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THE FUTURE TEACHER ACADEMY GROW YOUR OWN: A COMPREHENSIVE AND COLLECTIVISTIC MODEL

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THE FUTURE TEACHER ACADEMY GROW YOUR OWN: A COMPREHENSIVE
AND COLLECTIVISTIC MODEL

by

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MS St. Cloud State University

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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COMPREHENSIVE AND COLLECTIVISTIC MODEL

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DEDICATION

Primero le tengo que agradecer a Dios por darme la bendición de terminar este doctorado. Este doctorado no habría sido posible sin todos aquellos que vinieron antes de mí. ¡A mis antepasados- gracias por todo su sacrificio- valió la pena! Le agradezco a mis padres por inculcarme el valor de la educación. A mi hermana, Noemi- gracias por ser una persona fundamental en mi crecimiento y educación. A mi hermana y comadre, Juanis- gracias por escucharme, ser mi confidente, y motivarme cuando no tenía ganas de continuar.

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NOMENCLATURE

GYO	Grow your own
FTA	Future Teacher Academy
RWT	Recruiting Washington Teachers
MDE	Minnesota Department of Education
SER	Special Emphasis Recruiting

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ABSTRACT

While the U.S. has seen an increase of students of color in K-12 schools, the teaching profession faces a shortage of teachers of color. A range of issues, including engaging and retaining teachers of color, learning outcomes, and ensuring academic success for students, all contribute to the shortage. Teaching focused Grow Your Own (GYO) programs have gained popularity as a grassroots effort to diversify the teaching profession to reflect current student demographics. This study examined existing teaching GYO collaboration models within a K-12 district and a post-secondary institution. The qualitative and exploratory study reviewed the benefits of the GYO Future Teacher Academy (FTA) programming during the college campus immersion experience via a one-week college campus residency. The study took place in a mid-size Midwest public university and used a phenomenological lens to focus on the GYO participants' perspective and experience during the one-week college campus immersion experience. Interviews were used to gather the data and explore the impact that the college campus immersion experience had on engaging the participants to consider teaching as a future career and matriculate into post-secondary education. The data analysis used inductive coding with transcripts and marginal notes. The marginal notes were used to create memos, which then became codes. The researcher combined the related codes into main themes.

Keywords: Diversifying the teacher profession, Teaching Grow Your Own (GYO) Programs, Changing student demographics

CHAPTER 1. PROBLEM DISCUSSION

The U.S. teaching profession is disproportionately White despite a student demographic that is racially diverse. In 2017-2018, about 79 percent of public-school teachers were White (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2021). During this same time, the student population grew increasingly diverse. By fall of 2019, about 32 percent of all public-school students were students of color (National Center for Educational Statistics).

In the state of Minnesota “about 34% of the state’s K-12 students are non-White, while teachers of color make up only 5% of full- and part-time teachers” (Star Tribune, October 5, 2020). Specifically, in Central Minnesota, the geographical area of this study, the local K-12 public school district reported that during the 2022 academic year, a 72.1% enrollment of students of color compared to a 27.9% of White students (Minnesota Report Card, 2022). This K-12 district is a collaborator with the teaching Grow your Own (GYO) program was explored in this study. Appendix A shows in more detail the district’s demographic breakdown; including demographic data that was deemed important to clearly show the district’s racial disparities among teachers of color versus students of color. Individuals working in any capacity in the educational system need to be aware of these demographic changes, as these are not temporary, and things will not revert to the way they were before. After his extensive work with American Indian communities, Bradbury (2021) concluded that “long gone are the days when a teacher could assume their student to be White, Christian, and steeped in middle-class values” (p. 55). The changing demographics of K-12 students are requiring the education system to change to support the needs of current students.

Despite the demographic shifts, the upcoming generation of future teachers remains predominantly White. Gist (2019) noted that the majority of current high school students interested in the field of education are White females. Specifically in the state of Minnesota, where this study took place, during the “2018-2019 academic year, 85% of the candidates who successfully completed a teacher licensure program identified as White (Minnesota, Biennial Report, 2021). Minnesota is a state that has seen an increase of diverse students, with an estimated 34% of the state’s K-12 students identifying as non-White (Star Tribune 2020). Despite the increased number of students of color in Minnesota, the number of teachers of color remains low.

There are a number of reasons why a more racially diverse teaching force is important. Teachers of color are beneficial for all students, not just students of color (Garcia et al., 2019). For example, teachers of color will help White students realize and breakdown bias about different cultures (Gist, 2019). For students of color, seeing a teacher that looks like them can help improve their academic progress and close the achievement gap (Hood, 2021). Gist concurred that the teaching profession should be as diverse as the student body to properly support all students. Additionally, Motamedi et al., 2021, found that if students of color do not see themselves reflected in the teacher workforce, they are less likely to pursue teaching as a profession. A more detailed discussion of the problem is presented in the literature review.

Teaching GYO programs have been gaining popularity by engaging, recruiting, and supporting students of color to enter the teaching profession (Garcia, 2017). Teaching GYO programs are local collaborations between post-secondary institutions and K-12 school districts aimed at diversifying the teaching profession using grassroots efforts (State of

Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, 2016). In general, teaching GYO programs include concurrent enrollment or college credit options, culturally responsive teaching pedagogy, field experiences, and a direct focus on recruitment and retention of students of color (Gist, 2019; State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, 2016). Teaching GYO programs that follow these comprehensive strategies are seeing positive results and are “moving the needle” toward having the teaching profession reflect current student demographics (Adams & Manuel, 2016). The State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board called the teaching GYO models an innovative approach to diversify the teacher profession.

Gap in Literature

Research on the existing teaching GYO programs has identified that there is a gap in the literature concerning programs that include a college campus immersion experience via a college campus residency. The Future Teacher Academy (FTA) is a teaching GYO program that includes education college credit, field experience opportunities, comprehensive student support, and a one-week college campus immersion experience. This qualitative study primarily focused on the impact the college campus immersion experience had on engaging students of color into the teaching profession and matriculation into post-secondary education. While there are many different types of GYO programs, the focus of this study was specifically on teaching GYO programs for high school students of color. The researcher felt that by narrowing the focus on only these programs, the data would present more in-depth and targeted information. Diversifying the teaching profession is a change that requires many systematic changes so having specific information that directly applies will be most beneficial.

Purpose and Focus of Study

For this study, the literature review discussed existing teaching GYO programs for high school students of color that include college credit opportunities, tailored one-on-one student support, culturally responsive pedagogy, and additional student resources to recruit students of color in the teaching profession. While there are many different types of GYO programs, the focus of this study was specifically on teaching GYO programs for high school students of color. It is important to note that the information on teaching GYO models is limited. Additionally, there is a gap in the existing teaching GYO programs for high school students of color that include a college campus immersion experience.

This qualitative study aimed to provide information about the FTA GYO program which is an existing teaching GYO program in Minnesota. More importantly, this study tried to fill the current gap in the research as the researcher was not able to find information about a teaching GYO that includes a college campus immersion experience. The FTA was designed to recruit and support future educators of color, and this program was based around scholars having college campus immersion experience. The FTA GYO program offers comprehensive student supports (similar to existing GYO programs), and it includes a college campus immersion experience via one-week residency at a university in the Midwest. The FTA's purpose is to increase interest in teaching among high school students of color. The FTA program started in 2019, and it has successfully recruited close to 50 students. The focus of this study was to explore the impact that the college campus experience has on the participants' interest in the teaching field and matriculation at a post-secondary institution.

This was a phenomenological qualitative study using a constructivist paradigm focused on the realities of the GYO participants and their feelings around the culturally

responsive sense of belonging model used during the college campus immersion experience. Constructivists believe that there are no absolutes, but rather probabilities and multiple realities or truths (Creswell & Roth, 2018). According to Okezie (2018), “constructivist theory is grounded in the perspective that learners construct knowledge for themselves, and strongly believe that the focus should be on learners and their engagement with their environment” (p. 241).

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to allow the FTA participants to share their realities about the college campus immersion experience. Creswell & Poth (2019) described phenomenological studies as those with the focus of “describing what all the participants had in common as they experience a phenomenon” (p. 75). For this study, the participants experienced the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience. The study’s ontology centered on the students’ view and essence of their experience during the FTA GYO college campus immersion (Creswell & Poth). The subjectivism epistemology allowed participants to share their lived experiences in the college campus immersion experience (Creswell & Poth).

A Qualtrics survey was used to collect descriptive data before the interviews. The researcher coordinated the interviews with an option to participate in-person or via zoom. The interview questions asked about the sense of belonging model used during the college campus experience and if it helped the participants to engage with the teaching profession and matriculate into a post-secondary institution (See appendix G to review the interview questions). See chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation and discussion of this study.

Importance & Significance of Study

Despite the limited information on national teaching GYO programs, there is an understanding these programs can be effective at engaging students of color in the teaching profession by offering concurrent enrollment or college credit courses, incorporating diversity and inclusion strategies, and offering opportunities for field experiences (Gist, 2019; Garcia, 2017; Paris & Bianco, 2019; Washington Professional Standards Board, 2016). Based on the existing literature, most teaching GYO programs include the aforementioned opportunities, but they do not include a college campus immersion experience.

The importance of this study was to fill a gap in the existing teaching GYO programs by exploring if a college campus immersion experience should be considered an integral part of a teaching GYO model. This exploratory study focused on the FTA GYO program, which includes education college credit, field placement hours, diversity, and inclusion strategies and a one-week college campus immersion experience. The primary focus of the study was to explore the sense of belonging model used during the college campus immersion experience and whether it had contributed to the participants' engagement in the teaching field and post-secondary matriculation.

This study contributed to the existing data on teaching GYO and provided information on a GYO program that includes a college campus experience. This exploratory study moved the conversation about the importance of college campus experiences in teaching GYO programs. Additionally, this study provided additional information on the topic of diversification of the teaching profession.

Research Questions

The exploratory research questions were:

RQ1: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to consider the teaching profession?

RQ2: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to enroll in post-secondary education?

Theoretical Framework

Teaching GYO programs are emerging as possible grassroots efforts to increase teachers of color. Teaching GYO models typically include college credits, culturally responsive pedagogy, and educational field experiences. The current study focused on the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience and its impact on encouraging students into the teaching profession and matriculation at a post-secondary institution. The FTA GYO college campus experience followed Strayhorn's Cultural Navigator sense of belonging model. Strayhorn defines a cultural navigator as "translators, coaches and guides" (Strayhorn, 2015, p. 59) who help the students navigate the higher education culture. The FTA GYO sense of belonging model has a strong culturally responsive structure.

Definition of Variables

Students of Color- defined as students who do not self-identify as White. The participants of this study were students of color who had participated in the FTA GYO program, had graduated high school, and had matriculated into a post-secondary institution.

Grow Your Own (GYO) Programs- defined as collaboration program between K-12 school district and postsecondary institution focused on supporting students of color into the

teaching profession. For purposes of this study, the GYO programs explored in this study are all working in diversifying the teaching profession.

College Campus Immersion Experience- defined as a GYO program that includes a one-week summer residency at a university campus. During the college campus immersion experience, participants enroll in at least one education course and experience a stimulation of first-year college experience.

Culturally Responsive Sense of Belonging- defined as “using cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students” (Gay, 2002). For purposes of this study, the culturally responsive sense of belonging was used to measure the benefits the FTA GYO had on encouraging the teaching profession and matriculation into an institution of higher education by the participants.

Cultural Navigator- defined as “translators, coaches and guides” (Strayhorn, 2015, p. 59). Cultural navigators are knowledgeable about the culture, know how it operates, how to get things done, and most importantly can help students know how to be part of it and feel a sense of belonging within the system (Strayhorn).

IRB Approval

The researcher completed the Social and Behavioral Research training through Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative to assure that the participants were protected throughout the different phases of the study. Additionally, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The Minnesota State University, Moorhead approved the study on August 25, 2022 (see Appendix D). Since the research was conducted at a different institution of higher education, that institution granted permission to conduct the study. The IRB approval ensured the wellbeing of the participants in this study.

Informed Consent

Protection of human subjects participating in research was assured. Participants were invited to participate in the study and were aware that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw their participation any time. Additionally, the participants were given informed consent before the interviews. The researcher communicated that this study was part of her doctoral degree program. Confidentiality was protected by using pseudonyms and by not using any identifying information.

Limitations

A convenience sample was used, and the researcher already had a working relationship with the participants. The participants were all former FTA GYO scholars, and the researcher coordinates that program. Another limitation was the low number of participants. There were a total number of nine interviews. The research study was limited to the former FTA participants who live and attend college or university in the Midwest. The participants were enrolled in a post-secondary institution, and this study did not include participants who moved out of the state of Minnesota or had decided to not pursue higher education opportunities. The experiences of the sample may not reflect the experiences of participants from other teaching GYO programs.

Delimitations and Positionality

The researcher coordinated the FTA program and the college campus immersion experience so her perspective could be biased towards the study. Additionally, the researcher ran the interviews, and has a working professional relationship with the participants. The reason the researcher decided to run the interviews was because she already had built trust with the participants. The researcher's relationship could have impacted the students'

decision to participate in the study. Additionally, the researcher works at an institution of higher education in the Midwest and a large portion of the material in this study was from the perspective of recruiting students to a post-secondary institution, which might not be applicable to other institutions of higher education or geographical areas.

This study focused on the college campus immersion experience and how this experience impacted the students' interest in education and matriculation into an institution of post-secondary education. The study did not take into account other internal and/or external factors that could have impacted the participants' decisions.

Scope of the study

The researcher felt that the educational system is a complex one and wanted the focus of the study to be on teaching GYO programs that specifically recruit high school students of color into the teaching profession. Additionally, the study explored only the experiences of those who have participated in the FTA program and who enrolled in post-secondary education. The purpose of the study was to explore if the college campus experience made a difference in post-secondary matriculation and engagement in the teaching profession. This qualitative study aimed to provide additional information to those working towards diversifying the teaching profession.

There are many variations of GYO models. For this study, the researcher focused specifically on those who are working toward diversification of the teaching profession, specifically teaching GYO that recruits high school students of color. In this section, the different elements of teaching GYO models will be explained, and any existing data will be presented.

A Brief Explanation of the Future Teacher Academy (FTA) GYO Program

The current study explored the FTA teaching GYO program and the impact the college campus immersion experience had on the participants' decision to become educators and to matriculate into a post-secondary institution. Below is a brief history and explanation of the FTA GYO program to bring in some context.

The FTA is a collaboration between a K-12 culturally diverse school district and an institution of higher education. Both educational institutions are in central Minnesota, an area that has seen a rapid increase in diversity. Despite the increasing numbers of students of color, the teacher workforce in the region is predominantly White. Minnesota Biennial Report (2021) indicated that the percent of teachers of color within the economic development region (where the study took place) was 1.61% (102 teachers of color and Indigenous teachers). Yet, within this same economic development region, there was 19.83% (16,145 students of color and Indigenous students) of students of color and Indigenous students (Minnesota Biennial Report). Teachers of color continue to be in short supply in Minnesota, especially in Central Minnesota.

The FTA GYO program began as a direct financial grant from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in 2019. Its purpose was to create a grassroots collaboration, modeling some of the existing GYO best practices, to recruit high school students of color into the teaching profession from within the community. Its overarching goal is to showcase and “motivate students of color to enter the teacher workforce and see the profession in a positive light, the cycle of poor schooling experiences must be broken” (Leech et al., 2019).

During the planning phase of the FTA GYO program, a needs assessment was

completed, and different voices and perspectives were included from students, teachers, counselors, and local community members. This wider community collaboration has allowed for a more comprehensive support structure. Appendix B shows the different levels of structure that are used throughout the FTA process. Additionally, during the planning stages, the core FTA staff attended a micro-aggression training to minimize unconscious biases and/or micro-aggressions.

The FTA program structure has broad student support including high school early engagement opportunities, support during college matriculation, and support and follow-up during the participants' college education career. The format of the FTA program is that participants enroll in an introduction to education course and while enrolled in the course, they live on a college campus for a week during the summer. The education course uses the overarching lens of diversity, equity and inclusion while examining the existing educational system. The course was designed to give participants opportunities to understand the educational system in its current stage, to discuss their own experiences within the system, and to formulate what change(s) are needed to support students of color and recruit teachers of color. Teaching GYO programs that allow the participants to learn and discuss their own educational experiences while reflecting on educational systemic racism can significantly motivate students to pursue a career in teaching (Gist et al., 2021).

The FTA includes a comprehensive recruiting process in which teachers, counselors, cultural liaisons, and community members can invite students to participate. The FTA team has identified different organizations that work with students of color in the community and reached out to these organizations to widen the recruitment efforts. The FTA uses a comprehensive recruiting process like Special Emphasis Recruiting (SER) in which the

student's background is central. A core belief of the program is to include as many students as possible instead of excluding or putting barriers for students to participate in the program.

With this philosophy, students are not turned away from the program due to low GPA.

Because the Introduction to Education course is a college level course, the FTA college team, in collaboration with FTA K-12 team, work together to assess the students' academic needs to assure that participants can successfully complete the course and program. The FTA recruits students of color who are sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled at the K-12 partner district high schools, and who have an interest in teaching.

The FTA program includes the participants' family and community throughout the different phases of the program. The program was created using a collectivistic perspective and therefore, family, community, religion, and culture are all important pieces to this program. For example, this wider collaboration begins with the FTA coordinators (consisting of cultural liaisons, an equity coordinator and post-secondary coordinators) meeting with the prospective families to explain the program, discuss expectations and goals, answer questions and have the families tour the dorms where their student will be staying during the college campus immersion experience. Additionally, a complete schedule of the program is shared with the parents. The FTA coordinators are available for home visits during any of the FTA phases. The families have numerous opportunities to connect and meet with the core FTA planning team to ease any concerns about their student participation. For all the past FTA participants (close to 50), this was the first time that they have stayed overnight on a college campus. For many, this was the first time they ever visited a college campus. Therefore, there was hesitation and concern from the participants and families regarding this aspect of the program.

The FTA GYO model includes college credit, culturally appropriate pedagogy, an emphasis on equity and inclusion within the educational systems and a college campus immersion experience via a one-week residency at a public-state university in the Midwest. The FTA GYO model differs from most other GYO programs in that it has the college campus immersion program via the one-week residency at a university campus. During the college campus immersion experience, the participants are enrolled in a three-college credit course, which has a strong emphasis in equity and inclusion within the educational system. Additionally, the participants learn study skills, college readiness and receive one-on-one mentorship.

FTA Cultural Navigator Sense of Belonging Model

This study explored the FTA GYO sense of belonging model that was used during the college campus immersion experience. A cultural navigator sense of belonging model was used throughout the FTA GYO programming and implementation stages. The FTA coordinators understood the importance of having a comprehensive and culturally responsive sense of belonging model and felt that creating a cultural navigator sense of belonging would have the best results. The cultural navigator sense of belonging was used to help the participants feel connected with the post-secondary institution, with the education program, with the FTA staff and the other FTA participants. During the different phases of the FTA, the FTA team gets to know the students, their cultural background(s), their strengths, and weakness and uses this information to create tailored student supports (Strayhorn, 2015). By using the cultural navigator approach, the participants feel welcomed and supported throughout their FTA campus college immersion experience. This approach can avoid feelings of isolation during the college campus immersion experience and instead foster a

sense of connection with the post-secondary institution and the FTA program, staff, and fellow participants.

The FTA model was planned to use a collectivist rather than individualistic model. The FTA participants are students of color and most of their cultures value collectivistic over individualistic goals. From past cohorts, the students seemed receptive to the collectivistic approach, and it helped to build community within the FTA staff, institution of higher education, and other FTA participants. The higher education system favors and rewards an individualist approach (i.e., student grades, scholarships, and individual successes) (Strayhorn, 2015). The FTA staff in their role as cultural navigators work with the participants so they can understand the individualistic post-secondary approach while still retaining their collectivist views and goals. According to Yang (2021) “learning the culture does not mean complete assimilation into it. It means learning how to be successful, but also appreciating the different perspectives and value they bring to the college” (p.21).

The FTA staff emphasizes the value and importance each student brings to the FTA program and to the college campus. The college campus immersion experience is designed to make the participants feel important, connected, and that they matter and belong in the teaching profession and in post-secondary education (Strayhorn, 2015). This theme is reinforced in the day-to-day interactions, the classroom environment, recreational activities, and the daily debrief meetings. The participants can share meals with the president of the university and senior administrators and the FTA participants often discuss how they feel like they are the VIPs on the college campus. These interactions allow the participants to be the center of attention and it helps to create a sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2022). Additionally, university and school district leaders stayed overnight in the dorms to better support the

students during the FTA week.

The FTA staff in their role as cultural navigators “help students build supportive connections with others on campus so they can find that sense of belonging that means so much” (Strayhorn, 2015, p. 60). The FTA staff are available to help the participants after the FTA programming and “stick with students even through turns, detours, roadblocks, dead ends, and even the OCCASSIONAL head-on collision” (Strayhorn, 2022, p. 30). The FTA participants know that they are now part of the FTA family, and they can always reach out for help, guidance, or to simply chat.

FTA GYO Data

The FTA GYO has run three cohorts starting in 2019. The first FTA GYO cohort had 12 participants- 11 students of color and one White student. In 2020, (due to the pandemic), the FTA was unable to hold the college campus immersion program and it transitioned to online activities including bi-monthly meetings and a book club. The book *Stamped* written by Jason Reynolds and Ibrahim X. Kendi (2020) was read and bi-monthly zoom meetings were held to discuss. This book was chosen due to its focus on racism, antiracism, and the role each citizen plays in the societal systems. The Living Room conversations protocol was used during the book club meetings to allow participants to take turns sharing and leading the conversations (Living Room Conversations, 2010). The online meetings and book club were opportunities to stay connected with the students and be able to address the inequalities that students of color and American Indian students face in educational systems.

In the Summer of 2021, the 2nd FTA cohort was able to participate in the college campus immersion experience and 17 students of color were welcomed to the host campus. The third FTA cohort in Summer 2022 welcomed 19 students of color. Every year the FTA

numbers continue to grow, and much of that growth is happening via student and family referrals. Currently, the FTA participants have an 82% percent matriculation into post-secondary institutions. Most of the FTA participants who enroll into a post-secondary institution have enrolled at the host post-secondary institution or local community college.

Anecdotally, there are many stories of personal and interpersonal growth during the college campus immersion experience. For most of the FTA scholars, this was the first time that they had stepped onto a college campus. At the same time, they were able to sit in a university course and sleep in a college dorm. For many of them, they were the first person in their families to enroll in a college credit course. The FTA scholars expressed how special they felt during the week. They often discussed how they felt that they were “the VIPs” on campus who were sharing meals with the University President, a state Senator, and numerous community members. During the daily debriefs with the FTA staff, the students would share they felt comfortable and understood, despite being in this new educational setting.

The FTA provides individual support before, during, and after the college campus experience week. The FTA scholars have access to tailored support provided by the university FTA leadership, K-12 district leadership and local community members. If the FTA participant attends the host higher education institution or the local technical and community college, then the student will have continued support by the FTA coordinators and local community. If the FTA participant matriculates at another institution, then the coordinator checks in from time to time.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since there is a nationwide teacher shortage and most teacher preparation programs are similar in requirements, the researcher focused on the existing literature from teaching GYO models throughout the United States. This study focused specifically on teaching GYO programs for high school students of color, and there is limited information available. This chapter was divided by first discussing the existing teacher of color shortage and contrasting this data to the changing student demographics. Secondly, literature on teaching GYO programs was included as well as the role teaching GYO programs can play in addressing the teachers of color shortages. Thirdly, an example of a well-established teaching GYO, Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) model was explored. This section concludes with the discussion of sense of belonging within post-secondary education and the importance of cultural navigators. The reason the cultural navigator sense of belonging model (Strayhorn, 2015) was discussed in this chapter is because the FTA GYO program used it as the foundation to build community and support for the participants. Additionally, the cultural navigator sense of belonging model served as the theoretical framework for this study.

Current State of Teaching Profession & Changing Student Demographics

While the U.S. has seen an increase of students in color, the teaching profession has a significant shortage of teachers of color. Even in schools that have a significant percentage of students of color, White teachers remain the majority. In 2011-2012, teachers of color represented 18 percent of the U.S. teacher workforce, while students of color in public schools equal 49 percent of the total student population (U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey, 2011). As can be seen by this statistic, the number of teachers

of color who are in the classrooms is not keeping up with the number of students of color enrolled in our schools. By 2017-2018, the National Center for Education Statistics, 2021 found that about 79 percent of public teachers were White. With regard to students of color, the National Center for Education Statistics, 2018, reported that:

“In fall 2017, of the 50.7 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, 24.1 million were White, 7.7 million were Black, 13.6 million were Hispanic, 2.8 million were Asian/Pacific Islander (2.6 million were Asian and 185,000 were Pacific Islander), half a million were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 2 million were of two or more races” (p. 2).

Based on the above statistics, students of color represented most students enrolled in public schools in 2017. There was a 3% increase in the number of teachers of color in the classroom between 2011 and 2017. While this is an important increase, it is still not keeping pace with the changing demographics of students enrolled in public schools, especially when compared to statistics from fall of 2017. The teacher of color shortage is an issue that applies to all schools independent of the student demographic information. An example of this is that even in schools where a majority of students are Hispanic or Black, 54 percent of teachers were White (The National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). If the school had a majority of American Indian/Alaska Native students, 61 percent of teachers were White (National Center for Educational Statistics).

The national teacher of color and student demographic disparity is also being experienced in most U.S. states. This study focused on exploring a teaching GYO program for high school students of color in the state of Minnesota. This program is funded by The Minnesota Department of Education as a method to recruit students of color from local

communities into the teaching profession. In terms of teacher of color figures, Minnesota reported that for the 2019-2020 academic year teachers of color and Indigenous teachers represented 5.64% of all licenses (Biennial Report, 2021). While teachers of color represented about 5 percent of the state's teacher workforce, "about 34% of the state's K-12 students are non-White" (Star Tribune, 2020). Furthermore, the U.S. Census Data (2018) noted that in Minnesota,

"Between 2010 and 2018, the fastest growing racial group in Minnesota was the Black or African American population, which grew by 36%, adding more than 96,500 people. Second fastest was the Asian population, which grew by 32%, adding 69,800 people, followed by the Hispanic or Latin(x) population, which grew by 24%, adding 59,000 people."

Additionally, between 2010 to 2018, the state of Minnesota added five times more residents of color than White residents (U.S. Census Population Estimates, 2018).

Minnesota's residents of color are expected to grow by more than a million between 2018 and 2053, which will represent over one-third of the state's population (Minnesota State Demographic Center, Department of Administration, 2021). Yet, despite all these student demographic changes the state's teacher of color rate is at 5 percent, including full-time and part-time teachers.

Since this study explored teaching GYO programs (which are collaborations between K-12 districts and institutions of higher education), it was important to note that institutions of higher education are also seeing these demographic shifts. Higher education relies on K-12 settings for their student pipeline; therefore, institutions of higher education are also experiencing the same changes and pressure as those in K-12 districts. Additionally, most

U.S. states require that teachers have graduated from a teacher preparation program so if students of color do not matriculate into post-secondary education, the teacher pipeline can be negatively impacted. Carver-Thomas's (2017) research noted the lack of students of color matriculating into college. As an example, in 2007, Black and Latino students made up over 38 percent of K-12 students but represented only about 24 percent of students who matriculated into an institution of higher education (Carver-Thomas, 2017). A year later in 2008, Latino and Black students made up only 19 percent of teacher preparation candidates (Carver-Thomas, 2017). Gist et al., (2021) noted that part of the teacher of color shortage can also be explained by the fact that traditional university teacher preparation programs tend to enroll disproportionately large number of White students. The teacher of color shortage needs to be addressed by K-12 settings, institutions of higher education and local community.

Importance of Having Teachers of Color

Although student populations at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels are becoming increasingly diverse, the teacher population remains overwhelmingly White. One might wonder why this even poses a problem. It could be said that a good teacher is a good teacher regardless of their ethnic or racial background. This is true; however, having a teacher workforce that is diverse benefits all students, not just students of color. For example, CC Network (2021) noted that teachers of color support White students, as those interactions help with "dispelling myths about people of color, particularly those who do not often interact with people of color" (p. 4). For students of color, having a teacher that looks like them can encourage students to choose teaching as a future career (Gordon, 2002). Additionally, Gordon noted that community members and college professors have a vital impact on a young person's career decisions, especially among first-generation students.

Therefore, the importance of having teachers that look like and have similar lived experiences as the students is crucial in engaging these students in the field of education. Gist et al., (2019) research focused on the cultural and linguistic connections between teachers and students. They found that “TOC (Teachers of Color) who have strong cultural and linguistic connections with their students are more likely to build strong connections” (p. 14). Findings from the existing literature indicate that the message is that students of color will benefit from having teachers of color with whom they can share similar lived experiences and have similar linguist and cultural backgrounds. If this can occur, the students of color might decide to choose teaching as their future profession. Bianco & Marin-Paris (2019) in their research with teaching GYO programs, make a strong distinction that teachers of color are important “not only because of their racial or ethnic membership, but also because of their lived experiences and deep understanding of their communities that need them the most” (p. 39). The idea that teachers of color bring a similar perspective because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds and their lived experiences allows for a deeper connection with students of color.

Statistically, teachers of color tend to have higher expectations of students of color, which can lead to higher persistence and academic achievement (Villegas, 2010). For example, Bradbury (2021) found in his work with American Indian students that the lack of teachers of color in their schools was harming the American Indian students by not having high expectations for the students. Bradbury noted “teachers were harming the educational achievement of American Indian children by making excuses for their lack of achievement due to less-than-ideal home life conditions” (p. 69). Additionally, Bianco & Marin-Paris (2019) in their work with communities of color in the educational system found a similar

trend in that schools have not traditionally been a welcoming space for students of color. Based on these findings, it can be understood that teachers of color can help create an educational system that has high expectations and a welcoming educational space for students of color. Gordon (2002) added to this understanding by emphasizing the importance the teachers' identity has in the classroom setting. Gordon noted that teachers have identities and images from their own cultures and local communities embedded in their kinfolk and these can be useful in the classroom especially if they can reflect similar identities and images to those of the students. Okezie (2018) concurred with this idea in his research with a teaching GYO program for African American male teachers. Moreover, Okezie emphasized the importance teachers have on building and nurturing internal and external protective factors, building resiliency, and offering comprehensive and tailored student structures. Findings in the literature continue to emphasize that teachers of color, who look like the students, and who can relate to the students' culture and shared lived experiences, can improve the overall academic performance of students of color.

Research has shown that having more teachers of color can help close the achievement gap. Motamedi et al., (2021) concluded that students of color, who are taught by teachers from the same ethnic and/or racial group, face fewer discipline issues. Having more teachers of color would be of particular benefit to Minnesota, as it ranks "near the bottom of all U.S. states in shrinking the achievement gaps between students of color and white students" (CC Network, p. 6). Additionally, Minnesota has one of the most prominent educational racial disparities in the country (Minnesota Department of Human Rights, 2022). Minnesota discipline data from "2013-18 indicated Black students are 10% of the K-12 student population and represent the highest suspended demographic at approximately

39.5%” (CC Network p 7). During the 2015-2016 school year, Indigenous students were ten times more likely to be suspended or expelled compared to their White counterpart students (Minnesota Department of Human Rights). During this same school year, Black students were eight times more likely to be suspended or expelled compared to their White counterpart students (Minnesota Department of Human Rights).

Teaching GYO Models as a Possible Solution

In view of the literature and current information, the need to recruit and retain teachers of color continues to be a top priority for states, school districts, and for post-secondary institutions. These entities play a different, but significant role in the recruitment and retention structures built to support teachers of color and diversify the teaching profession. Teaching specific grow your own (GYO) programs are homegrown models that focus on the racial representation of teachers of color who live in the community and can relate to students shared experiences (Gist, 2019). State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (2016) noted that teaching GYO programs have a focus of recruiting teachers within the local community and because of this they can be viable solutions to addressing the diversity and teacher shortage. Teaching GYO programs aim to provide an integrated system covering all major areas of the educational system including the curriculum, culturally appropriate pedagogy, recruitment, student support structures and retention models (Gist et al., 2019). Garcia et al., (2019) concurred with the integrated systems approach and emphasized the important role that high schools, teacher preparation programs, higher education institutions, parents/family and community-based organizations play to the overall success of the teaching GYO models.

Although data on teaching GYO outcomes are limited due to their recent

development, there are some positive results coming from this work. Hanover (2019), found that teaching GYO “individual programs have demonstrated positive effects on outcomes, including students’ expressed interest in teaching and pursuit of teaching degrees” (p. 3). The number of teaching GYO programs are expected to increase to fill the shortage of diversity in the teaching profession and include culturally responsive strategies that support students of color.

Teaching GYO models are proving successful in recruiting students of color into the teaching profession (Gist, 2019). An example of this success would be the state of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) education focused GYO. RWT has proven success by recruiting teacher candidates of color as 35% of their participants are non-White compared to 10% in traditional teacher education programs (Garcia et al., 2019). The RWT GYO program will be further discussed in the literature review as an example of a program that is bringing positive results to diversification of the teaching profession. Even with such examples of success, there is still limited data on teaching GYO programs.

Benefits of Teaching GYO Programs

According to Gist (2019), the teaching GYO models are gaining in popularity because of their focus on the racial representation of teachers of color who live in the community and can relate to students’ shared experiences. Okezie (2018) specifically discussed the importance of teaching GYO programs for Black males as they provide comprehensive support. Moreover, Okezie addressed that teaching GYO programs play a crucial role with the participants in developing the whole person and teaching to “learn for life.” Garcia et al., (2019) agreed that teaching GYO programs help to develop the whole

person and added that they can create and implement multiple pathways into the teaching profession by utilizing effective strategies relevant for those communities. A key concept that Garcia et al., provided is that teaching GYO programs can create effective strategies tailored to individual communities. Having different pathways or bridges are important aspects in teaching GYO programs, as these allow the program to meet the needs of the community. Perhaps the most important element of teaching GYO programs is the understanding that to recruit and retain teachers of color, the program needs to meet the individual needs of each of the communities of color.

Understanding the Teaching GYO Partnerships

Teaching GYO programs are collaborations and grassroots efforts that allow the programming to zero in on the needs of the local community. Effective teaching GYO partnerships between post-secondary and community institutions can impact the long-term success or failure of the program (Hanover, 2019). Most of the existing teaching GYO collaborations include a K-12 district and a post-secondary institution. It should be emphasized that K-12 districts and institutions of higher education both benefit from the GYO partnerships. For K-12 school districts, the partnership with an institution of higher education can allow for additional resources and opportunities for their students (Hanover). For the institutions of higher education, the partnership can result in a pipeline of future students (Gist et al., 2019). In a more holistic perspective, “schools are incubators of democracy and therefore must foster a more inclusive and equitable society that is reflective of the world around us” (Hill-Jackson, 2020, p. 435). A fundamental purpose of the teaching GYO models is to have the teaching workforce reflect the community and student demographics and create a more equitable educational system.

Teaching GYO Models: Addressing Student Diversity & Equity

Bradbury's (2021) historical overview of the teaching system noted that assimilation was a part of the educational process, and diversity was not valued until recently. Perhaps, the assimilation process is one of the main reasons why we find ourselves with an education system that lacks teachers of color. A possible solution has been the creation of teaching GYO programs. According to Carver-Thomas (2017), teaching GYO programs are "able to recruit candidates from non-traditional populations that are more likely to reflect local diversity and more likely to stay in their communities" (p. 20). Teaching GYO programs include program curricula that is intentionally designed to engage with students of color to encourage students of color into the teaching profession (Gist, et al., 2019). These teaching GYO models are specifically addressing ethnoracial diversity and teacher of color shortage by recruiting from within the local community (Zinger, 2019). Hanover (2019) in their research reviewing the existing teaching GYO concurred that "GYO programs should address equity and diversity in the teaching workforce in addition to increasing the overall pool of potential teachers" (p.4).

Additionally, teaching GYO models highlight the importance of having teachers who are racially and ethnically diverse and who can share similar lived experiences with their students. These similarities can create a deeper connection and understanding with diverse communities (Greenberg et al., 2021). Furthermore, addressing equity and diversity through culturally responsive pedagogy brings positive change to the teaching profession via college credit and field experiences, and this change will further engage students of color into the field of education (Hanover, 2019). Bianco & Marin-Paris (2019) discussed their work in developing the Pathway2Teaching GYO and its dedication to "disrupting educational

inequities in and for diverse communities by empowering students to become the educators they wish they could have had” (p. 40). RWT & BEI GYO (2020-21) report found that, “educators of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds are critical to building an equitable education system” (p. 2). In addition to the racial and ethnic focus, teaching GYO programs are committed to educational justice (Bianco & Marin-Paris). Gist (2019) was clear in labeling the GYO programs as justice projects capable of creating equitable educational opportunities.

Teaching GYO: Comprehensive Student Supports

Existing GYO models include comprehensive programming delivered through an integrated system. Effective teaching GYO models should include academic and social networks to support the different student needs (Okezie, 2018). Gist et al. (2019) explained an integrated system that covers all major areas of the educational system including the curriculum, culturally appropriate pedagogy, recruitment, student support structures and retention models. RWT & BEI (2021) noted that their teaching GYO programs include student supports such as “college and financial aid application processes, college visits, and opportunities to connect with students and faculty of educator preparation programs” (p. 3). It is these comprehensive and tailored teaching GYO models that transform teacher development with their community-centered approach, innovation, and intervention strategies to our current teacher education models (Gist, 2019).

Teaching GYO’S Comprehensive Recruitment Strategies

Teaching GYO models are purposeful in their mission to recruit and engage students of color into the teaching profession. Existing teaching GYO models discuss the importance of community collaborations, but each GYO program follows different recruitment

strategies. Most teaching GYO programs do not specifically address their recruitment strategies. The nature of teaching GYO models is to follow strategies that work for the local community. This can pose a challenge since there is not a set process. Currently, the teaching GYO literature lacks specific information on the actual recruitment strategies.

Recruiting is an important phase of any teaching GYO model, and one issue programs can face is that despite having strong community connections and collaborations, recruiters can still struggle to “operationalize outreach ideas that prioritize diversity and equity that may increase the number of teachers of color” (Hill-Jackson, 2020, p. 430). The typical recruiting efforts such as posting fliers or web-based recruiting do not tend to work well for recruiting underrepresented populations (Hill-Jackson). Carver-Thomas (2017) argued that using high-touch recruitment methods such as actively following-up, building relationships and offering support are fundamental strategies to recruit teachers of color.

Some research has emphasized the importance of using Special Emphasis Recruiting (SER), which is “defined as intentional recruitment of underserved populations” (Hill-Jackson, p. 433). SER’s purpose is to center on diversity and race when recruiting underrepresented populations (Hill-Jackson). SER is a recruiting process that could work for GYO programs, as it includes a specific set of approaches focused on teacher recruitment that requires the recruiters to go beyond traditional recruiting methods to recruit teachers of color into the profession (Hill-Jackson, 2020). SER prioritizes the group needs over those of the individual and this strategy could work well for teaching GYO models since most of the communities of color come from collectivistic societies. RWT GYO (2022) program emphasizes the importance of having different layers of recruitment including personal contact, peer-to-peer recruitment, school, and community recruitment. SER is an example of

a comprehensive and tailored recruiting model specifically focused on underrepresented communities. For teaching GYO models to be successful in recruiting teachers of color, their recruiting processes should include an extensive and multi-layered approach.

An Existing Teaching GYO Program: Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) Model

The researcher chose to discuss the Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) teaching GYO program due to its similarities to the FTA GYO, which will be explored during this study. The RWT and FTA are both funded by the state's teacher licensing board and recruits high school students. The main difference between the two is that the FTA GYO program includes a one-week college campus immersion program.

Like many U.S. states, Washington has seen an increase in students of color while most teachers are White (Institute of Education Sciences, 2021). In an effort to diversify and increase the number of teachers of color in the state, the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) was given the responsibility to create a program that would recruit, mentor, and prepare high school students to become educators (Garcia et al., 2019.) The Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) GYO was developed to create alternative recruiting paths to increase teachers of color and to have the teaching profession reflect more closely the "diverse demographic of Washington's students (Garcia et al.). RWT is a high school teacher academy designed to recruit and support students as they explore cultural identity and educational opportunities through the lenses of the teaching profession" (Adams & Manuel, 2016).

The collaboration of the RWT GYO includes K-12 districts, high school students, teacher preparation programs, institutions of higher education, parents/guardians, and community-based organizations who all designed and implemented the innovative teaching

GYO program (Garcia et al., 2019). The RWT GYO includes extensive academic curriculum, observation, and reflection time, sharing of lived experiences in the classroom, mentored support, hands-on field experiences, exposure to higher education options and college credit options (Adams & Manuel, 2016). This teaching GYO program provides support and guidance on matriculation to post-secondary process, financial aid support, access to visiting college campuses, and opportunity to connect with faculty from education preparation programs (Adams & Manuel). The RWT program purposefully highlights the importance of having a diversity and equity lens within the development and implementation phases. The RWT GYO academy focuses on supporting the participants as they explore cultural identity and education opportunities through the lenses of the teaching profession (Adams & Manuel).

The RWT program is purposeful, comprehensive, and student focused. This teaching GYO model is showing results as 35% of the RWT participants are non-White compared to 10% in traditional teacher education programs (Garcia et al., 2019). RWT has seen an increase in students who identify as bi/multilingual and multilingual language learners (Adams & Manuel, 2016). Additionally, 90 percent of RWT and survey respondents said that the program helped them to do well in school (Adams & Manuel). Hanover Research (2019) found in a survey evaluating RWT that 59 percent of recent graduates reported that the program increased their interest in a teaching career. This information shows how the RWT GYO program is making progress towards the recruitment of diverse teachers.

Sense of Belonging in Higher Education

As previously discussed, the GYO models are focused on creating partnerships and recruiting and retaining teachers of color. The community sense of belonging created in the teaching GYO programs is fundamental for their success. The sense of community needs to begin within the GYO partnerships and continue in the teacher preparation program. The sense of belonging is crucial in the teacher preparation program to support the student of color towards graduation. In the following sections, the researcher will discuss more about sense of belonging involvement within higher education.

Over the last several decades, sense of belonging has emerged as an important concept to support college students. Sense of belonging definitions have evolved, Hurtado et al. (1997) described sense of belonging as “students’ psychological sense of adjustment and transition to college” [and their connection to the community] (p. 260). If a student can relate to the institution’s environment, then it allows them to feel that they are part of the campus community. Markesteiner et al., (2019) defined sense of belonging as the need to feel respected, included, and valued at the college campus. This is perhaps the simpler definition to understand because it is not surprising that students want to feel respected and valued by their college community. If a student feels respected and valued, they feel motivated and own their college experience, which can result in better academic performance and persistence (Markesteiner et al., 2019).

Sule (2016) went a step further and discussed the need students have to feel that they matter to their college community. Sule explained that students would seek out spaces that foster these feelings. Not surprisingly, these definitions for sense of belonging are hinting that students need to feel valued, cared for, and understood by their college community. If a

student is able to experience these feelings in their college environment, then their sense of belonging increases and they perform better academically and emotionally. In research conducted by Gillen-O'Neel (2021), college students with an increased sense of belonging had a higher academic and social engagement than their fellow peers.

Although sense of belonging is now a well-studied concept within higher education, the cultural, ethnic, and racial factors are often still excluded from the sense of belonging models. For some time, the sense of belonging model was viewed as one-size-fits-all without considering the student's cultural background and what their unique needs might be. The understanding now is that each student arrives to a college campus with different cultural views and shared experiences (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). These different cultural views and shared experiences impact the student's experience while attending college. Hussain & Jones (2021) concluded that students of color faced discrimination and bias at a higher rate than their white counterpart classmates, making their experiences different than those of White students.

This study focused on exploring whether the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience through the use of its sense of belonging model was successful in engaging students into the teaching profession and helped with matriculation into post-secondary education (see chapter 1 for a more detailed explanation of the FTA GYO program).

Cultural Navigators as Sense of Belonging Model

The study explored Strayhorn's cultural navigator (Strayhorn, 2015, 2020) sense of belonging as it was utilized during the college campus experience. The cultural navigator model was fundamental in the creation and implementation of the FTA GYO programming including the education course, field placements, and activities to have the students feel

supported, appreciated and more exposed and comfortable with higher education systems (see chapter 1 for a more detailed explanation of the FTA GYO program). The FTA staff felt that the FTA students would benefit from early exposure to Strayhorn's cultural navigator sense of belonging model as most institutions of higher education are now implementing sense of belonging models to more effectively support students.

Postsecondary institutions are realizing the need to make changes to their sense of belonging models to be successful in supporting students of color and those from underrepresented groups. Strayhorn (2015) discussed the importance of cultural navigators who build a student-centered sense of belonging within post-secondary institutions. Strayhorn explained that higher education is a distinct culture and one that can be complicated to navigate. The culture of higher education includes its own lingo, structures, systems, etc. and these can be challenging for someone who is not used to navigating these systems. For example, Yang (2021) described how financial aid and student support services are a vital part of the higher education culture and many students need a cultural navigator to help understand these systems.

Cultural navigators can play a crucial role in helping students navigate the system and culture of higher education (Strayhorn, 2015). Cultural navigators are especially important for "students whose cultural backgrounds are qualitatively different from the (White) majority or from the dominant codes and values that operate on campus (Strayhorn, p. 58). Cultural navigators have knowledge about the system, know how to be successful within the system, and serve as a bridge for students to achieve their success within the post-secondary institution. Cultural navigators "know the codes of conduct, customs, dominant values, language, requirements, rules, traditions and so much more" (Strayhorn, 2022, p.29).

They are individuals who know about the culture of the institution and are “altruistically inclined or contractually obligated to share that information with a newcomer” (Strayhorn, p. 29). Cultural navigators “walk the walk” alongside the students. They provide their support during this journey by demonstrating, navigating, and following along with the students. Cultural navigators know the student’s interest, goals, culture, and bridge these important factors with the post-secondary institution to create a sense of connection from the student to the institution and from the institution to the groups of students that share similar lived experiences. Students who feel a positive sense of belonging tend to obtain better grades, have higher retention rates, and adjust better to post-secondary structures (Strayhorn).

Cultural navigators see students as capable and responsible for their own destiny within the higher education structures (Strayhorn, 2022). They use “an anti-oppressive, anti-racist, culturally relevant strengths-based approach that is equity-minded” (Strayhorn, p. 30) to support students. Additionally, cultural navigators are equity-minded and acknowledge oppressive structures and policies within the institution that hinder student’s success (Strayhorn). They help to break down the barriers and change the higher education system from within.

Qualitative Study

A qualitative study can be used to empower individuals to share their stories, hear, and uplift their voices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was a study focused on the realities of the FTA GYO participants during the college campus immersion experience. The aim of the study was to explore the participants’ realities and their perceptions around the college campus immersion experience and therefore a qualitative study was used. The purpose of the study was to note whether any of the experiences during the college campus immersion

experience impacted the participants interest in teaching and/or matriculation into higher education. The study focused on the participants and the construction of their own knowledge regarding the college campus immersion experience (Okezie, 2018). Fundamentally the study wanted to hear the voices of the participants and understand their experiences during the college campus immersion experience and exploring if Strayhorn's sense of belonging model was helpful in creating community between the FTA staff and participants.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The population of students of color continues to grow in the United States, yet the teaching profession is mainly composed of White teachers (Gist, 2019). Having a diverse teaching force can benefit all students, not just students of color. The number of teaching GYO programs continue to grow as a grassroots effort to diversify the teaching profession and have it reflect current student demographics. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the existing teaching FTA GYO college campus immersion experience. This study aimed to understand if the college campus immersion experience (which used Strayhorn's cultural navigator model) encouraged students to pursue the teaching profession and matriculate into post-secondary education. The study focused on the effects the sense of belonging model had on matriculation into post-secondary education and interest in pursuing teaching as a profession.

This study wanted to add to the existing literature on teaching GYO programs while studying the aspect that is not in other teaching GYO models--; the college campus immersion experience. Depending on the results of the study the college campus immersion experience might be a feature that more teaching GYO programs want to include.

Research Design

The qualitative phenomenological study focused on the experiences of the FTA scholars during the college campus immersion experience. Phenomenological studies place the emphasis on "the way human beings give meaning to their lives" (Suarez Sousa & Bradbury, 2022). Creswell and Roth (2018) concur with Suarez Sousa & Bradbury and added that there is commonality among human beings over a lived experience. The participants of this study had the shared lived experience of the college campus immersion during the FTA GYO camp. The researcher wanted to explore if based on the students' experiences there was

shared commonalities around matriculation into higher education and interest in the teaching profession. Phenomenological research does not aim to develop a theory but rather bring deeper insight and this greater insight is brought forward by the participants' reality, views, experiences, and perspectives (Creswell & Roth, 2018).

This study used a constructivist or interpretive paradigm, which places its focus on multiple realities (Suarez Souza & Bradbury, 2022). Constructivists believe that individuals, based on lived experiences, create knowledge (Creswell & Roth, 2018). The study specifically focused on the realities of the GYO participants around the sense of belonging model used during the college campus immersion experience. The study explored the participant's feelings and perspectives on the college campus immersion experience and if it helped to increase the participant's interest in the teaching profession and matriculation into post-secondary education.

Research Questions

The exploratory research questions were:

RQ1: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to consider the teaching profession?

RQ2: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experienced encourage high school students of color to enroll into post-secondary education?

Setting

The study took place in Central Minnesota and the participants were students of color. The participants had completed the GYO FTA college campus immersion experience at a midsize public university in the Midwest. The interviews were held at the same post-secondary

institution where the students had their college campus experience. The interviews were conducted in person or via zoom. The participants had all graduated from high school, were still living in Central Minnesota, and had matriculated into a college or university in the Midwest. The participants had contact with the researcher who was the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience coordinator.

Participants

This study focused on understanding the participants' experiences during the FTA GYO program. Therefore, all the possible participants were students who participated in the FTA college campus experience during the Summer of either 2019, 2021, or 2022. The participants were high school graduates who had enrolled in a post-secondary institution in Central Minnesota. The participants were all students of color of Somali descent and most of them were first-generation college students. Convenience sampling was used for this study as the researcher has a working relationship with the students due to her role in the FTA GYO program. The researcher coordinated the FTA GYO program as part of her employment at a post-secondary institution and supported the participants' post-FTA program completion.

Role of the Researcher

Since the researcher coordinated the FTA GYO, she communicated with the participants (via email, phone and in person) to notify them that their participation was voluntary. Additionally, she notified them that their participation or lack of participation, would not in any way impact the working professional relationship they have with the researcher. The researcher chose to lead the interviews because she felt that the students would be more comfortable discussing their experiences during the college campus immersion experience with her as they have an established professional relationship.

A convenience sample was used for this study, as the researcher had a working

professional relationship with all the participants. The researcher had a professional working relationship with the participants and had met with them numerous times over the past one to two years. The researcher is employed at the institution of higher education where the study took place. She made every effort to schedule the interviews in a neutral place for the participants to feel comfortable and at ease. The researcher chose to schedule the interviews at the university as the participants had their college campus experience at that same institution.

Instrumentation

For this study, the researcher used interviews to give the participants the opportunity to share more in-depth information and allow the researcher to ask clarifying questions if necessary (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Additionally, the semi-structured interviews gave the participants the space, freedom, and comfort to discuss their experiences during the college campus immersion week. An interview protocol was used to create consistency among the different interviews (see Appendix E).

During the data collection phase, the researcher was able to understand the participants' reality and perspective through their lived experience while engaging in the interview process (Jung, 2021). Each participant had to feel comfortable and open to share his/her experiences with the researcher. Students of color (particularly those that identify as Black), generally have less trust in educational settings and systems (Fosnacht & Caldron, 2020). The FTA GYO participants self-identify as Black from the Somali culture. For the aforementioned reasons, the researcher felt that as an added effort to reassure the participants, she would run the interviews, as she has a working professional relationship with the participants. Additionally, the researcher ran the FTA college campus immersion

experience and has known the participants for at least two years.

Data Collection

The qualitative and exploratory study began with reaching out to the former FTA participants via email and phone to invite them to participate in the study. Descriptive data was collected via a Qualtrics survey (See Appendix G). Interview questions were used to collect the data (see Appendix G). The interview format consisted of 13 questions covering broad topics of the FTA experience, sense of belonging, academic and teaching engagement, and matriculation in post-secondary education. The interviews were done in a semi-structured format to allow participants to be able to share their experiences in the FTA college campus immersion experience. The duration of the interviews was between 30-40 minutes. The participants met in the public post-secondary institution where they had attended the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience. The interviews were conducted in person or via zoom.

Once a participant agreed to participate in the study, the researcher coordinated the time, day, and location for the interview. The consent form was given to the participants before the interview along with a copy for their records. Once the researcher had the signed consent form, the participants completed the Qualtrics descriptive survey followed by the interview questions (Appendices F and G). The semi-structured interview consisted of 13 questions centered on the participants' experience during the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience. The interview questions were open-ended allowing the participants to discuss their own personal experience during the FTA GYO program. All study data was saved in a password-protected computer.

It is important to note that the interviews took place at the same higher education

institution where the FTA GYO participants spent the college campus immersion experience. The reason behind having the interviews at the same institution as the FTA GYO college campus immersion, was that the participants had spent a week at this setting and were familiar with it. Additionally, being in the same place as the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience and talking about their experience would hopefully evoke their true feelings about their experience. The interviews were recorded using zoom and the recordings were saved in a password-protected computer. To protect the identity of the participants, data were anonymized, and a pseudonym was used for each of the participants during data analysis.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis inductive coding was used, meaning that all themes and codes were created after the data was analyzed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). No preconceived notions or ideas were created before the data analysis. The data was organized into transcripts and marginal notes were used to organize the data (Creswell & Poth). Zoom caption service was first used followed by a detailed check from the researcher. Once all the recordings were transcribed and reviewed by the researcher, then the marginal notes and themes were created.

Once the transcripts and marginal notes were created, the researcher reviewed this information two additional times to verify the data. The marginal notes were used to create memos, which then became categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher combined the related categories into themes and similar themes were clustered together. The themes created a description of what and how the participants experienced during the college campus experience and included textual descriptions of the experience and verbatim examples (Creswell & Poth).

At the completion of each interview, the researcher invited the participants to reach out with any additional feedback or questions after they had time to process the interview questions. Out of the nine participants, none of them reached out to the researcher. The researcher reached out to each individual participant for member checking. Member checking is when the researcher obtains and documents the feedback from the participants on their interpretation of the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Out of the nine participants, six participated in the member checking phase of the study.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research does not aim to provide replicability, but seeks to expand understandings (Stahl & King, 2020). Qualitative research is based on the participants' realities and the shared experiences over a particular phenomenon. Because of the participants' multiple realities, establishing trustworthiness is paramount with qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness as the process of which the researcher is able to persuade the audience that the research and its findings are significant enough to pay attention. For trustworthiness to be achieved, four criteria have to be met: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is the confidence that the results are true and credible from the perspective of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, the research demonstrated credibility by member checking in which each participant was asked to review the interpretations and assure that their voice and experience was adequately represented (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). Transferability is in what ways can the knowledge and/or experience be applied in similar contexts and settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In this study, transferability was demonstrated by understanding that in similar settings with similar participants, commonality among the data

results would be achieved. Dependability refers to adequately tracking all procedures used to collect and interpret data and being able to show that these processes are documented, logical, and traceable (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher used the same semi-structured interview process, same Qualtrics descriptive survey, and similar setting which was a neutral location for the interviews to achieve transferability. Finally, confirmability has to do with producing an actual product that shows the findings and interpretations of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). For confirmability, the researcher used an audit trail (Appendix J shows the audit trail for research question 1) to show repeatable results in data findings. An audit trail is a document that allows to retrace the process used to arrive at the final findings and provide documentation showing possible repeatable results in future similar studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The exploratory qualitative research focused on the experiences of the participants during the college campus immersion experience. Within the college campus immersion experience, the research aimed to find shared themes that made the study findings credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To achieve this collective judgment/perspective, 15 former FTA participants were invited to participate in an interview. Out of the 15 participated that were invited, nine participated in this study. Once the interviews were completed, data was closely analyzed to find themes and these themes helped to make the findings objective.

Ethical Considerations

The participants received information that their participation was voluntary and that in no form will their participation impact their relationship within the FTA program, the university or college, or their working professional relationship with the researcher. The researcher explained the purpose of this study via email, during the invitation phone call and

by providing consent forms. Any personal identifying information was deleted, and a pseudonym was used. All data were stored in a password locked computer that only the researcher had access to.

Cultural Considerations

The researcher implemented cultural considerations during the recruitment and data collection phases. All the participants were of Somali descent and Muslim and no interview was scheduled during prayer times. If any of the participants needed a space to pray before or after the interviews, the researcher was able to help locate a space. Additionally, the researcher asked the participants if they wanted to have a member of the Somali community present during the interviews to help navigate any cultural questions or to make the students feel more comfortable. The Somali community member was someone that the students knew and that had a trusted relationship with the students and their families. This option was presented to the participants and all of them declined this option.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

The present qualitative study focused on the Future Teacher Academy (FTA) Grow Your Own (GYO) program, which includes education college credit, field placement hours, diversity, and inclusion teaching strategies, and a one-week college campus immersion experience that used Strayhorn's Cultural Navigator Sense of Belonging Model (2015). The primary focus of the study was to explore if the sense of belonging model used during the college campus immersion experience contributed to the participants' engagement in striving to become a teacher by enrolling into post-secondary education. This was a phenomenological study, which used one-on-one interviews with semi-structured questions to allow participants the opportunity to discuss their experience in the FTA camp. This chapter will discuss the descriptive survey information and discovered themes based on each research question.

Researcher's Role

In 2019, the researcher was tasked with creating an educational camp experience for high school students of color to encourage them to become educators. She spent several months researching best practices for high school camps that were specifically created to support students of color and first-generation students. During this research, the researcher decided to incorporate the cultural navigator sense of belonging model throughout all phases of the FTA camp experience. The FTA camp experience is an innovative model, as it focuses specifically on encouraging high school students of color to consider the career of education. The FTA scholars took an introduction to education course and had a five-day college campus immersion experience that simulates a first-year college experience.

By the Fall of 2021, the researcher and FTA team noticed that FTA participants were

matriculating into post-secondary institutions at a high rate, and many were choosing to become educators. These data, along with the anecdotal information shared by the students, fueled the researcher's interest in understanding whether the FTA camp had made any contribution to these results. For this study, the researcher wanted to understand if the FTA camp experience (including its cultural navigator sense of belonging model and five-day college immersion experience) had any influence on the students' decision to attend college and/or decide to become educators. Additionally, since the FTA camp had been funded by GYO funds focused on diversifying the teacher profession in the state of Minnesota, the researcher wanted to understand if the five-day college immersion experience should be an added component in other teaching GYO programs. Finally, the researcher hopes to be able to share this information with other GYO programs in the state of Minnesota.

Research Questions

The exploratory research questions were:

RQ1: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to consider the teaching profession?

RQ2: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to enroll in post-secondary education?

Description of the Sample

The study consisted of nine participants composed of three (33.33%) freshmen, four (44.44%) sophomores, one (11.11%) senior, and one (11.11%) other all who are currently attending a public university in central Minnesota. Regarding academics, two (11.11%)

participants identified their GPA between 2.1-3.0; seven (77.78%) participants identified their GPA as 3.1 to 4.0; and one (11.11%) participant was not willing to disclose their GPA. All the participants identified as Somali and four (44.44%) identified as males and five (55.56%) identified as females.

The Qualtrics descriptive survey (see Appendix F) included questions on parent's highest level of education to better understand the participants' post-secondary exposure and knowledge. Statistically speaking, students whose parents have attended college are more likely to finish their bachelor's degree. For example, the Pew Research Center (2021) found that "among 22- to 29-year-olds, those with a college-educated parent are more than twice as likely to have completed a bachelor's degree as those without a college-educated parent (72% vs. 28%)." With regard to the participants' fathers' highest level of education, four (44.44%) answered less than elementary school; one (11.11%) responded middle school or equivalent; one (11.11%) college or equivalent; two (22.22%) responded as other; and one (11.11%) preferred not to answer. With regard to mothers' highest level of education, four (44.44) participants responded less than elementary school; two (22.22%) participants responded high school or equivalent; one (11.11%) other; and two (22.22%) participants preferred not to answer.

Additionally, the descriptive survey included questions about the participants' exposure to college and their overall experience in the FTA camp. For six (66.67%) participants, the camp was the first time they had ever visited a college or university campus. For three (33.33%) participants, this was not the first time they had ever visited a college or university campus. For all nine participants, this was the first time they had ever stayed overnight at a college or university campus.

The researcher wanted to include questions that related directly to the research questions in the anonymous Qualtrics descriptive survey, as she wondered if students would be more open and willing to respond candidly knowing that their information was anonymous. In the Qualtrics survey, all nine participants disclosed feeling extremely welcomed and supported by the staff. At the time that the survey was administered, eight (88.89%) participants replied that they still feel extremely supported by the FTA staff and one (11.11%) still feels very supported by the FTA staff. When it came to the support they felt from their fellow FTA participants, four (44.44%) participants felt extremely supported, three (33.33%) participants felt very supported, and two (22.22%) participants felt moderately supported by other FTA students. When asked about if the camp experience was useful in helping them decide to go to college or university, a total of eight (88.89%) participants felt that it was extremely useful, and one (11.11%) participant felt that it was very useful (see table 1).

The next set of Qualtrics survey questions were designed to assess whether the FTA experience helped the participants understand college or university better. The participants were asked if the FTA experience was effective in showing them what college or university was like. The responses were that eight (88.89%) participants felt the FTA experience was extremely effective in showing them what college or university was like, and one (11.11%) participant felt it was very effective in showing them what college or university was like (see table 1).

The participants were asked if the FTA experience helped them to learn more about education and teaching. All nine participants strongly agreed that the FTA experience helped them to learn more about the field of education (see table 1).

Additionally, the participants were asked if they felt that the FTA experience was effective in showing them what being a teacher was like. Seven (77.78%) participants found the FTA extremely effective, one (11.11%) participant very effective, and one (11.11%) participant moderately effective (see table 1). As a result of the FTA camp, six (66.67%) participants said yes to becoming teachers; two (22.22%) said maybe; and one (11.11%) participant said no to becoming a teacher (see table 2).

Table 1

Qualtrics Survey Questions #1

Question	Not At All	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
	Useful	Useful	Useful	Useful	Useful
	n	n	n	n	N
<i>Was the FTA experience effective in showing you what college or university is like?</i>	0	0	0	1	8
<i>Did the FTA experience help you learn more about education and teaching?</i>	0	0	0	0	9
<i>Was the FTA experience effective in showing you what being a teacher is like?</i>	0	0	1	1	7

Table 2*Qualtrics Survey Questions #2*

Question	Yes	Maybe	No
	n	n	n
<i>As a result of the FTA camp, did you decide to become a teacher?</i>	6	2	1

The final section of the Qualtrics survey had open-ended questions. The researcher wanted to provide an anonymous space where participants could feel comfortable disclosing their experiences during the FTA camp. The two open-ended questions were: do you feel that having support from the FTA helped you? If so, how? (See Appendix H for complete list of answers); and how was your FTA experience? (See Appendix I for complete list of answers). The first question had seven responses and the participants disclosed that the FTA had helped them in relieving/lowering stress (about college), helped them learn more about education, helped them decide on a major, and made them feel that they belonged. The second question (how was your FTA experience?) had eight responses and the responders described the FTA experience as amazing, fun, life-changing, and unforgettable. The participants wrote that they felt more comfortable navigating college after the FTA camp experience.

Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis

The participants were initially contacted via email inviting them to participate in the study. All the participants had participated in the FTA academy and had a professional working relationship with the researcher. For those interested in participating in the study,

the researcher scheduled an interview via zoom or in-person at the university where the FTA camp experience took place. The researcher was mindful that her working professional relationship could impact the participants' interview responses especially those that may not have had a favorable experience during the FTA camp experience. As a way to mitigate this factor, the researcher offered interested participants the opportunity to have their interview administered by someone other than the researcher. The researcher had a member of the Somali community who had offered to conduct the interviews for those who were interested. All the participants declined this option, and the researcher conducted the interviews. Before the interviews were conducted, the participants completed the informed consent (see Appendix D) and the descriptive Qualtrics survey (see Appendix F). The participants received a signed copy of the consent for their records. The researcher read the interview protocol (see Appendix E) to each interviewee at the start of the interview. All interviews were recorded via Zoom and Zoom caption was used to gather an initial transcript. Following the Zoom caption service, the researcher conducted a detailed check on each transcript. The recordings were saved in the password-protected cloud and password-protected laptops. Each interview and transcript were checked three times for accuracy by the researcher.

The qualitative data analysis occurred concurrently as the interviews were being conducted, as recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018). The interviews were transcribed within 24 hours. Inductive coding was used for the data analysis. This meant that all themes and codes were created after the data was analyzed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). No preconceived notions or ideas were created before the data analysis. The transcripts were used to find verbatim comments from the participants that applied to each of the research questions (the data was first organized by the interview questions). The data analysis used

phenomenological methodology by using significant phrases that provided essence to the information as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018).

An audit trail (See Appendices J and K) was created using verbatim comments (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The margin notes were used to create categories (Creswell & Poth). The researcher combined the related categories into themes and similar themes were clustered together. The themes were composed of direct quotes or paraphrases for each question. Five main themes were found for Research Question 1, and six themes for Research Question 2. The themes created a description of what the participants experienced during the FTA camp and included textual descriptions of the experience, with verbatim examples (Creswell & Poth). Once the themes had been identified, the researcher reviewed the information two additional times to verify the analysis.

At the completion of each interview, the researcher invited the participants to reach out with additional feedback or questions after they had time to process the interview questions. None of the participants reached out to the researcher providing additional information after the interview. Once the researcher had reviewed the transcripts two times, she reached out to each individual participant to do member checking. Member checking is when the researcher obtains and documents the feedback from the participants on their interpretation of the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Out of the nine participants, six decided to participate in the member-checking phase of the study. No changes were made to the findings after the member-checking phase.

The data analysis was reviewed based on each of the research questions. Research Question 1 was “how did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to consider the

teaching profession?” The themes for Research Question 1 were programming, diversity within the field of education, learning more about the teaching career, valuing teachers and the teacher profession, and the decision process in declaring current major. Each theme for Research Question 1 will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Themes for Research Question 1

Programming

The FTA camp programming was important for the participants’ decision in choosing or not choosing the career of education as their future career. The programming that was discussed in the interviews included the introduction to education course, the field placement hours at the different childcare centers, the read-a-loud assignments, and the extracurricular experiences. The participants found the introduction to education course interesting as it allowed them to see what a college class was like. Participant #3 referred to the importance of the class as the decision-maker for declaring education as her major due to the knowledge she gained. She said, “understanding the development of kids because we learned about that in the class, so after that, I was like, yes, this is what I want to do. This is my new passion – teaching” (Participant_#3, 2023).

All nine of the participants discussed the importance of their time at the childcare center as being fundamental in their decision to become or not to become educators, and many felt surprised about this experience. Participant #6 was surprised at the connection he felt when he spent time at the childcare centers. He described the experience as “some sort of like connection. And I just felt some type of way and reading to kids, and it was fun” (Participant_#6, 2023). Participant #4 described his experience at the childcare center, as “I didn't think we would be having fun with kids, but once we got to the childcare centers and

got to read the kids, it was fun” (Participant_#4, 2023).

The participants discussed the importance the FTA camp activities had on them because for most of them, these were new activities, and they were able to understand how each activity related back to teaching and education.

Diversity within the Field of Education

Diversity within the field of education was a theme discussed by the participants who chose to become educators. Five participants discussed the importance of having diverse teachers in the classrooms while reflecting on the fact that many of them had not had many or any diverse teachers in their education. The participants felt that diverse teachers would understand their situation, culture, and be able to better support them. These participants discussed that this realization directly impacted their decision to declare education as their major following the FTA camp. Participant #1 mentioned having an interest in education before the camp, but she was not sure she would become a teacher because of the lack of teachers of color she had seen in her own education. She said, “I was a little anxious about becoming a teacher because I had never seen diversity before (in the field of teaching)” (Participant#1, 2023). Participant #4 shared that before the camp she wondered if kids from other races would respect her as a teacher. She said, “before I thought that once I become a teacher, maybe kids of other races would not like me because I'm like wearing a hijab” (Participant_#4, 2023). During the field placement experience, this participant noticed that kids loved spending time with her because she made them laugh and she was no longer worried about how her students would perceive her because of her culture or race. For participant #6, he realized that his community needs teachers like him. He mentioned, “the kids need me, and I will be able to understand them more” (Participant_#6, 2023).

The participants who chose to declare education as a major disclosed in the interviews that a motivator for this decision was to support other students of color. They realize the importance of diversity in the field of education since many of them had not seen that when they were students (see table 3 for audit trail).

Table 3

Audit Trail #1

Discourse and dimension	Example quote
Diversity within the field of education ^a Diverse Teachers Different Races Not seen diverse teachers	“I was a little anxious about becoming a teacher because I never seen diversity before but after the program, and that week it was clear to me because I've seen a lot of diverse people.” (P1) “Before I thought that once I've become a teacher, maybe kids of other races would not like hate me because I'm like wearing a hijab. Because I saw the kids not caring what I was looked like because they wanted to listen to me.” (P4) “It's changed because I noticed that we don't have many teachers, diverse teachers, multicultural teachers.” (P6)

^a Audit trail for diversity within the field of education.

Learning more about the Field of Education

The participants at large discussed an increased interest in learning more about the field of education after the introduction to education class and field experience during the FTA camp. Participant #1 described this process as “I just wanted to learn more after taking those few courses in this program” (Participant_#1, 2023). Participant #7 described the learning as being important because it showed him what he would be doing if he became a teacher. He said, “they’ve covered a lot of components and aspects to teaching and that was really interesting to me. So, my decision went more to education” (Participant_#7, 2023). During the FTA, camp participant #8 reflected on his knowledge by saying, “a teacher is more important than a doctor, because a teacher taught him to be a doctor” (Participant_#8, 2023).

Additionally, participants shared that they felt more comfortable with college classes after taking the course during the FTA experience. Finally, participants described feeling comfortable with the faculty, which was surprising to them. During the FTA camp, they felt that the faculty were caring, knowledgeable, and presented the information in a fun way.

The Value of Teachers

The participants felt that their understanding of teachers’ role and their importance in our society had changed after the FTA experience. The participants reflected on the contributions teachers had on others and on making our society better. Participant #5 described this realization, stating that “it made me realize how important teachers are, and it made me feel that I would be doing something good, not only for me but for others” (Participant_#5, 2023). For this participant, his decision to become an educator was greatly attributed to his desire to help others. Participant #8 realized that choosing a career was not

only about making money but also about helping others. He said, “you work with people, you help out people, you help out kids. You change people's lives (referring to teachers and their work)” (Participant_#8, 2023). Participant #2 was very impressed to meet a male professor and that experience changed his view of education. He said, “he taught us about education and what he did. And I was like okay, I am impressed” (Participant_#2, 2023). Participant #4 who was interested in teaching before the camp mentioned, “teaching was always what I wanted to do, so like I didn't change my decision, but it made me want to teach more” (Participant_#4, 2023). After the FTA camp, participant #9 decided not to become a teacher and she learned that she still wants to work with others and help improve people's lives (Participant_#9, 2023).

For most of the participants, this was the first time they had explored the teaching career. During this exploration, they realized the importance of teachers in their own lives, and some of them used this information to decide to become future educators.

Declaration of Major

The participants described that the camp directly impacted their decision-making in choosing their current major. The impact was independent of the actual major the participant decided on. Participant #1 realized that teachers learn so much from their students, she mentioned, “I know you are teaching, but you are also learning more every day. That's what I want for my career” (Participant_#1, 2023). Participant #7 described this process as:

Before going in (to camp), I was thinking about nursing. Kind of quickly changed because we had different professors and different people in the field of education come in and talk about the benefits of pursuing a career in education (Participant_#7, 2023).

Participants discussed that learning more about the teaching profession impacted what major they chose. Participant #8, “it impacted my decision because I learned that it's important to go for things you have passion” (Participant_#8, 2023). Even those participants that were undecided or decided not to pursue education commented on how the camp made them realize what was important when declaring a major. Participant #9 said, “I decided to go into nursing because I'm still able to work with people” (Participant_#9, 2023) and this career still allows her to educate others and improve people’s lives.

Overall, the participants concurred that the FTA camp experience gave them knowledge used when deciding their college major.

Research Question 1 Data

In terms of actual number of participants who plan to choose education as a major, the numbers are as follows: three female participants were interested in teaching before the FTA camp, and the camp solidified their decision, and they declared education as their major after the FTA camp. An additional three participants (two males; one female) were undecided before the camp and after the camp; they choose education as their major. One male was undecided before the camp and after the camp, he is now interested in becoming a K-12 school counselor. Moreover, one participant was undecided before the camp and after the camp she knew that teaching was not her career (she will still pursue a career in a helping field). Finally, one male was undecided before the camp and after the camp, he is still undecided.

Themes for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was, “How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to

enroll in post-secondary education?” The themes for this question were changes to college perceptions, college exposure and experience, cultural navigators, welcoming and supportive community, confidence and reassurance, and decision to matriculate into current post-secondary institution. In the following section, each theme will be discussed in detail.

Changes to College Perceptions

All the participants discussed a change in perception about college after experiencing the FTA camp. For all of them, this was the first time they had spent significant time (including spending 5 nights) at a college or university campus. Participant #1 said, “I learned that college is not only about a degree so you can make money” (Participant_#1, 2023). This participant went on to discuss the importance college will have for the rest of his life and all the valuable lessons he will learn in college. Participant #3 believed that college was “just a dorm, and nothing outside it,” (Participant_#3, 2023) and she was surprised to realize everything else that was on a college campus. Participant #9 described thinking that college was “you would take your classes, you go home, and you do your homework” (Participant_#9, 2023) and not realizing the different activities and communities that exist within a college campus.

All the male participants described hearing that university was too hard and challenging and how before the camp, they had all decided that they would start their college career by attending a 2-year community college first. Participant #2 said, “college is too hard because some of my friends, they said going to college is a lot of stress. When I came here, I saw a whole different life and I was going to try to come here (for college)” (Participant_#2, 2023). Participant #6 described thinking that professors were going to be too strict and after having the FTA class, he realized they were open and very helpful.

The participants discussed how their perceptions about college changed to a more positive and realistic outlook after the FTA experience.

College Experience and Exposure

The participants discussed the importance the FTA camp had in giving them college experience and exposure. Most of them discussed that they did not understand what college was like and the FTA camp helped them to understand college life. Several participants elaborated on this topic by sharing that the FTA camp was the first time they had had such a positive experience talking about college with adults. Participant #5 put it best by saying, “I’ve never had an experience with adults in school that well in my life... positive, positive experience with adults” (Participant_#5, 2023). Participant #2 said, “every day, we had someone come to tell us about college, about life, about education and that changed my life” (Participant_#2, 2023). Several participants discussed how staying on campus lowered their anxiety about college. Participant #4 described college as “safe and secure” and after the FTA camp, this participant decided to live on campus during her freshmen year. Most of the participants reiterated the importance of knowing the different resources that exist on a college campus. Participants discussed not being aware of the student support resources that were available and how knowing this information gave them confidence and support in their decision to matriculate into post-secondary education. For example, participant #9 discussed knowing where the different resources were on campus after the FTA week, and this made her feel comfortable knowing the university layout.

The participants discussed that the FTA camp experience created a positive experience that allowed them to be exposed to college, its resources, and it supported their decision to matriculate into post-secondary education.

Cultural Navigators

Participants described the significant effect that the FTA camp coordinators had in their journey to matriculate into post-secondary education. The participants described the coordinators as cultural navigators (Strayhorn, 2015). Cultural navigators are being defined as individuals who will be there to support the participants in their education journey (see chapter 2 for additional information on the cultural navigators' sense of belonging model). Participant #5 described it as "I mean you (researcher) even helped me with the application for this university. So yeah, I feel like I had a personal connection with you, and I could call you anytime that I needed some help" (Participant_#5, 2023). Similarly participant #4 felt, "FTA brought us closer to the FTA staff, and if I needed help, I could just contact one of the staff and they would help me with anything" (Participant_#4, 2023).

Furthermore, the participants described the coordinators as guides. Participant #3 said, "there was guidance, and I never really had that much support from teachers and staff" (Participant_#3, 2023). The participants described that the coordinators made them feel comfortable and fostered a family feeling during the FTA camp. Participant #2 described that the coordinators made him feel like he was at home.

The bond the participants built with the camp coordinators and staff was a deciding factor in their decision to matriculate into college (see Table 4 for cultural navigator's audit trail).

Table 4

Audit Trail #2

Discourse and dimension	Example quote
Cultural navigators ^a	

Meeting people/friends	“We met a lot of people. So, you spoke to us. You made us feel like it was our home and I made new friends” (P2).
Felt like a community	“It made me feel comfortable (the community)” (P2).
Friendships	“Throughout the program I was able to make friends and get to know everybody” (P3).
Bonding	“And I feel like we created the family with that bond. So, I feel like it's just the community overall was amazing” (P3).
Connections	“And FTA is like a big part of our reason why I would be finishing school because FTA brought us closer to the FTA staff, and if I needed help, I could just contact one of the staff and they would help me with anything” (P4).
Shared Experiences	“We shared our experience. We spent some time together, and even after I was done with the program, we still connected to the staff, the students, and every time I have any questions regarding my major” (P1).
Help is available	“I mean you even helped me with the application for this

university. So yeah, I feel like I had a personal connection with you anytime I wanted that I needed some help” (P5).

Felt like home

“Because you guys (FTA staff) were really caring people” (P9).

^a Audit trail for cultural navigators.

Welcoming & Supportive Community

The participants discussed the FTA camp experience as a welcoming and supporting community. Since the theme of welcoming and supportive community was quite prevalent, the researcher asked further questions to understand what the participants understood to be a welcoming and supportive community. Participant #2 discussed that he was not accustomed to feeling welcomed and supported. He mentioned that he is used to “everyone doing their own stuff but when I came here everything changed for me (because of the community)” (Participant_#2, 2023). Participant #5 described feeling welcomed because “I felt very comfortable with everyone, and honestly, I've never felt that comfortable with school and adults” (Participant_#5, 2023). Multiple participants described the community as a “family” and that made it feel welcoming. Participant #6 further elaborated on this topic by saying that she felt welcomed, “because we mostly did everything together” (Participant_#6, 2023). Moreover, a few participants shared the feeling of being welcomed and supported because they felt that they were treated equally, they were comfortable with everyone, and they felt understood. The participants at large discussed feeling that they were always able to ask questions from anyone in the FTA camp staff, and this made them feel welcomed and supported. Several participants commented that the fact that there were other Somali students

and Somali staff evoked these feelings for them. Moreover, several participants noted feeling welcomed and supported because the FTA coordinators wanted to try Somali food during the FTA camp. For them, this meant that they were respected as individuals and as members of their culture and community.

For the participants, the welcoming and supportive community made them feel more at ease with their decision to matriculate into post-secondary education.

Confidence & Reassurance

All the participants shared the theme of confidence and reassurance at the FTA camp, especially when it came to their journey in deciding to pursue higher education. Participant #5 mentioned that after the FTA camp, she said to herself, “Oh, you're going to go to college; don't second guess it anymore” (Participant_#5, 2023). Participant #3 shared this sentiment by saying, “I was like I'm going to go here for education for sure” (Participant_#3, 2023). Participant #7 specifically explained this feeling,

Yeah, confident. And I understand how it (college) works. I would say it made me more confident that I can handle university life. I know the resources, and I could find help from the people that want to help me. So, yeah, it made me more confident (Participant_#7, 2023).

Participant #8 described feeling confident because he felt that the FTA “opened a lot of doors for me” (Participant_#8, 2023).

Overall, the participants felt that their feelings of confidence and reassurance in the FTA camp carried over, as they became college students.

Decision to Matriculate into Current Institution of Higher Education

During the interviews, the participants disclosed the reasons why they chose to attend

the university where the FTA camp was hosted. Even though this was not an intended result of the study, the researcher wanted to understand what factors contributed to this decision. It is important to note that all nine participants were attending the university where the FTA camp was held at the time of the study. A reoccurring idea was the familiarity the participants felt with the campus and the relationship they had with the coordinators that worked at the university. Participant #6 mentioned, “you were welcoming like a family” (Participant_#6, 2023). Participant #1 discussed that his decision to attend his current university was because the FTA camp staff helped him with the matriculation process. Participant #4 discussed, “the FTA was at the university campus, and I'm living in the dorms now, because I just knew where to go” (Participant_#4, 2023). Participant #5 felt that the coordinators were like her older sisters, and they would always support her, so she decided to matriculate at the university. Participant #9 discussed that “there's lots of resources out on campus, and it's easier to find the resources because it's not like a humongous school” (Participant_#9, 2023). Finally, participant #7 described the importance of his relationship with the coordinators by saying, “they're part of the university and they represent the university and they're really pushing that university life is not as hard as you think, and we are here to support you. We can help you through the process, and so on, so forth, and that just got me on board to go to the university” (Participant_#7, 2023).

The relationship with the FTA staff and university campus seemed to be a deciding factor as to the reason why they chose to attend the university where the FTA experience was hosted.

Research Question 2 Data

All nine participants were at the time of the study attending the university where the FTA camp was held (the same university at which the researcher is employed). The researcher wanted to further understand the impact the FTA camp had on the participants' decision to matriculate in a post-secondary institution, therefore she asked the participants about their plans of college before the camp and compared those to where the students were at the time of the study. Before the camp, three students did not think they were going to attend college. Before the camp, two students thought they would be attending a 2-year college because it would be easier. Before the camp, four students knew they would be attending college but did not know where they would be going.

Summary

This chapter reported the study results detailing the participants' experience during the FTA GYO camp. The findings suggest that the FTA five-day college campus immersion experience did have an impact on the participants' decision to matriculate into higher education and in their interest in pursuing a career in education. The study found that the FTA camp impacted the participants' interest in education because of programming, diversity within the field of education, learning more about the teaching career, valuing teachers and the teacher profession, and the decision process in declaring their current major. Regarding the impact the FTA camp had on matriculation into post-secondary, the themes were changes to college perceptions, college exposure and experience, cultural navigators, welcoming and supportive community, confidence and reassurance, and decision to matriculate into current post-secondary institution.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss and summarize the study, which explored the Future Teacher Academy (FTA) Grow your Own (GYO) who is focus is on increasing future teachers of color. The identified problem, purpose, methodology, and results of the study will also be discussed. Finally, the chapter will discuss study limitations, future recommendations, and a brief conclusion.

Summary

The U.S. teacher profession continues to be disproportionately White despite the changing demographics. Having diverse teachers will benefit all students (Garcia et al., 2019). For students of color, having a teacher who looks like them can help with building cultural and linguistic connections, which can result in greater academic success (Gist et al., 2019). Additionally, teachers of color can help close the achievement gap. Motamedi et al., (2021) found that students of color who are taught by teachers of color will face fewer disciplinary issues (see chapter 2 for literature review).

GYO programs are gaining popularity in helping to diversify the teaching profession. Teaching GYO programs are grassroots collaborations between higher education institutions and K-12 districts (Hanover, 2019). The GYO philosophy is that the solution to diversifying the teaching profession is found within the community, and it involves recruiting and supporting teacher candidates of color who live and work in those communities.

Even though GYO programs are not a new concept, there is limited information on teaching GYO's that are for high school students of color and that also include a college campus immersion experience. Most college campus immersion experiences for high school

students are interdisciplinary and not focused on a specific major. This study was on the FTA GYO teaching program, which was focused on increasing future teachers of color and included a five-day college campus experience. The FTA GYO program includes an introduction to education college course, field experience opportunities, comprehensive student supports, extracurricular activities and five-day college campus stay. Additionally, the FTA GYO program uses Strayhorn's Cultural Navigator Sense of Belonging Model (Strayhorn, 2015) to support and create community with the participants and their families.

The purpose of this study was to explore if the FTA GYO college campus experience helped the participants decide to matriculate into post-secondary education and if it impacted their decision to become educators (see chapter 3 for the study's methodology). This phenomenological qualitative study used a constructivist paradigm focused on the realities of the FTA GYO participants around the college campus experience. The study consisted of semi-structured questions collected via interviews. A Qualtrics survey was used to collect descriptive data (see chapter 4 for descriptive data). The exploratory research questions were:

RQ1: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to consider the teaching profession?

RQ2: How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to enroll in post-secondary education?

The study consisted of nine participants all who had attended the FTA GYO camp and had matriculated into a post-secondary institution at the time of the study. The study emphasis was on the participants' shared lived experiences during the college campus

immersion experience. The results were that the FTA college campus immersion experience did impact the participants' decision to matriculate into post-secondary education. There were six themes that described this impact which were: programming, diversity within the field of education, learning more about teaching careers, valuing teachers and the teacher profession, and the decision process in declaring current major. Most of the participants discussed the importance of the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience as this was the first time that any of them had spent significant time on a college campus. This was also the first time they had spent time thinking and learning about the field of education. Many of them described feeling surprised that the college course and the FTA programming had changed their perspective on teaching and that they now valued teachers for all that they do to support students. Another important realization for the participants was that most of them had not had teachers of color during their K-12 schooling. For some of the participants, this realization was one of the contributing factors why they chose to become educators.

After the FTA GYO program, six participants declared education as their major. For three of them, the FTA GYO program solidified their decision that education was going to be their career and for other three, the FTA GYO made them realize that they were needed in the field of education. Even for those participants who chose not to become educators, they expressed that the FTA GYO taught them about the field of education and the importance of choosing the correct major. In conclusion, for research question 1, the findings showed that the supportive and welcoming FTA GYO environment along with the teaching-focused programming helped some of the participants decide to become educators. Additionally, most of the participants endorsed a higher regard for teachers after the FTA GYO camp.

Regarding Research Question 2, the participants felt that the FTA college campus

immersion experience had impacted their major because it changed their college perceptions, gave them college exposure, and created a welcoming and supportive community (see chapter 4 for the complete list of themes). The participants shared the feeling that the FTA GYO experience was a welcoming and supportive community where they felt comfortable to be themselves, where they felt valued and where there were other staff and students that looked like them. Moreover, a reoccurring theme was that the FTA GYO participants saw the FTA staff as cultural navigators, which gave them confidence and reassurance in matriculating into post-secondary education (see chapter 4 for more details). Most of the participants described feeling that they felt that FTA GYO staff truly cared about them and that they would be there to support them after the FTA and throughout their college journey. In summary, the participants decided to all attend the same university where the FTA GYO experience had occurred, many detailed that this decision came from feeling comfortable on the university campus and knowing that the FTA staff would be there to support them throughout their university journey.

Overall, the findings showed that the FTA GYO was successful in encouraging and supporting high school students of color into post-secondary education. The FTA GYO benefitted the participants due to its supportive environment, cultural navigators, and teaching-focused curriculum. Firstly, it was able to support students of color (many of whom were first-generation immigrants and first-generation college students) to matriculate into post-secondary education. Moreover, all the participants shared the FTA GYO made them feel connected with the campus community, and they felt that they would be successful in their college career because of this experience. Secondly, the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience proved to be successful in exposing the participants to the teaching

profession. For some, this exposure was a significant factor in influencing them to declare education as their major. For others, this exposure made them realize that they do not want to become educators, but they learned more about themselves and their future career. The participants disclosed valuing more the teaching profession after the FTA GYO experience.

As previously discussed, the teacher workforce continues to be disproportionately white despite the changing demographics. The study findings show some hope that local GYO collaboration programs like the FTA GYO college campus immersion experience can start to “move the needle” toward a more diverse teaching force and towards a more equitable educational system.

Comparison of the Findings with Previous Literature and Theoretical Framework

The literature review consistently showed that having teachers or staff of color could benefit all students, especially students of color. Similar to the literature findings, the participants of this study (all of whom identify as students of color) described the importance of having FTA GYO staff of color, especially staff from their same ethnic and cultural background. They described feeling more at ease, understood, and able to be themselves. Furthermore, the participants commented that their parents felt a similar ease because they were able to speak with the staff in their first language and this reassured them that their student was going to be safe during the college campus immersion experience. Lastly, the participants described the importance of having other students of color in the FTA GYO program. The diversity of the staff and students helped the participants feel that they belonged in FTA GYO camp and in the university. For some the FTA GYO camp made them feel welcome in the teaching profession (see chapter 4 for the actual data matriculation information).

The theoretical framework used in this study was Strayhorn's Cultural Navigator Sense of Belonging (Strayhorn, 2015) as this model is used throughout the FTA GYO program to build community. The cultural navigator sense of belonging allows participants to have someone who understands the higher education culture and who is going to support the student through the thick of their journey within this system. The FTA GYO program uses this sense of belonging model to motivate, support, and advocate on behalf of the student. Furthermore, the FTA staff gets to know the families and support them as they navigate higher education alongside their student. The interviewed participants disclosed feeling supported by the FTA staff and knowing that no matter what challenges they would face in university, they could always reach out to the FTA staff. The participants mentioned that they could tell that the FTA staff cared about them and their well-being. Most of the participants discussed that before the camp, they did not know where they were going to attend college or if they were even going to attend college. After the FTA GYO camp and their familiarity with the campus and the support they felt from the camp staff, they decided to matriculate at their current university. A recurring theme was that the participants felt that they would get support from the staff at any time while they were completing their college degree.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study had a small size sample consisting of nine participants. The study was limited to former FTA GYO participants who were still living in the upper Midwest. The participants all attended the same institution of higher education, which may not represent other participants in teaching GYO programs. Moreover, this study did not include participants who had not enrolled in post-secondary education. The participants of this study had the same ethnic and cultural background, lived, and studied in the upper Midwest.

Finally, this study did not focus on external factors that could have impacted the participants' matriculation into post-secondary schools or interest in education. For example, the study did not account for additional variables such as: how long the participants had been in the country, how many of the participants were first-generation immigrants, and high school academic performance.

Convenience sampling was used for this study, as the researcher is the coordinator for the FTA GYO program. Additionally, the researcher had a working professional relationship with the participants that could have affected the answers. The researcher conducted all the interviews, and the working professional relationship could have influenced the answers. Finally, the researcher is employed at the institution where participants are currently attending.

Future Recommendations

Additional teaching GYO studies that include a college campus immersion experience are needed. This study showed that for the participants, (all who identified as students of color and many as first-generation college students), the college campus immersion experience supported them in their decision to matriculate into post-secondary education. Additionally, it supported their decision to matriculate into the institution where they experienced the FTA GYO college campus experience. The study demonstrated that teaching-focused programming did help the students to understand the education field and to understand the importance of having diverse teachers. For some, these factors were why they chose to declare education as their major (see Chapter 4 for major information). Future studies should include larger sample sizes, include participants who chose not to matriculate into post-secondary education, and include participants in different geographical areas.

Longitudinal studies are needed to measure the long-term effects of GYO programs. For example, a longer study could measure if the GYO students are more likely to graduate college after having participated in the GYO college campus immersion experience. For those participants who chose to become educators, the longitudinal studies could measure the percentage of students who graduate and actually enter the teaching profession. Finally, following the GYO participants through their college career would show some of the barriers students of color are facing.

Conclusion

This study explored if a teaching GYO college campus immersion experience program, which used the cultural navigator sense of belonging model (Strayhorn, 2015), was effective at supporting high school students of color into matriculation into post-secondary education and increase their interest in teaching. First, the results showed that the comprehensive sense of belonging model did support and encouraged the students to attend university. Secondly, it supported them in enrolling at the university where the teaching GYO program was held. Thirdly, the programming helped many of the participants decide to become educators. In a more holistic view, the participants described the FTA GYO college campus immersion as an experience that gave them confidence, created positive association with school staff, and exposed them to a first-year college experience all while having the teaching profession as the focus. More GYO programs that include a college campus immersion experience are needed in order continue to “move the needle” toward diversifying the teaching profession and supporting students of color in post-secondary education.

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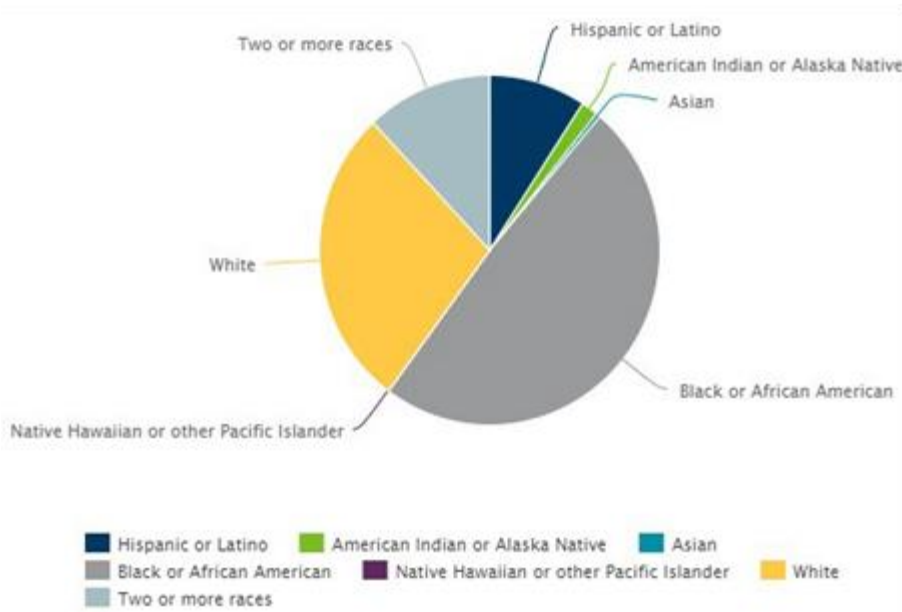
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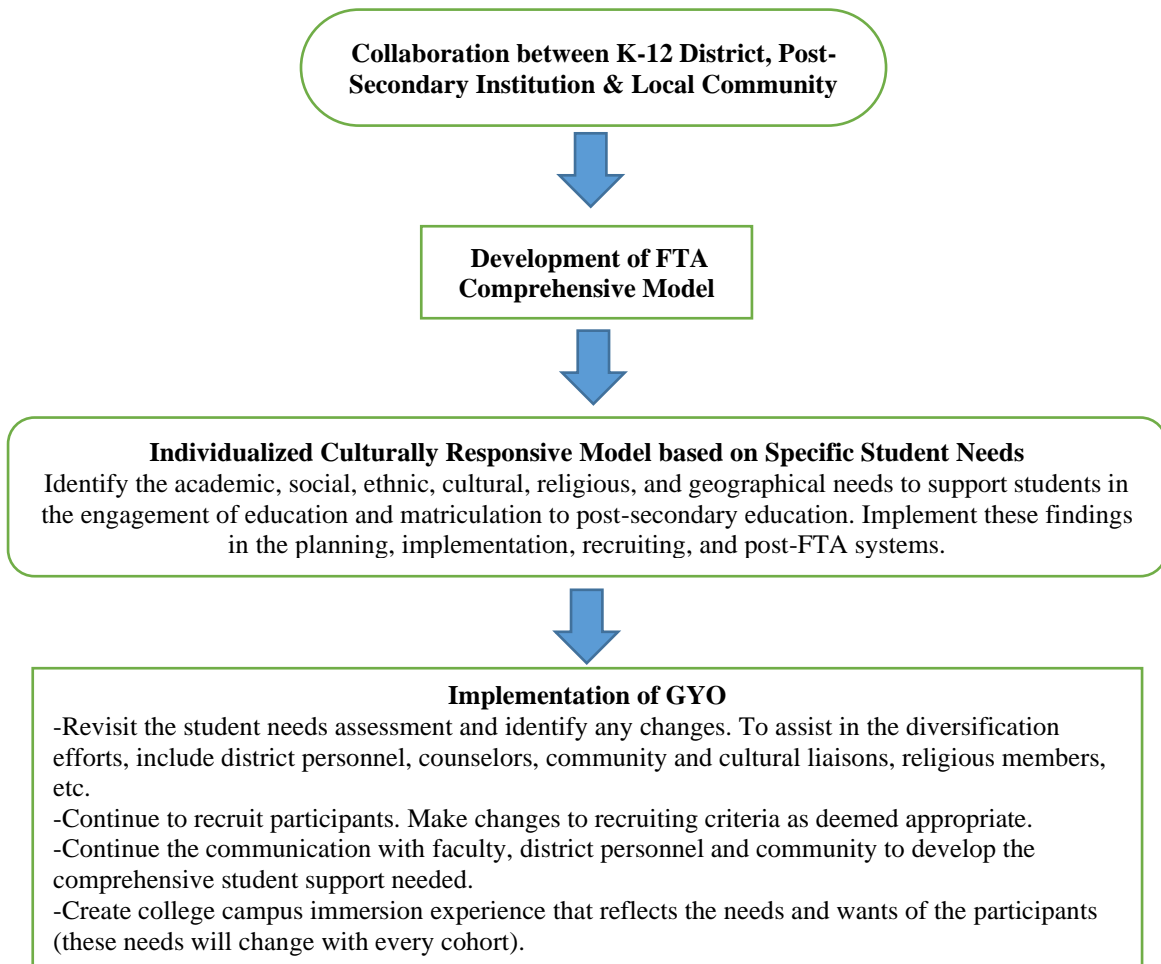
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APPENDIX A. K-12 DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN



APPENDIX B. THE FTA GYO COLLECTIVISTIC MODEL



APPENDIX C. IRB APPROVAL**Institutional Review Board**

DATE: August 25, 2022

TO: Bradbury Boyd, Ph.D, Principal
Investigator Gricel Escobedo, Co-
investigator

FROM: Dr. Robert Nava, Chair
Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB

ACTION: APPROVED

PROJECT TITLE: [1928669-1] Future Teacher Academy Grow Your Own
Model: A Comprehensive and Collectivistic Model

SUBMISSION TYPE: New

Project APPROVAL DATE:

EXPIRATION DATE:

REVIEW TYPE:

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project

and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to the Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB.

This project has been determined to be a project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the [Minnesota State University Moorhead IRB](#). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been issued in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Minnesota State University Moorhead's record

APPENDIX D. CONSENT FORM**Future Teacher Academy (FTA) Grow Your Own Model**

Please read this consent agreement carefully before agreeing to participate in this study

You are invited to participate in the Future Teacher Academy (FTA) Grow Your Own Model.

During this study, I hope to learn more about your experience during the FTA college campus immersion experience. Additionally, I would like to learn if the FTA experience changed your interest in the field of education and if it helped your decision to matriculate into a university or college.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you have participated in the FTA college campus immersion experience. If you decide to participate, I will schedule an interview which will have a duration of 30 to 40 minutes and will consist of 13 questions. The interview will be recorded and any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. You will be able to decline to respond and/or terminate your participation at any time.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with your participation in this study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the knowledge and information that will be gained about the FTA college campus experience.

Contact:

Please feel free to ask questions regarding this study. You may contact me later if you have any additional questions at gricel.escobedo-kingwell@go.stcloudstate.edu, or Dr. Boyd Bradbury, principal investigator, Educational Leadership at bradbury@mnstate.edu.

Whom to contact about your rights in this experiment:

Any questions about your rights may be directed to Dr. Robert Nava, AVP for Academic Affairs

and Dean of Graduate Studies, at 218-477-4308 or by email at: irb@mnstate.edu.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep for your records. You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time after signing this form should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

No personal information will be shared or linked to the responses. Instead, pseudonyms will replace your name. During the interview, you may refuse to answer any questions.

Agreement:

The purpose and nature of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time and my withdrawal will not affect any future relationship with Gricel Escobedo-Kingwell.

By signing this agreement, I also affirm that I am at least 18 years of age or older.

Signature: _____ **Date:**

Name (print):

APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Introductions:

Hello and welcome! Thank you for agreeing to join the discussion on the Future Teacher Academy (FTA) experience. As you know, my name is Gricel Escobedo, and I was one of the coordinators for the FTA. Currently, I am working on my dissertation for a Doctor of Education, and I truly appreciate your support.

For my dissertation, I am focusing on understanding if and how the FTA supports students of color in choosing to become educators and in attending a college or university after high school. I personally invited you because you participated in the FTA and have now enrolled in a college or university.

Please know that there are no wrong answers. I also want to reassure you that you can be completely honest about your experience in the FTA and my feelings will not be hurt or will your responses impact our working professional relationship. Please share your perspective, as it will help to bring more information about the FTA experience.

I am recording the session because I do not want to miss any of your comments. This recording will also be shared with my dissertation committee, but no names will be shared beyond what may be said during this session.

Finally, if you are worried, anxious, or simply want to talk to someone following our discussion in this group, the university counseling services are available for this purpose.

Do you have any questions before we move forward?

APPENDIX F. DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

My name is Grisel Escobedo, and I was one of the coordinators for the Future Teacher Academy (FTA) program. I am working on my dissertation for a Doctorate of Education at Minnesota State University, Moorhead.

I am wondering if you would be willing to take this survey to help me understand more about your experience during FTA camp. The information will be anonymous and will be used and published in my dissertation.

The survey consists of 19 questions, and it should take around 10 minutes to complete. You will also be invited to participate in an interview.

If you have any questions, please email me at grisel.escobedo-kingwell@go.stcloudstate.edu.

Thank you for your time!

Q1 What school year are you in (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, other)?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Other _____

Q2 What is your race or ethnic background?

Q3 What is your gender?

- Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary / third gender
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other _____
-

Q4 What is the name of the school you are currently attending?

Q5 What is your Grade Point Average (GPA)?

- Under 1.0 GPA
 - 1.1 - 2.0 GPA
 - 2.1 - 3.0 GPA
 - 3.1 - 4.0 GPA
 - Not willing to respond
-

Q6 What is your father's highest level of education?

- Less than Elementary School
 - Elementary School or Equivalent
 - Middle School or Equivalent
 - High School or Equivalent
 - College or Equivalent
 - Other _____
 - Prefer not to answer
-

Q7 What is your mother's highest level of education?

- Less than Elementary School
 - Elementary School or Equivalent
 - Middle School or Equivalent
 - High School or Equivalent
 - College or Equivalent
 - Other _____
 - Prefer not to answer
-

Q8 Was the FTA camp the first time you had ever visited a college or university campus?

- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
-

Q9 Was the FTA camp the first time you had ever stayed overnight at a college or university campus?

- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
-

Q10 During the FTA camp, did you feel welcomed and supported by the staff?

- Extremely welcomed & supported
 - Very welcomed & supported
 - Moderately welcomed & supported
 - Slightly welcomed & supported
 - Not at all welcomed & supported
-

Q11 Do you still feel supported by the FTA staff?

- Extremely supported
 - Very supported
 - Moderately supported
 - Slightly supported
 - Not supported at all
-

Q12 Do you feel supported by other FTA students?

- Extremely supported
 - Very supported
 - Moderately supported
 - Slightly supported
 - Not supported at all
-

Q13 Do you feel that having support from the FTA helped you? If so, how...

Q14 Was the FTA camp experience useful in helping you decide to go college or university?

- Extremely useful
 - Very useful
 - Moderately useful
 - Slightly useful
 - Not at all useful
-

Q15 Was the FTA experience effective in showing you what college or university is like?

- Extremely effective
 - Very effective
 - Moderately effective
 - Slightly effective
 - Not effective at all
-

Q16 Did the FTA experience helped you learn more about education and teaching?

- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
-

Q17 Was the FTA experience effective in showing you what being a teacher is like?

- Extremely effective
 - Very effective
 - Moderately effective
 - Slightly effective
 - Not effective at all
-

Q18 As a result of the FTA camp, did you decide to become a teacher?

- Yes
 - Maybe
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
-

Q19 How was your FTA experience?

APPENDIX G. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What contributed to your decision to participate in the FTA camp?
2. Tell me about your experience in the FTA camp?
3. How did your family feel about you participating in the FTA camp?
 - Did your family have any concerns regarding your participation in the FTA camp?
 - Did you have any concerns regarding your participation in the FTA camp?
4. Did you connect with the FTA camp staff? If so, why do you feel that you connected with the FTA staff?
5. Did spending the week at the SCSU campus change your perspective on what it was like to be a college student? Please give me details...
6. Did spending the week at the SCSU campus change your perspective on teaching as a career? Please give me details...
7. Did the FTA camp help you to decide to attend college or university? If so, how?
8. In what ways (if any) did the FTA week impact your decision-making in attending your current college or university?
9. In what ways (if any) did it impact your decision-making related to your major?
10. Did you feel a community or family sense of belonging during the FTA week? If so, can you share some examples?
11. Did you feel celebrated, supported, welcomed and/or appreciated as an individual and as a member of your community by the FTA camp experience or staff? If so, can you share some examples?
12. How would you describe the community during the FTA week?

13. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of being a part of the FTA week?

APPENDIX H. OPEN ENDED QUALTRICS QUESTION 1**Do you feel that having support from the FTA helped you? If so, how...**

Having that support meant most of my worries were taken care of and relieved from my chest.

Yes, the FTA helped discover my major.

I felt like FTA really cared about my well-being. I was scared that I would have no one to ask for help when I needed it most. The staff helped me when I was in FTA and they also supported me even outside of FTA. They believed in me and always made me feel like I belong in the university. They went out of their way to make me feel comfortable. I learned many things from them that I have with me even now.

It has helped me make the decision to come to school here and study elementary education.

I was able to further in my studies in Education.

They helped me with my applications and they were the reason I started to want to go to college.

It helped increase my interest in education.

APPENDIX I. OPEN ENDED QUALTRICS QUESTION 2**How was your FTA experience?**

It was really good.

My experience with FTA was amazing. It help me get into college and also helped me succeed.

It was great overall experience that shaped how confident I would be in college and my capability of doing well in college.

My experience was amazing. If I wasn't told about this, I probably would still be deciding what major I would want to do.

I will never forget the experience I had in FTA. At the time I applied to go to FTA I was having a hard time in high school. I thought I couldn't possibly do well in university since I wasn't doing good in high school. When I got to FTA, I learned about myself and learned about how important teachers are. This experience gave me a whole new thought to school and university. This experience was the start of everything I wanted.

It was amazing and I made a lot of connections from the FTA camp

Amazing!!!

It was the best experience that I ever had in my life.

It was an amazing experience. I experienced what it's like to be a teacher and an education major in such a short period of time. I had so much fun, and staff and support team were all amazing! In result, I couldn't be more excited to become a teacher and more thankful!

APPENDIX J. AUDIT TRAIL

Research Question 1:

How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to consider the teaching profession?

Themes	Codes	Verbatim Comments
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare Center • Program • Activities • Reading/class 	<p>“So, after spending that week I knew it was exactly what I wanted to do, because we did so many programs, had so many activities” (P1).</p> <p>“I met a lot of kids; they are so cute, and I still want to do the field placement hours” (P2).</p> <p>“Because I enjoyed the experience where we were able to go to childcare center to read to the kiddos. Understanding the development of kids because we learned about that in the class, so after that, I was like, yes, this is what I want to do. This is my new passion –teaching” (P3).</p> <p>“You're able to go to places and work with children” (P3).</p> <p>“The activities we did as like groups and as a whole class” (P4).</p> <p>“I didn't think we would be having fun with kids, but once we got to the childcare centers and got to read the kids, it was fun” (P4).</p> <p>“As some sort of like connection. And I just felt some type of way and reading to kids, and it was fun” (P6).</p> <p>“The class we took with faculty, that was amazing” (P9).</p>
Diversity within the field of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse teachers • Different races 	<p>“I was a little anxious about becoming a teacher because I had never seen diversity before but after the program, and that week it was clear to me because I've seen a lot of diverse people” (P1).</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not seeing diverse teachers 	<p>“Before I thought that once I've become a teacher, maybe kids of other races would not like me because I'm like wearing a hijab. Because I saw the kids not caring what I looked like because they wanted to listen to me” (P4).</p> <p>“It's changed like it. I noticed that we don't have many teachers, diverse teachers, multicultural teachers” (P6).</p>
<p>Learning more about the teaching career</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about teaching • More Information on teaching • Thought of teaching 	<p>“I just wanted to learn more after taking those few courses in this program” (P1).</p> <p>“They had like more information on the things that I would be doing as a teacher, and I would ask them about that, and they taught me a lot” (P4).</p> <p>“I never thought about teaching, but when I saw the poster” (P5).</p>
<p>Value of teachers/ teaching career</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to teach more • Importance of teachers • Help out kids by teaching • Increase desire for teaching 	<p>“I know you are teaching, but you are learning more every day. That’s what I want for my career” (P1).</p> <p>“Teaching was always what I wanted to do, so like I didn't change my decision, but it made me want to teach more” (P4).</p> <p>“It made me realize how important teachers are, and it made me feel that I would be doing something good, not only for me but for others. It taught me that teachers are really honestly the backbone” (P5).</p> <p>“Teaching because you work with people, you help out people, you help out of kids. You change people's lives” (P8).</p> <p>“Teacher is very important that's the most important thing in life. They impact people's lives especially high school kids or middle school kids” (P8).</p>

<p>Major Declaration/Decision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major in connection to teaching • Benefits of pursuing education career • Passion for career • Helped with major decision 	<p>“It impacted my major in the way that I think about how, my major in connection to teaching” (P5).</p> <p>“Before going in (to camp) I was thinking about nursing. Kind of quickly changed because we had different professors and different people in the field of education come in and talk about the benefits of pursuing a career in education. And they've covered a lot of components and aspects to teaching. And that was really interesting to me. So my decision went more to education” (P7).</p> <p>“It impacted my decision because I learned that it's important to go for some things you have passion for” (P8).</p> <p>“Helped decide the major” (P3).</p> <p>“I decided to go into nursing because I'm still able to work with people” (P9).</p>
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APPENDIX K. AUDIT TRAIL

Research Question 2:

How did the FTA GYO comprehensive student support during the college campus immersion experience encourage high school students of color to enroll in post-secondary education?

Themes	Codes	Verbatim Comments
<p>College Experience and Exposure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't understand college life • First time in college • Opportunity to stay on college • Experience = comfortable in college • Never talked with anyone about college • Positive experience with adults • College supports-tutoring/resources • Knowledge of the campus 	<p>“My thoughts about college was it was just a place where you go, learn stuff, and pretty much just pursue a career” (P1).</p> <p>“Because I didn't understand what going to college was like. But after I did the FTA, I decided to go to college. It made me understand college life” (P2).</p> <p>“Yes, first time experience because like it's different with high school” (P3).</p> <p>“College is something all high school students are anxious about so if they get this opportunity to come in and stay here for a while” (P3).</p> <p>“And I think FTA taught me to be more comfortable in a college campus that way. I would feel safe and secure and living here right now. And FTA, got me to want to live here and experience college like a normal teenager” (P4).</p> <p>“I had never had anyone talk to me about college before” (P5).</p> <p>“I knew I always wanted to go to college, but what I can say is that it helped me with how college life was going to be like” (P9).</p> <p>“I've never had an experience with adults in school that well in my life, and I never had that much positive, positive experience of adults. I had never had anyone talk to me about college before” (P5).</p>

		<p>“And how there are lot of programs that can help us like tutoring” (P6).</p> <p>“And also because there's lots of resources out on campus, and it's easier to find the resources because it's not like a humongous school” (P9).</p> <p>“Every day, we had someone come to tell us about college, about life, about education and that changed my life” (P2).</p> <p>“I knew the student union, I knew where I could go if I wanted to play bowling, where to relax, where to study—I knew all those things so I was not lost” (P5).</p> <p>“The FTA camp was at the university and I'm living in the dorms right now, because I just knew where to go from” (P4).</p> <p>“I thought we were just going to sit in the classroom, take 3 credits every day, and then go back to the dorms. I was wrong about it” (P8).</p>
<p>Cultural Navigators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting people • Made friends • Felt like a community • Bonding • Shared Experience • Connection • Coordinators are helpful • Help is available • Comfortable • Felt like home 	<p>“We met a lot of people. So you spoke to us. You made us feel like it was our home and I made new friends” (P2).</p> <p>“It made me feel comfortable (the community)” (P2).</p> <p>“Throughout the program I was able to make friends and get to know everybody” (P3).</p> <p>“And I feel like we created the family with that bond. So, I feel like the community overall was amazing” (P3).</p> <p>“And FTA is like a big part of our reason why I would be finishing school because FTA brought us closer to the FTA staff, and if I needed help, I could just contact one of the staff and they would help me with anything” (P4).</p> <p>“We shared our experience. We spent some time together, and even after I was done with the</p>

		<p>program, we are still connected with the staff and the students.” (P1).</p> <p>“I mean you even helped me with the application for this university. So yeah, I feel like I had a personal connection with you and like, and I could call you anytime I wanted or needed some help” (P5).</p> <p>“Because you guys (FTA staff) were really caring people” (P9).</p>
<p>Welcoming & Supportive Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive • Welcoming • Smiling • Guiding us • Answering our questions • Trying our traditional food • Hospitality • Helped with homework 	<p>“Everyone does their own stuff but when I came here everything changed for me” (P2).</p> <p>“Everybody was very welcoming. They were being supported. They were like if you have any questions, you know we're here for you to guide. There was guidance, and I never really had that much support from teachers and staff” (P3).</p> <p>“I just appreciated how every staff took the time to get to know us individually, which made us feel welcomed because somebody's taking the time to get to know us, our hobbies, why we were into education, and how they can support us” (P3).</p> <p>“That's why I felt like it was welcoming, because I felt very comfortable with everyone, and honestly, I've never felt that comfortable with school and adults. So that was my first experience” (P5).</p> <p>“The camp coordinators, they would go out of the way to help. They had joyful faces. They were like come in so on, so forth” (P7).</p> <p>“They welcomed us the whole week. We did a lot of activities. They got me into school that's supportive, you know. They help us earn college credit. They helped us with the homework. They welcomed us the whole week. We did a lot of activities. They got me into school that's supportive” (P8).</p>

		<p>“I had a question you were there with the answers, so I felt welcomed” (P1).</p> <p>“I was like yeah; this is the school that I want to come into because it had great hospitability. It was very welcoming” (P3).</p> <p>“For me personally, I feel that we were all treated fairly. We were always welcomed and felt at least for me, I felt very comfortable with everyone. I feel like I was respected. And my culture and everything (was respected)” (P5).</p> <p>“You guys were welcoming like a family does” (P6).</p> <p>“Did because we mostly did everything together. We ate breakfast together, Lunch. It was kind of like family. We basically did everything together” (P6).</p> <p>“And there were people of my color there. And people that just understood us, and where we came from. So, I feel like overall my experience was good and fruitful one” (P7).</p> <p>“The activities. The way everyone was getting along” (P8).</p>
<p>Confidence Reassurance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence in my abilities • Reassurance • Felt at home/comfortable • Familiar • Accepted/no awkwardness • Other diverse individuals • Accepted and respected self and culture 	<p>“Then when I came here, I was like, Oh, you're gonna go to college; don't second guess it anymore” (P5).</p> <p>“Absolutely it gave me reassurance. It reassured me that I would be okay” (P5).</p> <p>“Yeah, definitely, I would say it made me more confident that I can handle university life. I know the resources, and I could find help from the people that want to help me. So, yeah, it made me more confident” (P7).</p> <p>“But after doing FTA, I was like I'm going to go here for education for sure” (P3).</p>

		<p>“You made us feel like it was our home (P2).</p> <p>“The students there were students of my color. So it just made me feel like more comfortable and relaxed there. And another thing was sometimes we'd have our traditional food” (P7).</p>
<p>Decision to matriculate into current institution of higher education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to others in the university • People that believe and push me • They are available • I know who to reach out to • Familiar • Helpful People • Understanding my situation • Caring People • Coordinators work at the university • The coordinators helped me get into the university • Decided on teaching so decided to come to university 	<p>“People like the Dean and School President...I learned how welcoming and supporting they are and it was my decision to come here” (P1).</p> <p>“I feel like you guys were my older sisters, and I felt like I could talk to you guys about anything” (P5).</p> <p>“My experience was amazing because I got to meet a lot of people very important people that I need in my journey in the University” (P6).</p> <p>“And yeah, they just went out of their way to help us, and to guide us and direct us and give us advice on what was good” (P7).</p> <p>“I connected with you, you understand my situation and you've been through it. And also like how guys are supporting us” (P6).</p> <p>“Amazing, I think you guys did the best” (P2).</p> <p>“Yeah, because you guys were such really caring people” (P9).</p> <p>“The activities. The way everyone was getting along” (P8).</p> <p>“They're part of the university and they represent the university and they're really pushing that university life isn't as hard as you think, and we're here to support you. We can help you through the process, and so on, so forth, and that just got me on board to go to university” (P7).</p> <p>“They did help me decide to attend, and even help me get into it (college)” (P1).</p>

		“It helped me decide to go to the university because of the teaching major and how it requires 4 years” (P6).
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