (students only): ______________________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone number: _______________________

Anticipated starting date: November 1, 2012

Name of faculty sponsor (for student research): Dr. Frank Lilly

E-mail address of sponsor: frlilly@csus.edu

1. Summarize the study’s purpose, design, procedures, data analysis plan, and the
   methods planned for ensuring the protection of the data obtained, including security
   measures, data handling, retention, data destruction date and who has access to the
   data. (Do not attach lengthy grant proposals. Be brief but complete.)
Purpose
The purpose of this study is to identify factors and perceptions that influence leadership experiences of Latino students who are currently in TRIO Student Support Services at a Northern Community College regarding academic achievement and as a vehicle to address the low transfer rate phenomenon.

Design
The design is a qualitative phenomenology study. It will be used to describe the leadership experiences of Latino students who are in a TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) at one Northern Community College.

Procedures
After IRB approval from Sacramento State and the community college TRIO Program, students will respond to email requests and return attached consent forms. Researcher contact information is listed on the consent form. The data will be collected from semi-structured hour-long one-on-one interviews conducted on the community college campus. Data collected from open-ended interviews will be transcribed and coded as an explanatory element.

Data Analysis Plan
Analysis of interviews will be conducted by applying coding as a means of data reduction. Assign codes may be a set of field notes drawn from interviews along with noting reflections or remarks in the margins. In addition, sorting through transcriptions to identify common patterns or themes will be used to analyze the experiences of participants.

Methods Planned to Ensure Protection of Data
Consent forms, data collected from interviews and transcriptions of interviews will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researchers home office and on the researchers personal computer under password lock and encryption to be destroyed within 6 months upon completion of the research.

2. Who will participate in this research as subjects (e.g., how many people, from where will you recruit them, what are the criteria for inclusion or exclusion)? How will you engage their participation (e.g., what inducements, if any, will be offered)? How will you avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest as a researcher (e.g., role, power relationships, monetary)?

The target sample from participants in this study will constitute ten to fifteen current Latino students at a Northern Community College who have completed at least two years of college as participants of the TRIO SSS Program and have indicated an intention to
transfer to a four-year institution. Only students that meet the aforementioned criteria will be eligible for inclusion in the research project. Email requests will be sent to all TRIO participants by TRIO staff and research participants will be randomly selected from consenting respondents. No inducements will be provided.

A perceived conflict of interest is that the researcher is a staff member of a TRIO SSS Program at a Northern Community College. To avoid conflict of interest the researcher will be conducting study at a different community college in Northern California.

3. How will informed consent be obtained from the subjects? Attach a copy of the consent form you will use. If a signed written consent will not be obtained, explain what you will do instead and why. (See Appendix C in Guidance and Procedures for examples of consent forms, an example of an assent form for children, and a list of consent form requirements. Also see the section on Informed Consent in Guidance and Procedures.)

After receiving approval from both Sacramento State and the Northern Community College TRIO SSS program, TRIO staff will email TRIO participants and be given the researcher’s email to respond to if interested. Consent forms will be attached to the initial email, introducing and explaining the research project. Interested students will respond and then be randomly selected to set up personal interviews. Informed consent will be obtained through voluntary signed written consent (see attached consent form). Signed written consent will be obtained from all participants and will be kept confidential and locked in the researcher’s file cabinet in her home office.

4. How will the subjects’ rights to privacy and safety be protected? (See the section on Level of Risk in Guidance and Procedures. For online surveys, answer the checklist questions at the end of Appendix B in Guidance and Procedures.)

The researcher will make sure student anonymity is of highest importance; therefore, pseudonyms will be given to all participants in this study. In addition, the name of the Northern community college in this study will be changed. The researcher will ensure that only two people have access to the participants’ information or data: the researcher and the faculty supervising this research. During the study all hard copies of consent forms and transcriptions will be kept at the researchers home office locked file cabinet. All data will be destroyed after 6 months after completion of the study.

5. Describe the content of any tests, questionnaires, interviews, surveys or other instruments utilized in the research. Attach copies of the questions. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

Participants who indicate they are interested in being involved in interviews will be
randomly selected by the researcher and invited to participate in individual interviews where they will be asked a series of questions (See attached interview questions) that investigate more in-depth into the factors and perceptions involved in the success of Latino students who are currently in TRIO Student Support Services at a Northern Community College and are transfer-bound.

The semi-structured interviews will take no longer than 60 minutes. There is no risk to participants. No discomfort or harm will come to participants answering the interview questions as they are based on the participants’ leadership experiences in a TRIO SSS and the impact on transfer.

6. Describe any physical procedures in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use? (The IRB will seek review and recommendation from a qualified medical professional for any medical procedures.)

N/A

7. Describe any equipment or instruments that will be used in the research. What risk of discomfort or harm, if any, is involved in their use?

A digital audio recorder will be used during interviews to record the researcher’s questions and the participants’ responses. There will be “minimal risk” involved for the participants.

8. Will any devices, drugs or pharmaceuticals be used in the research? If so, describe their use and any possible risk or discomfort. (If so, the IRB will seek review and recommendation from a qualified medical professional.)

N/A

9. Taking all aspects of this research into consideration, what risk level do you consider this study to be?

Check only one: Exempt _____ Minimal risk X _____ Greater than minimal risk _____

Explain your reasoning based on the information you have provided in this protocol.

This study involves minimal risk. Some of the information requested in the interview may be considered personal. However, all participants are adults above the age of eighteen and questions asked in interviews should not cause harm or discomfort. Each participant in the interviews will not be identified by their real names and participants will only be asked questions about their educational leadership experiences. The data will be associated with fictitious names and consent forms will be kept confidential.
For protocols approved as “greater than minimal risk,” the researcher is required to file semiannual reports with the committee that describe the recruiting of subjects, progress on the research, interactions with the sponsor, and any adverse occurrences or changes in approved procedures. In addition, the committee reserves the right to monitor “greater than minimal risk” research, as it deems appropriate. Failure to file the required progress reports may result in suspension of approval for the research.

_______________________________  _______________________
Signature of Researcher            Date

_______________________________  _______________________
Signature of Faculty Sponsor       Date
(for student research)

Signature of your department or division chair confirms he or she has had an opportunity to see your human subject’s application.

_______________________________  _______________________
Signature of Department/Division Chair Date

Questions regarding application procedures for human subjects approval may be directed to the Office of Research Administration at (916) 278-7565 or any member of the IRB. Questions about how to minimize risks should be directed to a committee member. Applicants are encouraged to contact a committee member whose professional field most closely corresponds to that of the researcher. See www.csus.edu/research/humansubjects/ for a list of committee members and current due dates for submitting an application.
To assure prompt review of your application, 
ALL researchers should complete this checklist:

- Have you written an appropriate answer for each question on the application form? (Please do not attach research proposals, grant applications, etc. as the committee cannot read such documents.)

- Have you answered all of the questions on the application form? (Please enter “N/A” if a particular question does not apply to your research.)

- Have you provided an e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached on the application?

- Have you (and all co-researchers) signed the application form? Has your department or division chair also signed the application form?

- Have you included your consent form with your application? Does that consent form identify you as the researcher and your department?

- Does your consent form clearly describe what participants will be asked to do in your research? Does it clearly describe any direct benefit they will receive as a result of their participation? Does it clearly describe any risks they will be exposed to during their participation, and what you will do to minimize those risks?

- Have you included with your application any screening forms that will be used to determine the eligibility of participants for your research?

- Have you described in your application any potential conflict of interest between your role as a researcher and any other relationship you may have with the participants or with an organization that is a source of your participants? This could occur if some or all of the participants are your students, employees, co-workers, friends, etc. Have you also described how you will avoid any such conflict of interest?

- Have you included with your application all tests, questionnaires, surveys, interview questions, focus group questions, etc. that will be used in your research?

- Have you checked the grammar and spelling throughout all of your documents?

- Have you prepared 11 copies of your complete application packet, including all attachments, for the committee? Does one of those copies have original signatures?
Have you retained an electronic copy of your application that can be edited and resubmitted with any changes requested by the committee?
STUDENT researchers must also complete this checklist:

☐ Have you met with your faculty advisor before preparing your application? Has your faculty advisor thoroughly reviewed all of your materials before you submitted your application?

☐ Have you provided an e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached on the application? Did you also include your home address on the application?

☐ Have you included the name of your faculty advisor and that person’s e-mail address on your application?

☐ Has your application been signed by you, any co-researchers, and your faculty advisor? Did you submit an original copy of your application with all of those signatures?

☐ Does your department have an approved Human Subjects committee that reviews student research projects? (As of July 2009, the approved departments are Child Development; Communication Studies; Criminal Justice; Economics; Educational Leadership & Policy Studies; Kinesiology & Health Science; Nursing; Psychology; Public Policy & Administration; Social Work; Sociology; Special Education, Rehabilitation & School Psychology; and Teacher Education.) If your research is in one of these departments, it must be reviewed and approved by that department’s committee first. Has your department’s committee completed the following form?

DEPARTMENT HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Project Title: ________________________________

Student Researcher: ____________________________

Faculty Sponsor: ______________________________

The ______________________________ Department’s Human Subjects committee has reviewed and approved this application. It requires review by the University’s IRB because the research is considered minimal risk or greater than minimal risk.

________________________________________    ________________________
Name of department’s human subjects chairperson    E-mail address of chairperson
October 16, 2012

To: Eva Margarita Munguia

From: Nancy L. Loeb, Senior Research Integrity and Compliance Officer

Administrative Liaison to the Institutional Review Board (IRB)
FWA #00003873

RE: Factors Influencing Leadership Experiences of Transfer Bound Latino/a Students Regarding Academic Achievement in a Community College TRIO SSS Program

Your protocol was reviewed on October 9, 2012 and is approved as "Exempt." The exemption is made pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). The approval applies to the conditions and procedures described in your protocol. Your approval expires on October 16, 2013.

Approval carries with it the understanding that you will inform the IRB promptly should any adverse event occur, and that you will make no modification to the plan as described in the protocol without the prior approval of the IRB.

Should you need further information about the protection of human subjects, please consult our website at http://www.csu.edu/research/humansubjects/ or contact me at 916-278-5674.
APPENDIX C

Letter of Intent

November 27, 2012

Dear Mr. [Name]

As a counselor for the Journey TRIO-SSS Program at American River College, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to reach out to the [Name] College TRIO-SSS program to collaborate and increase student success. As previously discussed with you, having the opportunity to interview your students for my dissertation study at Sacramento State University would allow for further understanding of how Latina/o students succeed in transferring to a four-year university with the assistance of the TRIO SSS program.

The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of transfer-bound Latina/o students currently participating in a TRIO-SSS program through qualitative interviews. These hour-long interviews would allow for the identification of factors that may hinder or facilitate a transfer culture as well as the advocacy of leadership as a vehicle to address the historically low transfer rate numbers. The intent is to interview a total of 10 participants, five females and five males, for approximately one hour. The participants would read and sign a consent form of which I have attached and participant privacy is ensured as confidentiality will be respected. The desired timeframe for conducting the 10 interviews will be by December 12th. The participant interview date and time will be set up by me after the participants have been identified.

The participant interviews will be a rich qualitative aspect to support the belief that TRIO works. The results of this dissertation will be used to improve, guide and implement new strategies for TRIO-SSS programs in supporting a transfer culture for Latina/o students. I look forward in collaborating with you and your program and have provided my contact information below for any further questions or concerns you may have.

Best,

Eva M. Munguia, Doctoral Candidate
Ed. D. Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Sacramento State University

[Contact Information]
APPENDIX D

Consent to Participate

You are being invited to participate in a study conducted by Eva M. Munguía, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Program at California State University, Sacramento. The purpose of this study is to examine factors that influence advocacy of leadership experiences of Latino students in the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) program as a vehicle to transfer to a four-year institution. Specifically of interest are leadership skills that students gain from the result of support services. As a Latino community college student in the TRIO SSS, your experience with education is important to understanding how Latino students succeed, specifically as you intend to transfer to a four-year institution.

Your participation in this study consists of participating in an interview conducted by the researcher. The interview will be conducted face-to-face. The interview should take approximately between 50 minutes to an hour. During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions about your leadership experiences that have impacted your academic achievement as being part of the TRIO SSS program and your intentions to transfer to a four-year institution as a result. The interview will be using a digital audio recorded to allow the researcher to listen to the interview as needed. The interview recording will be destroyed upon completion of the study approximately after 6 months. You may refuse to answer any question for any reason and terminate the interview at any time with no consequence of retribution.

Your participation in this study will be kept confidential that includes interview responses and collected data. All data will also be stored confidentially and your name will not be used in this study to ensure participant privacy like assigning pseudonyms to participants. Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your participation or future relations with any TRIO SSS programs.

If you have any questions, please ask. If you have any additional questions, later on please feel free to contact Eva M. Munguía at [redacted] or you can contact Dr. Frank Lilly at (916) 278-4120. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this study. You may decline to be a participant in this study without any consequences. You signature below indicates that you have read this information above and have decided to participate in the interviews for this research.

__________________________________  __________________
Signature of Participant              Date
APPENDIX E

Interview Protocol

1. How have your leadership opportunities benefitted you as a TRIO SSS student in a community college?
2. Tell me, have TRIO SSS counselors supported your desire to transfer? [How?] Give examples.
3. How has this college supported your desire to transfer and pursue a four-year degree?
4. What educational activities, services, or resources have been helpful to you? What is it about these activities, services or resources that have made them helpful?
5. How does your family, community, instructors’, and other educators from other educational institutions you have attended feel about your desire to go to college?
6. How would you describe your personal journey through the educational system and its impact on self-identity?
7. Which educational services in TRIO SSS have been frustrating? What is it about these services that have made them frustrating?
8. What cultural values have helped you to achieve success as a TRIO SSS student at the community college?
9. Have you ever felt excluded in college based your ethnic, cultural or gender background?
10. What do see as the barriers to obtaining academic achievement?
11. How can TRIO SSS better support or continue to support Latinos in their journey through higher education?
12. Tell me, what factors have led you to join TRIO SSS in the community college and to pursue a four-year degree?
APPENDIX F

Summary of Key Findings

**Question 1 Findings: Advocacy for Access and Leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Advocacy for Access and Leadership</strong></th>
<th><strong>Students notice how TRIO advisors encourage and motivated them to believe in their abilities to maximize opportunities.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question #1: How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of leadership at a community college?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Always encourage us to participate in events where we help other freshman, this year when they have their gathering during the summer they encourage us to come out and give advice, information and speak about SSS. This has definitely given me more confidence.</strong> (Monica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Cultivating Access (7)</strong></td>
<td><strong>My advisor has helped me in so much and so many ways, last semester he told me that I could apply to transfer and I was like oh really! I was surprised! and then he told me my overall GPA, which is a 3.9. I was so excited and happy and then he told me there was an opportunity at Berkeley to take a free class over the summer so I was so excited, oh yeah I’ll take it.</strong> (Elizabeth)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>They do offer a lot of things. Recently, more alumni are coming back and being able to speak of their experience and their transfer experience. My advisor wanted me to be one of those speakers to a quarter school.</strong> (Jose)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>I started getting involved because people from SSS were inviting me to different clubs, come and check out this club, come over here, will show you, will help you.</strong> (Lorena)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Encourage me to been a part of Phi Beta Kappa, it’s an academic honors society on campus. Through them I have met people and networking is what I’ve got through that experience.</strong> (Manuel)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Tremendously, I am actually the president of the SSS club, which was started last year, it was like why don’t we start a club and call it SSS. That’s really benefitted me and helped me to become a leader in some many ways.</strong> (Margarita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>They push you and motivate you to take the hardest class and the hardest teacher to prepare you</strong> (Irma)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Advocacy for Access and Leadership

Question #1: How does participation in the TRIO SSS program influence advocacy of leadership at a community college?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Mentorship relationship (7)</th>
<th>Students found in their TRIO SSS advisors a meaningful relationship with trustworthy knowledge.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- He has definitely supported me continuously. Emailing me events or information about UC’s. I remember my first semester at the community college he would constantly contact me on the phone asking to meet up and about school and how were my classes. Just to meet up and to keep him updated with everything. (Monica)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- He’s always reminding me of opportunities. (Elizabeth)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The support, the energy there, it's a really good energy. It’s positive, they don’t judge, they don’t ask you any personal things unless you want to talk about it first. (Jose)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I remember when I first had my meeting with my advisor to go over my ED plan and I told him, you know what? You remind me so much of my dad. My advisor reminds me so much of him because he’s the ones whose pushing me. (Lorena)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- He gives you the options to explore methods and he made sure that I was always on track. (Margarita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- They push you and motivate you, take the hardest class and the hardest teacher to prepare you for a four-year university. (Irma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- With my advisor, we not only talk about what courses we have to take, we talk about career goals and what school best fits me and especially what I’m looking for. He gets me pumped up and gets him pumped up and he gets pumped up too so it bounces back and forth. (Manuel)</td>
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</table>

5.
**Question 2 Findings: Perception of Success**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Support</th>
<th>Perception of Success</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1: Support</strong></td>
<td>Students shared that their family values and beliefs have been significant and empowering to their success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Strength</strong></td>
<td>• <em>Family-love</em> because it influences the way I form relationships with friends. Whether they’re unconditional love or just a friend and that helps me make connections and equally succeed in school. (Monica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>• <em>Self-respect</em> is the thing that’s helped me succeed because my mom always said that I needed to respect myself and for others to respect you. There are other cultures where respect isn’t that big of a deal but for us it’s huge. (Elizabeth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being Latino, we have family and that’s always nice, they are what matter; they are the ones that will love you unconditionally. Having that unconditional love, We are all very close. (Jose)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• My parents have always told me to never give up, to achieve for the greatest, and that’s what I’ve brought in myself when joining SSS. Even though at times it’s hard, I may be tired, I have headaches, I don’t want to do this; sometimes I even do think about giving up. I tell myself no, I have to do it. I have to suck it up and that I can do it. (Lorena)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Being Latinos we have siblings and you want to show that you need to get a higher education. (Janet)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There’s such a motivation to continue, to keep going, my mom even reminds me when she sees me doing homework and says that it’s all going to pay off, it’s all going to pay off. I hope so mom. (Margarita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My cultural values and traditions from my parents of always working hard, and reaching what you want to reach, and what you pushing to get to where you want to be. It is always at the front of my mind and it is something that pushes me. (Carolina)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• My parents have always taught me that if you really want something you have to work for it and you’re not going to get it right away. You have to take the stairs, you are not going to just go in the elevator and go up there. (Irma)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Definitely because both of my parents are very hard workers, that’s deep rooted within me, bestowed upon me. Just as having them as examples, that they could achieve in such a short amount of time without knowing the language, the city, and not knowing the people. That’s something that has showed me that hard work pays off. (Manuel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Perception of Success

**Question 2.** What are the perceptions of success of Latino students in preparing to transfer to four-year institutions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-theme 2: Self-Awareness (8)</th>
<th>Students reported the positive effect on understanding how education does transform self.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They definitely influence your character, who you hang around with. My school influenced me to be a kind person, to help others. From elementary to college, it has definitely had its ups and downs but I am satisfied where I am right now (Monica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• College does that and It challenges you in different ways but then there are benefits at the end. You are going to see what you did, and see where it got you. Let yourself go through that experience and you’ve gained something from it (Lorena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Right now I’m completely different, I really want to transfer and I believe that I can do it. I am completely different than I was when I started. I just feel like I’ve grown with the help. I don’t let others affect me like I did in high school (Elizabeth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coming to college helped me find pieces of myself that I thought I had lost (Jose)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Here at the college, taking that Chicano studies class. Always Having some sort of support from my parents has built me from the ground to where I feel comfortable (Carolina)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• I feel like I’m maturing along with the whole semester, taking different classes, each semester and having different professors each semester has matured me in a way (Lorena)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I took a Chicano Lit class in high school and that changed my perspective, she was a game changer. (Janet)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education it supposed to give you knowledge and it’s knowledge that no one can take away from you. What you do with that knowledge is up to you (Manuel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-theme 3: Supportive Experience (4)</th>
<th>Students identify having support from significant other, a high school counselor and other educational opportunity programs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mostly High School, the counselor that I had, she always told us that we have to go to college and make a difference. (Lorena)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• It wasn’t until I found someone who helped me who was motivating and who I wanted to be and who I looked up to. That was the guy I had dated in high school and he was getting 4.0’s. (Margarita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In High School, I was with Upward bound with them, they helped me a lot. They would always take us on trips to universities, they had tutoring. I would do tutoring with them. They’re the ones who recommended me to apply here. (Irma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mrs. Calderon, from Napa High, she is a part of AVID. She is an AVID teacher and I was lucky enough to be in one of her classes and through that class I got more knowledge. She was one of the ones that did push college onto me, what there was after high school. (Manuel)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Perception of Success

**Question 2.** What are the perceptions of success of Latino students in preparing to transfer to four-year institutions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme 2: Hindrances</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-theme 1: Exclusion (9)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some Students reflected back to when they were in middle school through high school to identify multiple occasions they felt excluded.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We had our group of all Mexicans and we all noticed it. All of the preferences for the white people. It made me feel like as if they knew we wouldn’t go anywhere in life. They didn’t believe in us, just in them. (Elizabeth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In Elementary School, they put me in ELD, which is English Language Development or something like that. But I didn’t need to be in that class. I really didn’t, I felt like I was put in there because I was Mexican. I didn’t think that was fair because I knew that I didn’t belong there. (Jose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- We wouldn’t talk to many of the white students. We were very separated from them. Americans were part of what is called the Senior Stage so it’s the middle of the campus. It’s like a podium and that’s where they all were all of them. The rest of us were all in the cafeteria and that’s how we noticed that there was pretty much a borderline. (Lorena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Once I got to High School they put me in ESL classes for Spanish speaking and I was really confused, excused me!!! I felt dumbed down in a way because I don’t have any trouble speaking English. What’s going on? &amp; I thought this isn’t cool!!! Like my friends were not in this class. I was confused but I remember having those exams ever since you were little and it was just because you said you spoke Spanish first so you were discriminated against ever since we were younger because that was a huge red flag. It was like WOW does everyone underestimated you because you’re Latina, Mexican? (Margarita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Most of high school as well. Maybe the last two years was a little bit better but in certain classes I just didn’t feel like I was comfortable. The white guys, white girls, white washed Mexicans guys, and me and my two friends. It was just a class that I just didn’t feel any connection with them, the teacher, the was more connected to the other students. (Carolina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There were all whites and only two of us Latinos and I was thinking what am I doing here? It’s not that I feel intimidated, when I work with an all white family I feel self conscious of how I speak English and I think maybe because of how I was raised or since back then whites are on top of us. (Irma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I think if anything did make me feel excluded it would be the economic status of the students. It might be in the demographics that in general most of us Latinos have a lower income. (Manuel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Growing up in Saint Helena, you were either you a White American or Spanish Mexican. I did really good in math that was the only thing I was good at there would be only three Mexican students and then the rest were White. And you were a rare breed in the mix that you were good at something and I kind of did feel like I didn’t belong there because I was Mexican. (Monica)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- I don’t know. I’d have to really recall. For a while I was kind of bitter because I couldn’t get financial aid and I think that was mostly it but I did see it a lot when I went to High School, I felt like the White students had more opportunity, they would get more help to get to college and even though I had gone into this program called AVID, at the end, she was so down to help me but I didn’t feel that from a lot of people. (Janet)</td>
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</table>
### Question 3: Findings: Transfer Conditions

**Transfer Condition**  
Question. #3 How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Fostering a transfer mentality (8)</th>
<th>Students commented that TRIO advisors did influence a transfer mentality by informed and experiential knowledge.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If it wasn’t for my advisor, I wouldn’t want to transfer or have the opportunity to go to Berkeley and actually experience it which that’s what made me want to transfer. (Elizabeth)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I probably wouldn’t have applied to as many schools if I wasn’t in the program because I just wasn’t really informed. (Janet)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My advisor says You really have to visit the school because it’s going to be a part of your home, where you’re going to be for the majority of the day, so it’s important to figure out if you can see yourself there, walking through the classrooms the scenery, everything. (Jose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving us those activities to participate in which opens up a lot of great opportunities because it helps you make that decision to transfer and that desire to transfer. You become more motivated to continue doing things to further your education. (Margarita)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With my counselor, at first I wasn’t sure if I wanted to transfer, I just wanted to get my AA from here but he told me it was a great opportunity to be the first one out of my family. (Irma)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>They help you start picturing ourselves at a four-year institution level. (Manuel)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>They’re trying to tell you, especially the first day of school, this is how it’s going to be for real when you transfer to a four-year. It is just going to get harder so you might as well pay attention now and see how everything works (Lorena)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Various times I was hesitant because I wasn’t sure why someone wanted to meet with me so much but now I realize he was just trying to help. Try to get you to learn you more, help you transfer, to figure out what’s right for you. (Monica)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question. #3 How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme 1: Parent-Transfer Connection (3)</th>
<th>Students reported on the benefits from having parent to be an active participant in their transferring goals.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>He helped out my mom understand and how it's going to benefit me. My advisor showed her all of Berkeley and she is now hoping that I get in.</em> (Elizabeth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>My advisor has told me. Get your parents involved, tell them what your goals are, what you are struggling with -- take them to the universities that you want to go to so they can get a sense</em> (Lorena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>My advisor specifically, he's my advisor, he really did help me, he actually helped bring in my dad and we did explain to him because I really wanted my dad to be informed my dad is more concerned and wants me to succeed but because of things he was wishy-washy but I think that he really helped and it helped me to take those next few steps</em> (Janet)</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Fear of Moving on (6)</th>
<th>As students reflect on transferring soon, they expressed their fears of making that transition into a four-year institution.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>It's scary Moving on and not having Jorge there Yeah, thinking about going to a UC. I'm hoping to like get with a group or someone that can help me get through that because obviously I don't know.</em> (Monica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>I'm so paranoid with the application; I feel like I missed a question or my personal statement isn't good enough. Or I'm going to get a C this semester and if I get a C I will not get in. I'm really stressed, I really do have a lot of pressure.</em> (Elizabeth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>What I see as a barrier is that I don't want me to fail, I don't want to fail into something that I know I can't get myself out of; I think that's what's scares me in achieving my education, its that fear.</em> (Jose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>I just have to find the way to get the support that I need whether it's physical, mentally, or emotionally, or financially to take that next step.</em> (Lorena)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>I was wish-washy about transferring because how am I going to handle all of that money by myself and moving on my own and my parents can't help me.</em> (Janet)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>what if I don't have the same services that I do now to help me? I think that's one of the things I fear most now as I transfer. I am leaving SSS, which has always helped me. Who has tutoring services? Who's going to take me on trips? To a university where I am going to have to do this all over again, to find those services, that scares me.</em> (Margarita)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer Condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question. #3 How does the TRIO SSS program contribute to establishing a transfer culture for Latino students?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Theme 2: Self-doubt (4)</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Felt very insecure and I felt like I couldn’t do it (Elizabeth)</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Before I came to any school in Napa, I really wasn’t confident (Janet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>● The shyness and not being comfortable, not having confidence, definitely had an impact on me during school but not an impact on my grades. (Carolina)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>● I’m always having doubts, I doubt myself in everything. I’m always saying am I going to pass this class --I don’t know, just little things, I always doubt myself. (Lorena)</td>
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</table>
Question 4 Findings: Supporting TRIO SSS students

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<tr>
<th>Supporting TRIO SSS students</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Question 4. How has TRIO SSS shaped the experiences for Latino students at a community college?</strong></td>
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</table>

**Theme 1:** Meaningful learning experience (6)

Students found a place in TRIO SSS to collect knowledge as it transformed their reality to achieve their goal.

- At first when I learned about the program I wasn’t really sure how powerful SSS was until now that I reflect on it. How powerful of a tool it is getting through college. (Monica)
- Coming into the community college, I didn’t know anything. I didn’t know anything about the college in the first place. Through SSS you learn about the transferring application, how to fill it properly, you learn about internships. (Manuel)
- Being in this program has led me to inform me about everything. The information I have gotten from SSS has giving me, is what has made me realize I can do it. (Irma)
- Without TRIO SSS I probably would fail here. Not my classes but I wouldn’t have, through high school I had AVID. Thanks to them they helped with the ED plan and they understand you. (Carolina)
- You have a connection from campus to campus and you’re not going by yourself. A lot of students that aren’t in programs like this just go by themselves and sometimes they don’t see opportunities that people like we do because we’re in the program and were informed by our advisors (Janet)
- I know for me coming into college I was lost, knowing about the program through my sister it has been good for me (Jose)

**Theme 2:**

Students reported to be very grateful to be part of the TRIO SSS and a few recommendations were given

- I think they have done a lot. I don’t know how they could improve. (Irma)
- I think they’re doing a really good job. Just I feel possibly it would be important to have the parents understand (Manuel)
- Not that I can think of. They do so many things for us. I don’t even know anything they don’t do. (Monica)
- I think they have done a really good job. They have a great group; they’re sweet and support you (Carolina)
- I think they’re just great right now. Maybe just having more students but I know they need to have a limit but that’s it because they’re the biggest help (Elizabeth)

- Probably have a bigger room. We just got his new one but I think it’s a bit smaller than the old one. Just a little bit more room because sometimes it gets packed in there. (Jose)

- There are a lot of things that they do for us (Lorena)

- Well, I feel like they do a little bit of everything. Through campus tours, they give the Latino community a chance to see different colleges to attend (Margarita)

- I think they are doing a good job so far but maybe having like parent workshops. Stuff like that would be beneficial and getting the financial aid technicians to speak to parents about what type of support the student would receive when he/she goes to the next level because that’s what my advisor did with my dad (Janet).
REFERENCES


