

“Lost in Transition: The Struggles of First-Gen, Low-Income Students in Moving from Community College to a Four-Year Institution”

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Problem of Practice

The problem of practice states that first-generation, low-income community college students experience socioeconomic factors that can impede successful transfer to a four-year institution. Students who lack awareness of resources that assist in a seamless transfer process may need help transferring credits and timely academic planning, financial aid, and adapting to sociocultural changes at the four-year institution (Gard et al., 2012, p.287).

Theoretical Framework

Goodman, Schlossberg & Anderson's 4 S's of Coping

Personal Characteristics
Psychological Resources



Characteristics of event or non-event:
Trigger
Timing
Control/source
Role change
Duration
Previous experience

Coping Resources:
Functions
Strategies: information seeking, direct action and inhibition of action

Social support:
Types: intimate, family unit, friendship, network, institutional
Convoy
Function
Options

Research Questions

How do the roles of first-generation and low-income community college students define the transfer journey?

What type of misconceptions did first-generation, low-income transfer students describe to be the most troubling as they began to engage in the transfer process?

What on-campus resources did first-generation, low-income transfer students find the most impactful in understanding the transfer process?

Research Design

- Qualitative instrumental case study
- Participants: Low-income, first-generation transfer students
- Case: Kean University at Ocean County College (Kean Ocean)
- Methods: Interviews and Focus Groups
- Data Analysis: Categorical Analysis (Merriam, 1998)

Research Significance

- Barriers to degree completion such as financial and familial factors create frustration and unwillingness to complete their degree (Davis et. al, 2022; Gard et. al, 2012)
- Bachelor degree attainment is less likely for first-generation, low-income community college students in comparison to peers with college-educated parents from higher income brackets (Goldrick-Rab et. al, 2007; Jabbar et. al, 2021)
- 18% of community college students do not complete degree requirements because they were missing major requirements to facilitate successful transfer (Davis et. al, 2022)



References: Davis et. al, 2022; Gard et. al, 2012; Goldrick-Rab, et. al, 2007; Goodman, Schlossberg & Anderson, 2008; Jabbar et. al, 2021; Merriam, 1998)