



The Influence of Summer Bridge Programs on Student Social Development

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Abstract

Transitioning to college can be tough. One of the most important aspects of the college transition is the adjustment to the social issues and development that occurs on college campuses. While many students transition through their own stages of social development and process social issues differently, this process can be difficult for students of diverse backgrounds at predominantly white institutions. Bridge programs have shown that while academics are improved, social development is often left behind. Through personal interviews, I received insight from students about their summer bridge experience. Some students stated that they would like to see more of an emphasis on social development, while others stated that their bridge program did adequately prepare them socially. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that how students are prepared socially during bridge programs is dependent on the individual student's experience.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to generate insights that can help the overall quality of summer bridge programs. Many of these programs focus on the academics but lack context when it comes to social development. I hope that this research can provide some insight to what is needed by student participants.

Methodology

Phenomenological Study

- Use of transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2007)

Sampling

- Racially underrepresented students who attend four-year PWIs and have participated in a summer bridge program

Data Collection

- 15-30 min. interviews at University of Dayton and Bowling Green State University

Building Trustworthiness

- Peer Debriefing
- Member Checking

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Findings



Future Research

- Larger Sample Size
- Specific Focus on Development or Issues
- Involve More Institutions

Conclusion

I discovered that students not only want academic preparation but also lessons on social awareness as well. The students I interviewed all saw that engaging in the social phases during college is an essential portion of the undergraduate experience. These students took heavy interest in social development, and while they said they did not experience many social issues on their campuses, they still would like to be informed about them. The level of social awareness ultimately depends on the students' individual experiences before and during their summer bridge program.

Selected References

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