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AUTHOR   de Acosta, Martha
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ABSTRACT
                Programs aimed at improving the high school
graduation rate of Latino students and their college recruitment,
retention, and graduation have increased in recent years, but they
have seldom been evaluated. To improve the design of such programs,
an in-depth analysis was conducted of 15 programs identified through
a literature search. Need for financial aid was often the only factor
addressed by early programs, and making college affordable continues
to be an important link to recruitment and retention of low- and
middle-income students. Later programs addressed other aspects of
Latino student participation, such as mastering cognitive skills and
career decision points. A recent added component is helping students
negotiate the institutional culture of the schools they attend. A
program model is developed with the following seven key features of
successful programs: (1) sensitivity to individual students; (2)
sensitivity to students' culture; (3) sensitivity to the institution
where the program is located; (4) pro-active interventions; (5) a
focus on accelerated, enriched learning; (6) small program size; and
(7) partnering with family and community. Programs for Latinos have
become more complex and their impact has been amplified, but ways of
making recruitment, retention, and graduation programs more effective
are still needed. An appendix contains a chart of successful
programs. (Contains 14 references.) (SLD)

ED 402 409

Characteristics of Successful
Recruitment and Retention
Programs for Latino Students
by
Martha de Acosta

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Dr. Martha de Acosta is Research Scientist at the Urban Child Research Center,
Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University

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Wornie L. Reed, Director
Urban Child Research Center
Levin College of Urban Affairs
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Programs aimed at improving the high school graduation rate of Latino/a students and their college recruitment, retention, and graduation have grown steadily over the last few decades. Although some of those programs are over twenty years old, only one or two have been comprehensively and carefully evaluated. In an effort to improve the design of these programs for Latino/a students, I examine the rationale for their design and the means by which the programs attain their expected outcomes. This analysis makes explicit the relationship between program objectives, activities, and expected outcomes for various types of programs, thus establishing the need for and relative strength of each of the program links that lead to the expected outcomes. The analysis would be incomplete without indicating how research on Latino/a, low-income, and urban students has led to reformulated rationales and our suggestion that continued research will offer valuable ideas for improved program design.

Methodology

My analysis of program design is motivated by Mohr's (1995) impact evaluation model, which explicitly relates the *problem* to the *subobjectives* and the *activities*. In this model the *problem*, a condition that would be unsatisfactory without the program intervention, is the counterfactual—what would be true if the expected outcome were not accomplished. To achieve the outcomes of interest, instrumental intermediate outcomes, or *subobjectives*, are what needs to be accomplished. Program *activities* are what the program personnel do. This model guides us in examining what is done in a program and how it is done, and in assessing whether certain program activities and subobjectives do indeed produce the expected outcomes.

A literature search of recruitment, retention, and graduation programs for Latino/a students using Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), World Cat, Contents First, Education Index, and Periodical Abstracts—large electronic databases that index journals, books, and articles—yielded articles on 39 programs aimed at Latino/a students, and several survey articles that gave overviews of many other programs. Less than a handful of the programs were aimed at Latino/a students exclusively, but all the programs identified served Latino/a students. Fifteen programs were selected for in-depth examination (See Appendix, Table 1). These programs were selected because they were comprehensively described, had some type of evaluation, and were representative of the various types of programs for Latino/a students.

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Key Features of the Programs

Through the years, programs to recruit students have changed as awareness of the factors that negatively affect Latino/a students' college attendance has deepened. Components addressing additional factors have been added and programming staff across the country have found more effective ways of meeting the students' needs.

In describing key features of selected programs I will present outcomes sought by staff of some model programs and the ways they created the conditions for achieving those outcomes.

Evolution of recruitment and retention programs

Need for financial aid was the first and often the only factor addressed by early programs for Latino/a students since students of lower socioeconomic status have fewer opportunities to complete a college education. A study (cited in Honan, 1996) conducted by Allen Sanderson of the National Opinion Research Center tracked 25,000 adolescents over six years; it shows that students from low-income families form their educational aspirations before they get to high school, and that those "aspirations have solidified by the eighth grade" (Honan, 1996, p. A12).

Sanderson contends that low socioeconomic status is a stronger influence than race, ethnicity or gender in setting ceilings for students' aspirations. However, because a larger percentage of Latinos/as than whites are situated in the lower economic rungs, Latino/a eighth graders have lower expectations than whites in terms of the career or occupation they expect to attain by age 30. For instance, only 4.8 percent of Latino/as expected to be in science or engineering, while 4 percent expected to be in sales or clerical/office work. At the same time, the percentage of whites who expected to be in science and engineering was larger (6.1%) and the percentage opting for sales or clerical office work was smaller (2.7%).

Making college affordable continues to be an important link to recruitment and retention of low- and middle-income students. In programs with a financial aid subobjective, students receive information on how to apply for financial aid and are referred to counselors to find information on scholarships and loans. Sometimes the university sponsoring the program will cover the fees for a bridge program while the students earn three to six units of credit.

As crucial as financial aid is to providing equal opportunity to students, the reasons why Latinos/as do not reach college, stay, and graduate go beyond adequate economic resources.

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Latino/a students drop out of high school at a higher rate than whites and blacks, and a larger number of those who stay in school underachieve. In 1990, Latino/a student performance in standardized reading tests shows 17-year-olds scoring 275, performing above intermediate (250 for this test), but below adept (300). In writing, 11th grade Latino/a students scored 198, with 200 being minimal reading level for that test. In math and science almost no gain has occurred since 1986. In 1990, 17-year-old Latino/a performance in math was 284, below "understands measurements and solves more complex problems" which a score 300 would indicate (U.S. Department of Education, 1992).

When programs for minority students were created, a main subobjective was to improve students' academic skills. The assumption was that students were not attending college or did not stay in college because they had not mastered the cognitive skills demanded by college work.

The underachievement of Latino/a students is a complex problem that encompasses cognitive, affective, social, and economic dimensions. Supplementary educational programs at the high school level, one-on one and group tutoring, and remedial courses at the college level are typical activities directed at improving academic skills. For example, the Mission-To-College Program at San Francisco State focuses on the special language needs of students, strengthens the college-preparatory curriculum for ninth and tenth graders, and also offers college preparatory courses for high school juniors and seniors (see Table 1).

It was also found early on that many students were not taking the high school courses required for college admission; as a result, academic and career advising were added to the programs. As more was learned about what was required to build students' academic skills, programs began to move to the middle and even elementary school levels. Cuyahoga Community College, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University and NASA collaborate in math, science and pre-engineering programs that reach into the lower grades (see Table 1).

While programs with just three subobjectives—being able to afford an education, mastering cognitive skills and discovering careers and career decision points—had some positive effect, many program staff, in an attempt to expand the programs' impact, started to be attentive

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to the contribution of psychological and social factors to Latino/a students' underachievement.

Helping students discover the importance of schooling became a fourth key subobjective added to many programs. By attaining this subobjective, students not only gain new knowledge, but find academic success compelling. The combination of cognition and affect is key to students' motivation to master cognitive skills. Educators who are successful with students at-risk of dropping out have found that the students have to consider their school work meaningful, their activities have to be engaging, and they have to make sense at the moment they are being executed. Students will not perform because they are told that it will be good for them when they grow up. Most programs include strategies ranging from the formation of peer groups that are supportive of academic work, to mentoring, which makes the importance of schooling real for students. Based on these principles, the Puente Program has expanded its college program to the high school level (see Table 1).

The latest component to be added to programs aimed at Latino/a students is help in negotiating the institutional culture of their school/college or university. This subobjective explicitly addresses the dilemma faced by many minority students who may be the first ones in their family to attend college. Not only are the students unfamiliar with the way postsecondary institutions operate, but they may feel that by becoming a member of the institution they are abandoning their family and ethnic/racial group. Programs such as Puente and the Mother-Daughter Program at Arizona State University (see Table 1) have been successful in including the community and the family in the educational process, thus conveying to the young persons the concept that educational success is not an individual attainment that separates them from their own, but one that moves the whole family or community up with them.

Program staff sought to achieve subobjectives according to what they saw as the most severe aspects of the problem. Some programs continue to address only a few or just one of the subojectives discussed. Many programs designed nowadays, however, have benefitted from the trials and errors of earlier programs, and are consequently more comprehensive. Program staff need to consider as well the sequence in which the subobjectives build on each other to lead to the desired outcomes.

In Figure 1, I propose a model for the design of recruitment and retention programs for

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Latino/a students based on research of successful programs. Ideally, support programs should address the five subobjectives discussed. Discovery of the importance of school has to be achieved at younger ages when possible, and as soon as the programs begin (see Figure 1). Mastery of cognitive skills needs to be tackled early as well. For many students, early academic support will be all they need; others may enter and exit academic support components as needed. The model rationale depicted in Figure 1 does not represent a rigid causal line; it suggests the need to address subobjectives in a timely manner. It also shows that each of the subobjectives contributes to enhancing the recruitment of Latino/a students into postsecondary education and improving their retention rates.

Common Characteristics of Successful Programs

There is agreement in the literature that successful programs addressed to Latino/a students and, for that matter, to other minorities, share similar styles. A review of successful programs reveals seven key features of those styles.

Sensitivity to individual students

Successful programs for Latino/a students have various points of entry and exit. Activities are tailored to individual students' diverse needs and assets.

Often educators think of Latino/a students as an homogeneous category and assume that all incoming Latino/a students need the same services. Consequently, many Latino/a students complain that they are referred to remedial services even when they do not need them. They are often expected to have limited proficiency in English, behave in stereotyped ways, and hold certain beliefs. Social class, race, and gender have structured differential access to resources for Latinos/as, and, together with place of birth, residency status (undocumented, immigrant or citizen), and place and length of residency in the United States, are key determinants of ethnic and cultural identity. But, ethnic and cultural identity do not have essential natures; they develop as we live and work with others. Recognizing both the importance and the nonessential nature of ethnic identity, culturally sensitive staff ask students many questions: how they see themselves, how they prefer to do things, and how the staff can best help them.

Staff in successful programs have discovered that in order to effectively provide support, students need to see that they are valued. Repeatedly, urban students report that they do not

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receive any respect from teachers and that teachers do not care about them (de Acosta, 1996). Young people's perception that the staff cares about them is the cornerstone on which successful programs for urban youth are built (McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994). The value staff places on students shows in everything the staff does—in the choice and style of program activities and in the creation of a sense of community. For instance, in the Summer Bridge Program at the University of California at Berkeley (see Table 1), awareness of students' reluctance to ask for help led to the creation of peer study groups that connect the complementary acts of asking and giving. Students study together and develop a sense of community that combines academic and other interests (Robert & Thomson, 1994).

Sensitivity to students' culture

Validation of students' language and culture tells students that people who are like them belong in institutions of higher learning. Association with community members who have a similar cultural background and who have completed college, and collaboration with allied community agencies are some of the most powerful strategies to validate students' culture and, at the same time, teach them how to negotiate the culture of mainstream institutions. For instance, The Puente Project, connects students in two-year colleges with mentors in the community for informed chats on work and career (McGrath, Galaviz, Healy, & Cazden, 1996).

Sensitivity to the institution where the program is located

Successful programs have a good fit with the host institution. Knowing the institution's history, formal and informal organization, and knowing how decisions are made helps in designing a program that can make a difference. Cookie-cutter programs are not advisable; to be successful, programs need to be adapted to each college's individual culture and environment. A good example of institutional adaptation can be found in Wadhwa's (1988) account of how Uri Treisman's calculus enrichment program at the University of California, Berkeley, was transformed to suit Cleveland State University, a less selective commuter school where the majority of the students have part-time or full-time employment.

Pro-active interventions

Many students are reluctant to go for tutoring or receive other kinds of academic assistance due to low-self esteem and/or a pre-college experience that taught them to hide what

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they did not know. Successful programs actively recruit these students and design programs for them that are physically and psychologically accessible. The Learning Center at the University of California at Berkeley (see Table 1) exemplifies these good practices.

Focus on accelerated, enriched learning

Instructional staff structure learning material so that it is challenging, yet do-able. Strictly remedial courses with an emphasis on basic skills disconnected from a context are avoided. The pre-engineering programs mentioned in this paper challenge the students by teaching math and showing its relevance. Many programs rely on collaborative, hands-on learning.

Small size of the program

In order to adequately serve students, successful programs are small (25-100 students). When the programs are larger, they are organized in such a way that every student receives direct personal attention. Given the rapid advances in instructional technology, it is important to remember that students need the personalized attention of the staff.

Partnering with family and community

Among Latino/a students who interact mostly with other Latinos/as, family ties and ties with members of the community to whom students are related through church, social, and recreational activities are very strong. Successful educational programs targeted to these students have used these relationships to strengthen students' attachment to school and desire to do good academic work. The Mother-Daughter Program and the Puente Program are prime examples of the effectiveness of this strategy. Other communities of support need to be found for young Latinos/as who are more assimilated into the mainstream culture and who have distanced themselves from Latino/a students remaining closer to the traditions of their country of origin.

Hostos Community College in New York City (see Table 1) has developed such a program. In partnership with the Manhattan Theater Club, playwrights visit the Hostos campus to coach students in the ESL Intensive Program to write scenes in English and rehearse them. Students with various degrees of integration into the mainstream culture are reached by Hostos Community College's programs. According to its president, the College's "primary purpose is to build community." She continues "We're committed not only to changing the lives of

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individuals, but also to revitalizing the South Bronx, a mission that is especially urgent in an area that has seen so much devastation" (Straight, 1995, p. 63).

Conclusion

Across the country, Latinos/as working with non-Latinos/as have designed and implemented recruitment, retention, and graduation programs that give educators insights into how to reach Latino/a students more successfully. In this paper, I have outlined the growth of programs to increase the participation of Latino/a students in college, showing how educators moved from overcoming apparent obstacles to addressing more subtle ones. As research on urban youth continues to provide insights into the causes of students' disengagement from school, new subobjectives have been added to programs for Latino/a students. The programs have become more complex and their impact has been amplified. We should remain vigilant, and since the number of Latinos/as in college is still slim, we should continue to investigate ways of making recruitment, retention, and graduation programs more effective.

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Appendix

PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
Step-To-College (STC)/Mission-To-College (MTC) (San Francisco State University, SFSU)	•Limited academic skills	•Increase representation of Chicano-Latino students at colleges and universities	**1. STC:** •College level classes for high school juniors and seniors •College I.D. card •Information and assistance completing college applications & financial aid forms **2. MTC:** •Strengthened college-prep curriculum for 9th-10th graders **3. Bilingual MTC:** •Greater emphasis on special language needs - tutors provided **4. Academic Fellows Program (AFP):** •50 students from MTC are paid to study after school	•Approximately 90% of seniors went on to post secondary education •High college retention rates: STC students at SFSU 75%, vs. 59% for all university students	•Classes taught on high school campus •In 1992, 700 students admitted under STC and over 500 served in MTC •10 high schools involved	Straight (1995)

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PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/NEED	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
ESL, Community Service and Cultural Offerings (Hostos Community College, New York)	•Limited academic skills	•Retain students, 90% of whom live below poverty line and enter college academically unprepared •Improve English speaking and writing skills, foster multi-cultural environment, provide positive role models	•English as a Second Language (ESL) with a service component: Hands-on focus through short-term community service interships (English is only language spoken) •Activities at Arts and Culture Complex	•Graduation rates increased by 15%, exceeding national community college norm increase of 11%	*80% Hispanic and 74.4 % female	Straight (1995)
Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program (Arizona State University)	•Limited career awareness •Need to gain family support	•Increase retention of female Hispanic students in high school and college •Prepare students for successful university experiences using a team approach that involves mothers directly in the educational process	•Support network of role models •Campus visits •Classroom exercises that give flavor of university life	•Over 4 years, 185 students had participated in the program; 83% were still in high school, in contrast to the 40-60% national retention rate for Hispanics in high school	•Latino program •No cost •Program begins in 8th grade	Magallan, DeNecochea, Hirsch (1988)

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PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
Summer Bridge Program (Alvin Community College, Texas)	•Limited academic skills •Limited career awareness	•Enhance retention rates •Improve achievement levels of high-risk students	•Learn personal time management, goal setting, and stress reduction techniques •Visit each vocational department and participate in hands-on activities •Learn from guest speakers	•Of the 7 students in the 1st group, all completed one semester & enrolled for a second; 6 achieved a GPA of 2.0 or better •In following year, 8 of 11 completed fall semester & enrolled for spring; 7 maintained a GPA of 2.0 or better •Participants rate program as highly enjoyable and contributing to their self-confidence and knowledge	•2 week, non-residential •Aimed at disadvan-taged students	Parochetti, J., Montgomery, M., & Bethscheider, J. (1994)
Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA)	•Limited academic skills in math and science	•Develop high school students' mathematics and science skills •Motivate students to enter math and science fields	•Tutoring •Guidance •Career counseling •Incentive awards for academic achievement	•Increased recruitment of Latino/a students	•Latino Program	Magallan, DeNecochea, Hirsch (1988)

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PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
The Puente Project (Community college bridge to University of California, UC, and California State University, CSU)	•Limited academic skills •Limited access to community role models •Limited knowledge of careers	•To increase UC eligibility rates of both high school and community college Latino students •To create a pipeline to support Latino students as they progress from high school, to the UC/CSU system, and on to graduate or professional school •To increase the number of Latino teachers and counselors in public schools, community colleges, and UC/CSU •To effect permanent, institutionalized community support for schools and colleges throughout the state	•Accelerated writing instruction •Focused academic counseling •Interaction with role models	•99% of Puente high schools students were still in school after the first pilot year •Because of Puente's strategies for fostering parent involvement in the program, 95% of the high school students' parents are actively involved in the program and in their children's education	Aimed at Mexican American/ Latino/a students	McGrath, Galaviz, Healy, Cazen (1996)
Project STEP (Student/ Teacher Educational Partnership, University of California at Irvine)	•Limited academic skills	•Develop higher order thinking skills in math, science, reading, and writing	•Tutoring •Academic counseling •Parental involvement •Faculty in-service •Curriculum review	•Increase in number of college preparatory courses in participating high schools •Significant increase in numbers of students taking college entrance exams	•Predomin- antly Latino	Magallan, DeNecochea, Hirsch (1988)

PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
College Now (Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY))	•Limited academic skills •Limited career awareness	•Present college as an option in the minds of high school juniors and seniors •Experience a taste of college free of charge •Ease transition to college by improving basic skills or earning college credit •Improve retention in college	•Freshman skills assessment test •College Now Courses: Developmental courses, college credit courses, orientation courses •College I.D. card	•Measurable impact on improving the basic skills •CN participants stayed in the CUNY system at a higher rate that the comparison group •CN alumni required less remediation in college than other freshmen •CN alumni progressed faster to receive degree than comparison group •Revitalized High School teachers interest in teaching	•Not focused on minority students, rather moderate achievers •Courses taught at the high school •17 high school throughout Brooklyn •Students served: 2,502 in fall 1991 & 1,525 in spring 1992	Human Services Group (1992)
Summer Bridge Program (University of California at Berkeley)	•Limited academic skills •Lack of peer support •Stigma of asking for help and using academic services	•Retention of minority undergraduates •Develop students' basic language skills •Build community	•Small group tutorials •Teaching of study strategies and test taking techniques •Credit and non-credit bearing classes •Support activities with peers •Collaborative learning	•2 year retention rates as high or higher than non-Bridge students with much higher high school grades and SAT scores	•Aimed at all minorities •Students live on campus •150-200 students in Summer Bridge	Robert and Thomson (1994)

PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
Early Outreach (University of Illinois)	•Limited academic skills •Limited career awareness	•Increase representation of black, Hispanic and American Indian students in health professions •Help talented minority students at an early age to be prepared for entering and completing college •Expose students to career options	**1. Saturday College (SC)** •Academic classes •College I.D. card •Tutors •Parent involvement mandatory •Career forums •College tours •Personal management workshops •Meaningful summer jobs	•Since 1980, approximately 95% of Saturday College (SC) graduates entered college the fall semester after high school graduation	•SC free of charge •Approximately 800 served annually by all parts of Early Outreach •Approximately 340 served by SC	Human Services Group (1992)
Summer Bridge Program (University of California, San Diego)	•Limited academic skills •Lack of peer support	•Improve academic performance and retention rates	•4 credit "Response Class" •Math & science classes •Extracurricular activities with peers •Personal management sessions •Peer counseling	•Retention rates exceed that of comparison groups	•Aimed at all minority freshmen •4 week program •Live on campus	Buck, C., (1985)

PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
Early Identification Program (George Mason University-Virginia)	•Limited academic skills •Lack of career awareness	•Increase representation of educationally prepared minority students •Identify 8th graders with uneven academic records and at risk of not successfully completing school • Encourage student to pursue a college-prep curriculum in high school • Facilitate successful application and admission to college	**1. Summer Academic Component:** •3 week non-residential program •Academic classes •Lectures, small group work, individual tutoring •Workshops on academic, counseling, or career topics **2. Saturday Workshops:** •Academic or career workshops, or culture event or field trip **3. Tutoring during school year.** •One day a week for 1-1/2 hour •Help with college applications and financial aid forms	•Essays on seniors' college applications show students read coherently, sentences are complete and grammatically correct with no spelling or typing mistakes •74% retention rate	•Aimed at all minority students •Parents important and involved throughout the year •Approximately 220 students served •High schools in 3 school districts involved	Human Services Group (1992)

PROGRAM NAME	PROBLEM/MISSION	GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	OTHER	SOURCE
Three Pre-College Programs (University of Virginia)	•Limited academic skills •Limited career awareness •Limited ability to negotiate university culture	•Increase representation of educationally prepared minority students applying to and graduating from college •Facilitate academic and social integration •Increase retention rates in college	**1. Research Assistantship Program (RAP)** •High School seniors attend summer program & work on faculty research team •Take one freshman class •Tutoring •Extracurricular activities with peers **2. Introduction to Engineering Program (ITE)** •Spend 1 week in summer visiting engineering faculty •Hands-on experience in computers, robotics, etc. •Mini-courses **3. Summer Transitional Program (STP)** •6 week academic program for at-risk students •Tutors and study groups •Extracurricular activities with peers	•All participants in RAP & ITE enrolled in college •Improvement in academic performance during senior year in high school •College retention of at-risk minorities participating in programs vs. those not participating increased from 55% to 76 % •Students understand various college majors better •Learned what research is and made important contribution to ongoing research; •Learned value of working as a team	•Aimed at all minority students •In 1989, 23 RAP students, in 1990, 25 ITE students, and in 1990, 87 in STP. •Reside on campus	Simmons, R. (1994)