

Chapter 1

Support Model to Promote College Opportunities for TRIO Multicultural Multilingual Students in Rural: Empowering Intercultural Competence

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ABSTRACT

According to the Council for Opportunity, the Federal TRIO Programs assist nearly 875,000 low-income students ranging from sixth-grade through adult education from disadvantaged backgrounds (first-generation college, low-income or underrepresented students, or students with disabilities) throughout their academic development. Participating students coming from different cultural and racial backgrounds: 39 percent are White, 36 percent are African American, 16 percent are Hispanic, 5 percent are Native American, 4 percent are Asian American, and 16,000 TRIO students who have disabilities. This case study advocates for and details a comprehensive support model and initiatives to provide intentional assistance and services

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to TRIO-granted and TRIO-eligible multicultural multilingual students. Findings from Academic Support administrators, staff, and students' interviews supported an interculturally-oriented integrated model via the provision of mentorship, tutoring, fostering cultural awareness, and capitalizing on students' linguistic and cultural resources to boost academic performance and retention. The study suggests ways to leverage a university's capabilities to cultivate the program's inclusive learning environment that honors and respects students' diverse cultural and language viewpoints.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of Education has funded TRIO Programs, which initially consisted of three programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, to provide guidance and preparation for students to succeed in college. TRIO Programs included in TRIO are Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Veterans Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services (SSS), Educational Opportunity Centers, and the Ronald McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (Student Support Services Program: Legislation, Regulations, and Guidance, 2011). TRIO Program's objectives include helping first-generation students from low-income backgrounds to successfully enroll in college, finish their studies, and actively participate in the economic and social components of American society. Indeed, participating students in the TRIO Student Support Services program had a retention rate in college that is more than double that of students with comparable backgrounds who did not take part in the program (deupwardbound.org). More notably, since its establishment, the programs have provided valuable opportunities for underrepresented student populations.

Although the programs do not explicitly specify which races are their goal, the majority of participants are racial or ethnic minorities (Bonilla et al., 2011). Approximately 20 percent of Black and Hispanic freshmen who enrolled in college in 1981 were beneficiaries of the TRIO Talent Search. In 2024, the demographic breakdown of TRIO Upward Bound students is as follows: 39 percent are White, 36 percent are African American, 16 percent are Hispanic, 5 percent are Native American, and 4 percent are Asian American, amongst which are 16,000 TRIO students who have disabilities (deupwardbound.org). There is also an ongoing debate and speculation on expanding TRIO program services to target undocumented immigrant students who mostly are English language learners (Oliverez, 2007; Reader, 2023). In fact, by 2021, students of color, especially those that are immigrants, refugees, or have a parent who was born in another country, have officially already surpassed white students in public schools; this was predicted years ago, and we are witnessing the

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