

Opportunity Gap vs. Opportunity  
Evaluating the Upward Bound Program through the Opportunity Gap Explanatory  
Framework

by  
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## ABSTRACT

First-generation and low-income high school students have historically experienced disadvantages to enrolling in post-secondary education. While there are many programs that assist first-generation and low-income high school students in enrolling and achieving post-secondary education, it is unclear if these programs create equitable opportunities for their target populations. This study explores the realities of the people, and policies in practice at an Upward Bound program to understand if the program creates opportunities for first-generation and low-income students in the program, or if the realities of the people and policies in practice in the program create opportunity gaps thus impacting first-generation and low-income students in the program. The study was conducted through the opportunity gap explanatory framework which provided a framework to understand the educational practices that construct opportunity gaps. The perspective of two administrators and three educators from one rural Upward Bound program was captured. Ethnographic interviews were conducted to collect data and thematic analysis was used to analyze and describe the opportunities and opportunity gaps that existed within the program. The data suggest that both opportunities and opportunity gaps co-exist within one rural Upward Bound program.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

First-generation and low-income college students experience a disadvantage when enrolling in post-secondary education. To combat the disadvantages, the U.S. federal government implements TRIO programs which assist first-generation and low-income high school and college students in preparing for and staying enrolled in college. One of these programs is the Upward Bound program. However, it is unknown if the Upward Bound program and other federal TRIO programs are equitable in the opportunities that the programs provide to eligible students. This research aims to identify opportunities created within the Upward Bound program and identify opportunity gaps that exist within the Upward Bound program through the theoretical framework of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. This chapter will provide an introduction to this study by first discussing the context of the Upward Bound program, followed by outlining the research aim, a statement of the problem, a presentation of the research question, and outline the significance of the study.

#### Context

There is a disparity in first-generation and low-income students' ability to enroll in college and earn a degree when compared to their higher-income peers and peers whose parents' attended college. First-generation college students are defined as students from families where neither parent attended a postsecondary educational institution. According to the Council for Opportunity in Education, only 38% of low-income high school seniors attend college upon graduation (Council for Opportunity in Education,

2020). The U.S. Department of Education found that only one-third of enrolled students in postsecondary education are first-generation students (Cataldi et al., 2018).

One solution the U.S. Department of Education implements to address the gap of first-generation and low-income student enrollment is college preparation programs, such as the Upward Bound TRIO program. The Upward Bound program is one of eight federally funded outreach and student service programs designed to serve individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). The Upward Bound program provides support to low-income and first-generation high school students to prepare them for postsecondary education (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2021), “The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education”.

#### TRIO and the Upward Bound Program

The TRIO program was established with the lead program, the Upward Bound program, in 1964 (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). TRIO was a part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty and expanded in 1965 when the Higher Education Act created the Talent Search program (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). The third program, Special Services for Disadvantaged Students was created in 1968 and this trio of federally funded programs encouraged low-income students and potentially first-generation students to obtain postsecondary education (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education



and Democracy, 2021). As of 2021, there are eight federally funded TRIO programs which serve the mission “to support college access and success for students who are low-income, potentially first-generation, and students with disabilities” as referenced in The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (2021). In 2020, the federal TRIO program served 808,545 students across every U.S. state and territory (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021).

The Upward Bound program is a grant funded program supported by the U.S. Department of Education (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). To qualify for the Upward Bound grant, the program must serve students between the ages of 13 and 19, and all students must be either low-income or potential first-generation students (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). The grant mandates that two-thirds of all students must be both low-income and potential first-generation, while the remaining third of students may be either low-income, first-generation, or are at a high-risk for academic failure (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). These are important demographics to target as only 21% of first-generation and low-income students graduated from a postsecondary institution within six years in the 2011 to 2012 school year (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021).

The Upward Bound TRIO program provides support for high school students from low-income families and from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). The program prepares these students

for higher education and teaches them skills to be successful in post-secondary education. In 2020, there were 966 Upward Bound programs which served 91,793 students (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). Upward Bound programs must provide academic instruction in mathematics, composition, foreign languages, laboratory sciences, and literature (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). Upward Bound programs also serve students by providing cultural enrichment programming, tutoring, mentoring, counseling services, and work-study programs (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program provides students with tutoring, a six-week summer program where academic instruction occurs, cultural enrichment activities and bi-weekly class participation that occurs at each qualified school in the area.

All Upward Bound grants are awarded on a five-year grant cycle (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). At the end of the five years, the program must reapply to receive funding (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). According to the US Department of Education (ED) (2021), the Upward Bound program must maintain records of the following to receive and maintain a grant:

- “The basis for the grantee’s determination that the participant is eligible to participate in the project;
- The basis for the grantee’s determination that the participant has a need for academic support in order to pursue successfully a program of education beyond secondary school;
- The services that are provided to the participant;

- The educational progress of the participant during high school and, to the degree possible, during the participant's pursuit of a postsecondary education program; and
- To the extent practicable, any services the participant receives during the project year from another Federal TRIO program or another federally funded program that serves populations similar to those served under the UB program”.

### Research Aim

Many research studies exist that explain the need for the Upward Bound program, and the federal government conducts annual studies on the performance of the Upward Bound program. However, there are few studies that analyze if opportunities or opportunity gaps are created within the context of the Upward Bound program. The opportunity gap explanatory framework has been defined as an analytical tool to understand and identify opportunity gaps within educational programs, such as the Upward Bound program. The opportunity gap explanatory framework consists of five interconnected components that aid in identifying opportunities (Milner, 2012). These components include color blindness, cultural conflicts, myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mindsets, and context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). There have not been many studies that have analyzed the validity of Milner's opportunity gap explanatory framework. This study seeks to analyze if the realities of the people and policies in practice at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program create opportunities for first-generation and low-income students in the program, or if the realities of the people and policies in practice at the Embry Riddle

Aeronautical University Upward Bound program create opportunity gaps thus impacting first-generation and low-income students in the program.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to understand if an opportunity gap exists at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, or if opportunities are made available to first-generation and low-income high school students enrolled in the program. The opportunity gap will generally be defined as a gap in educational opportunity to all students that is created by educational programming influenced by five components: color blindness, cultural conflicts, the myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mindsets, and context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012).

### Research Question

Does the opportunity gap explanatory framework identify if opportunities or opportunity gaps are created for first-generation and low-income students in the area that the program serves by the people and policies at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program?

### Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The study addresses how to create opportunities for students enrolled in programs that are intended to serve a diverse student population of first-generation and low-income high school students.

### Conclusion

In Chapter One, the context of the study has been introduced. The aim and objectives of the research question have been identified. The research question has also been presented.

In Chapter Two, the existing literature will be reviewed to understand the population of high school students that the Upward Bound program serves. This chapter will also establish an understanding of the opportunity gap explanatory framework.

In Chapter Three, the theoretical framework will be presented. The adaptation of a qualitative case study rooted in a theoretical framework will be explained.

In Chapter Four, an analysis of the data will be conducted. Explanations and details of each theme will be identified.

In Chapter Five, a discussion of the results will be conducted. This chapter will also include recommendations for practical implementation, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research and a conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to understand if an opportunity gap exists at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, or if opportunities are made available to first-generation and low-income high school students enrolled in the program. It is important to understand the value the Upward Bound program provides to first-generation and low-income high school students, the program's target population. The literature review will establish an understanding of the demographics of the target population for the Upward Bound program and explain how the program intends to create opportunities for its target population. The literature review will also describe the theoretical framework the study will be analyzed through, the opportunity gap explanatory framework. This literature review will help establish an understanding of the intent of the Upward Bound program and why this study is relevant.

#### The Upward Bound Program Student Population

One target student participant population for the Upward Bound program is first-generation students. In 2018, 58% of students under the age of 18 had the potential to be first-generation students (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). There are a variety of reasons that first-generation students have limited access to postsecondary education. A factor that impacts a first-generation student's ability to enroll in postsecondary education is academic preparation (Engle, 2007). In 1992, about half of first-generation students were unqualified for admission to a four-year university (Engle,

2007). Further, almost 25% of first-generation students who were qualified to attend a four-year or two-year university did not attend postsecondary education within two years after high school graduation (Engle, 2007). Another factor that impacts first-generation students' enrollment in college is the difficulty they experience in planning for college (Engle, 2007). Due to first-generation student's parents not attending college, they are less likely to have someone to guide them through college applications, take them on college campus tours, or assist them in the college exam process (Engle, 2007).

Despite these challenges, research suggests that there are actions that can be taken to improve first-generation students' college preparedness. It is important that first-generation students are identified early and once identified receive support so they can begin considering the option of attending college and prepare academically (College Board, 2017). A study completed by Ghazzawi and Jagannathan (2011) found a positive correlation between students who attend a summer college preparation program and those same students attending college. Romero (2020) also found that many alumni of the Upward Bound program found their experience life-changing in preparing them for college. These studies highlight the importance of creating opportunities for the target population the Upward Bound program serves.

The second target population for the Upward Bound program is low-income students. A low-income student is defined as a family whose taxable income for the preceding year didn't surpass 150% of the poverty level (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). Low-income students are less likely to attend postsecondary institutions than their higher-income peers. In 2019, 48% of students whose families made less than \$45,360 enrolled in postsecondary education following high school graduation (The Pell

Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). In comparison, 78% of students whose families made the highest quartile, \$138,748 and above, enrolled in postsecondary education following high school graduation (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021).

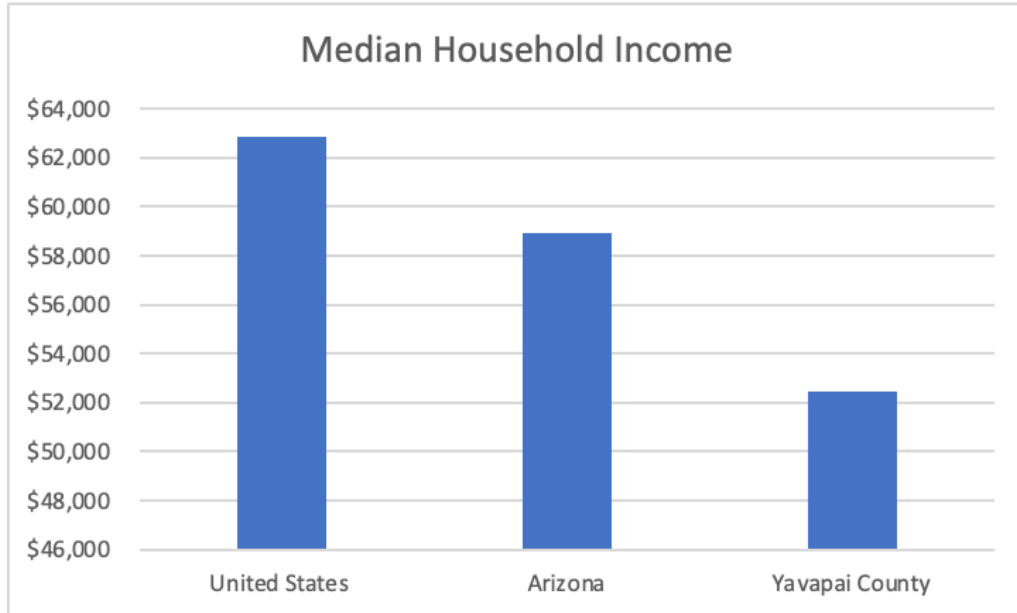
There are four factors that influence a low-income student's ability to adjust to postsecondary education: personal, family, cultural, and structural factors (Berg, 2010). Low-income students must be self-motivated to be successful in college to complete the assigned work and to identify university resources that will help them succeed (Berg, 2010). Both the decision to enroll in college and the ability to continue enrollment in college is impacted by the student's family (Berg, 2010). Family is an important factor for low-income student success because family can either encourage or discourage students to attend college (Berg, 2010). A student who is psychologically and emotionally encouraged to attend college is more likely to attend a university than students who are not encouraged (Berg, 2010). Additionally, family impacts a low-income student's ability to enroll in college based upon the responsibilities and expectations that a student has that might prevent them from leaving the home, such as getting a job, getting married, childcare, or chores (Berg, 2010). Cultural background and cultural capital also influence low-income students' success in college (Berg, 2010). Students expressed feelings of not fitting in at a college due to their different cultural experiences, such as lack of travel (Berg, 2010). The structure of college, especially economically, impacts how a low-income student succeeds in college. Some low-income students must work while taking classes and completing homework (Berg, 2010). The



structure of college makes it difficult for some low-income students to succeed while balancing multiple responsibilities. These four barriers are different than the barriers that higher-income students face and create a more challenging landscape for low-income students to succeed in college.

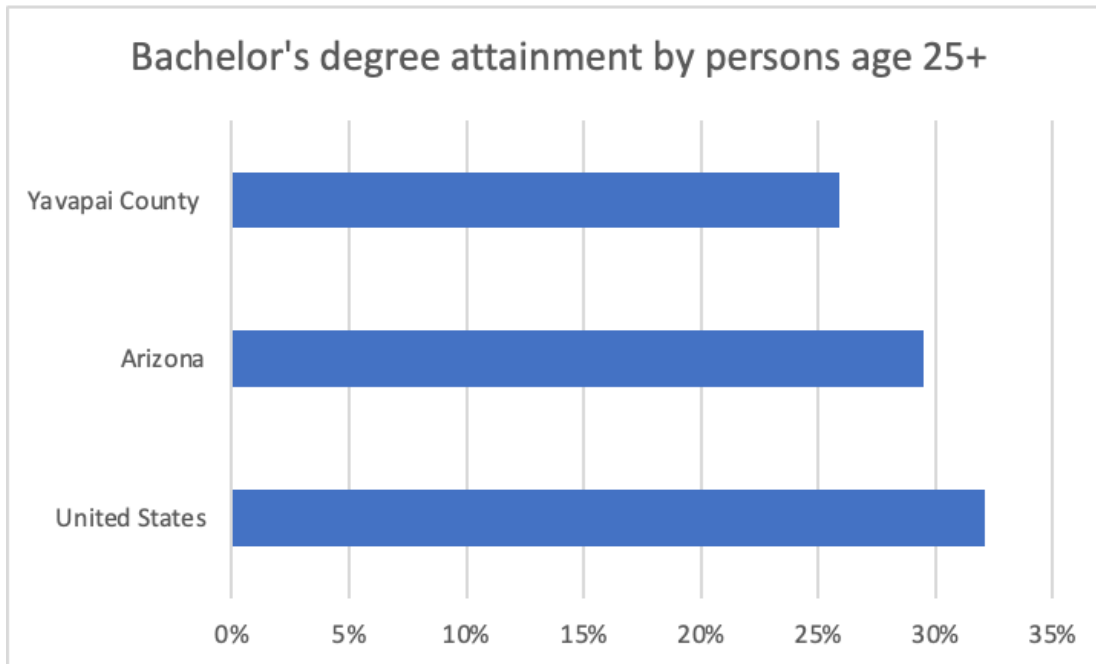
In FY21, there were 966 Upward Bound programs in operation with a total funding allocation of \$335,817,182 for all programs combined (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). Of these programs, 12 Upward Bound programs serve the state of Arizona and serve a total of 789 participants (*TRIO Map Viewer*, 2021). This study focuses on one Upward Bound program located in Northern Arizona, the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program serves 65 participants annually (*TRIO Map Viewer*, 2021). The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program primarily serves five high schools: Chino Valley High School, Bradshaw Mountain High School, Mayer High School, Yavapai County High School, and Tri-City College Prep High School (Opitz, 2022). Four of these high schools are designated as Federal Title 1 schools: Mayer High School, Chino Valley High School, and Bradshaw Mountain High School (Opitz, 2022).

Based upon the requirements to participate in the Upward Bound program, the need for an Upward Bound program in Yavapai County, the area in which the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University is located, is high. In Yavapai County, the median household income is below the median income of both the state of Arizona and the United States (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Arizona; Yavapai County, Arizona; United States*, 2020).



*Figure 1: Median Household Income in the U.S., Arizona, and Yavapai County*

The educational attainment in the Yavapai County area is low, which leads to the potential for a large quantity of potential first-generation students in the area. In Yavapai County, only 25.9% of individuals aged 25 or older have obtained a bachelor’s degree (*U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Arizona; Yavapai County, Arizona; United States, 2020*). The lower income of the area combined with the high levels of potential first-generation students creates a need for the Upward Bound TRIO program to exist within the Yavapai County area.



*Figure 2: Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Persons Age 25+*

### The Opportunity Gap Explanatory Framework

To determine if the Upward Bound program is creating opportunities that are accessible for first-generation and low-income high school students with diverse backgrounds, the study will be conducted through the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The opportunity gap explanatory framework is constructed of five components that are interconnected: color blindness, cultural conflicts, the myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mindsets, and context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). As Milner (2012) states, "...the central constructs of the framework can serve as analytic tools to explain both positive and negative aspects and realities of people, places, and policies in educational practice".

Studying educational policies through an opportunity gap explanatory framework provides a process-based evaluation in contrast to the achievement gap framework

(Milner, 2012). A process-based evaluation analyzes if the educational program is operating as it intended and can aid in determining if the target population of the program is being served (Bowie & Bronte-Tinkew, 2008). The results of a process-based evaluation should help identify processes that need to change to improve service delivery (Bowie & Bronte-Tinkew, 2008). The achievement gap framework evaluates students based upon comparison of culturally diverse students to white students (Milner, 2012). The achievement gap framework focuses research on students' achievement, rather than the inequitable systems and structures that can create a perception of an achievement gap (Milner, 2012).

It is more beneficial to evaluate the Upward Bound program based upon the opportunity gap explanatory framework rather than the achievement gap because the Upward Bound program is designed to help first-generation and low-income students attend college. The Upward Bound program is designed to provide opportunities through academic resources for students who are low-income or first-generation, which includes students of cultural, ethnic, and racially diverse backgrounds. These academic resources include "...tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, work-study programs, education, or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students..." (US Department of Education (ED), 2021). The academic resources provided to students before enrollment in college assist the students in preparing for life in college (Adelman, 1999). Students provided with academic resources pre-college are more likely to earn their bachelor's degree (Adelman, 1999). This study frames the Upward Bound program in an opportunity gap explanatory theoretical framework to

further understand how the reality of the program impacts the academic opportunities that can assist a high school student in college preparation.

To better understand the opportunity gap explanatory framework, each component will be explained in further depth. Color blindness is the practice of omitting an individual's race when making decisions, forming impressions, and enacting behaviors (Apfelbaum, et al., 2012). A color-blind mindset operates under the belief that if one doesn't observe the race of others, then one cannot be racist (Apfelbaum, et al., 2012). Not all color-blind practices are intentional. Educators might not realize that their upbringing and cultural background impacts what content they teach and how they teach and present curriculum (Milner, 2010).

Regardless of the intentionality of a color-blind mindset, color-blind practices create an opportunity gap in educational settings. How an administrator or educator views the world impacts the learning opportunities available to each student (Milner, 2010). If a demographic divide persists between students and educators, an opportunity gap is created because the student's race is omitted, and the student is not taught as a whole student (Milner, 2012). Thus, an opportunity gap is formed. When educators practice in a color-blind mindset, it becomes difficult for educators to recognize systemic disparities in educational practices (Milner, 2012).

In the classroom and in educational programs, it is helpful for students to have relevant cultural points of reference. When educators have different cultural reference points than their students, or do not try to incorporate their students' culture into the classroom, a cultural conflict is created (Milner, 2012). Cultural conflicts can limit the learning opportunities available to students (Howard, 2001). Sometimes when educators

and students have cultural conflict, educators and students will work against one another, thus leaving the student to believe that their social contexts are irrelevant (Milner, 2010). This feeling of irrelevance can result in students discontinuing engagement in the classroom (Milner, 2010). Students who have more cultural consistency with their school will have greater opportunities for academic success (Banks, 1998).

Another component of the opportunity gap are myths of meritocracy. Some educators are more comfortable discussing the socioeconomic status of their students than the student's race. However, educators often do not understand the full context of how a student's socioeconomic status impacts the student (Milner, 2010; Milner 2012). Some educators believe that an individual's socioeconomic status is earned (Milner, 2010). When an educator believes that socioeconomic status is earned, they disregard the inequities that low-income or low socioeconomic individuals experience (Milner, 2012). Meritocracy creates a false narrative that all people have equitable opportunities. Meritocracy ignores the systemic barriers such as sexism, racism, discrimination, and classism that are embedded in societal and classroom practices (Milner, 2012). When program staff and administrators begin to believe in meritocracy, they begin to create a gap in opportunity by believing the myth of meritocracy.

Another contributing factor to the opportunity gap is teachers' expectations on student achievement. Some teachers draw expectations from many factors including students prior achievement, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and diagnostic labeling (Peterson, et al., 2016). When an educator creates low expectations for students, they may teach less difficult curriculum and limit learning opportunities for their students (Gay, 2010). If an educator possesses a deficit mindset, they may believe that less

difficult curriculum is benefitting their students (Gay, 2010). Some students may disengage when they are not challenged and when the curriculum is not relevant to their lives (Milner, 2012). Educators may then believe that their students are incapable of success, thus perpetuating a cycle of low expectations and deficit mindsets (Milner, 2012). Educators should understand the complexities of working in urban, rural, and suburban areas (Milner, 2012). Understanding multiple contexts and social settings will help create opportunities for students.

Social contexts where students and educators live have a tremendous impact on their behavior, development, and thinking (Milner, 2012). Some educators believe that their students live in the same social context as themselves, which creates a context-neutral mindset. The dilemma with a context-neutral mindset is that the mindset doesn't allow for educators to consider the realities or inequalities of other social contexts (Milner, 2012). The social and physical setting of a student's life does influence opportunities available to the student (Milner, 2012). It is critical for educators to understand the broad and more centralized social factors that influence their work and their students (Milner, 2012).

### Conclusion

The existing literature suggests that first-generation and low-income students must overcome many obstacles to be admitted into colleges and universities. Almost 25% of first-generation students who were qualified to attend a four-year or two-year university did not attend postsecondary education within two years after high school graduation (Engle, 2007). In 2019, 48% of students whose families made less than \$45,360 enrolled in postsecondary education following high school graduation (The Pell

Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). However, there is a positive correlation between students who attend summer college preparation programs and those same students attending college (Ghazzawi & Jagannathan, 2011).

The opportunity gap explanatory framework provides a process-based evaluation to analyze if educational programs, such as the Upward Bound program, have an opportunity gap or if opportunities are being created (Milner, 2012). By analyzing the Upward Bound program through the lens of the five components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework, this study aims to understand if opportunity gaps exist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

This study aims to understand if opportunity gaps exist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, or if opportunities are created for the target population. The existing literature suggests a need for additional research on this topic as there is currently limited research on the opportunity gap explanatory framework.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to examine if opportunity gaps exist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The qualitative study was conducted through an opportunity gap explanatory framework to determine if the program had opportunity gaps or if the programming created opportunities. The data was collected through ethnographic interviews to best understand the culture and individual experiences of the subjects interviewed at the selected program site.

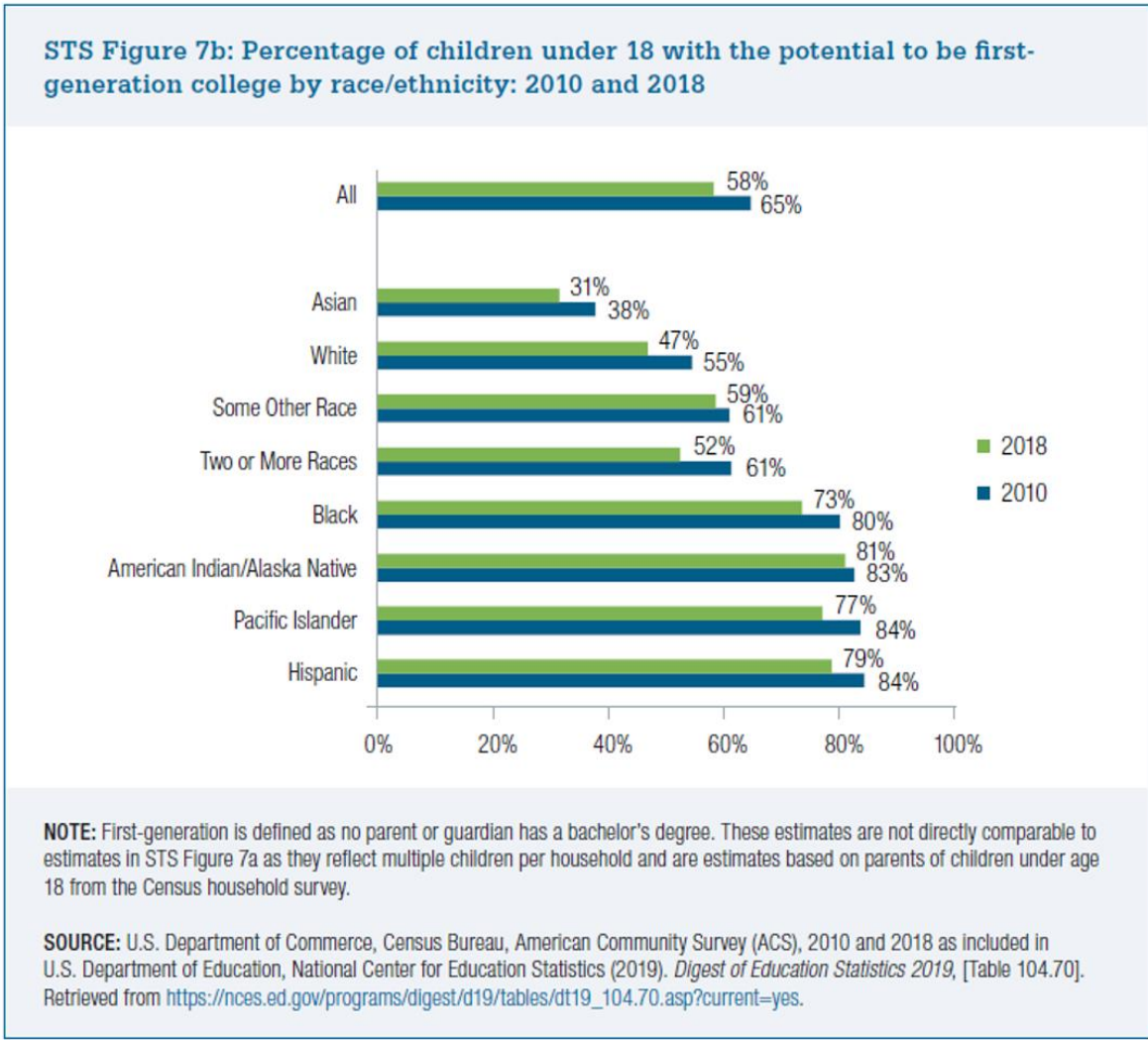
This research was significant in understanding the people and practices of the Upward Bound program to determine if the practices establish a program which creates opportunities for first-generation and low-income students. The Upward Bound program is designed to serve and provide opportunity to a diverse student population, which highlights the importance of understanding if opportunities are created. Equitable practices that establish opportunities for first-generation and low-income students will allow the program to perform its intended purpose of creating opportunity for a diverse population.

#### Statement of the Problem

It is unknown if there are opportunity gaps in the Upward Bound program. If an opportunity gap exists within the Upward Bound program, the target population, first-generation and low-income high school students, could be underserved. The opportunity gap explanatory framework is constructed of five components that are interconnected: color blindness, cultural conflicts, the myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit

mindsets, and context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). Analyzing the program through the five components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework will provide insight into the opportunity gaps that may or may not exist within the context of the program. If administrators and educators within the Upward Bound program operate within a context that creates an opportunity gap, the program could unintentionally establish opportunity gaps for low-income and first-generation high school students who participate in or apply to the program.

The Upward Bound program is designed to support first-generation and low-income students, as defined by the federal program guidelines. As shown in Figure 3, 58% of students of all races in 2018 had the potential to be first-generation college students (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021). Several races are represented in Figure 3, with the highest percentage of students being 81% of American Indian/Alaska Native students having the potential to be first-generation college students (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education & Penn Ahead Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy, 2021).



*Figure 3: Percentage of children under 18 with the potential to be first-generation college by race/ethnicity 2010 and 2018*

As first-generation college students have the potential to be students of a variety of different races, the Upward Bound program should be inclusive of all students of all races. The Upward Bound program should be operationalized in a manner that is equal to all students rather than create an opportunity gap for the students who the program intends to serve. The intent of this research is to determine if an opportunity gap exists

within the context of the Upward Bound program. If there are opportunity gaps in the program, the researcher hopes that uncovering the opportunity gaps will lead to more equitable practices from staff members and more equitable programming that creates opportunities for the intended student population.

The problem therein lies that it is unknown whether the Upward Bound program creates opportunity gaps for participating first-generation and low-income students. The opportunity gap explanatory framework will aid in understanding the educational practices and policies implemented in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program (Milner, 2012). By understanding the educational practices and policies, the opportunity gap explanatory framework can assist in identifying areas in which the program can improve upon and work toward creating opportunities for all students.

#### Research Question

Does the opportunity gap explanatory framework identify if opportunities or opportunity gaps are created for first-generation and low-income students in the area that the program serves by the people and policies at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program?

#### Positionality Statement

It is important for researchers to identify and acknowledge their positionality and how it can impact all aspects of the research process (Holmes, 2020). The researcher is uniquely positioned in that she attended the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. She participated as a student over 10 years ago. She was identified as both a low-income and a first-generation student. The researcher did know one of the study participants because the participant was a leader in the Embry Riddle

Aeronautical University Upward Bound program when the researcher was a student. The researcher attempted to remain in a context-neutral mindset, however, she is aware that these factors did have some impact on the research.

### Research Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative methodology approach. Data was collected from a director, an assistant director, and educators at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. Individual online interviews were conducted with each participant. The research study was conducted through a case study methodology. A case study methodology involves the researcher developing an in-depth analysis of a program that is bound by time and activity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The case study methodology was selected because the researcher desired to understand the Upward Bound program through the perspective of one Upward Bound program's administration and educators (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The case study methodology allowed the researcher to study the perspective of the Upward Bound administration and educators in-depth and understand multiple perspectives from the program. The in-depth analysis from the view of the participants in the study allowed the researcher to understand patterns that may have created an opportunity gap within the Upward Bound program (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Ethnographic interviews were conducted to collect data. Ethnographic interviews were selected as the interview method to capture the culture of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, while understanding individual experiences (Stage & Manning, 2003). The interviews were transcribed to text. The researcher used thematic analysis to analyze the interviews through a theoretical lens. As

Clarke and Braun (2017) state, thematic analysis is a way of “...interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data”. Thematic analysis evaluates participant’s lived experiences within the data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Codes were formed through inductive data driven analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Data was grouped according to the five constructs of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The thematic codes were identified, and the data was analyzed in an inductive manner.

The researcher applied a theoretical lens for the study to provide orientation for the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The theoretical lens used to orient the study was the opportunity gap explanatory framework by H. Richard Milner, IV. The opportunity gap explanatory framework as a theoretical lens allowed the research to focus on the cause of any inequalities that may exist within the Upward Bound program based upon programmatic practices, rather than the achievements of individual students (Milner, 2012). The opportunity gap is constructed of five components that are interconnected: color blindness, cultural conflicts, the myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mindsets, and context-neutral mindsets and practices (Milner, 2012). These components explain how educational practices are connected to opportunity (Milner, 2012). Using the opportunity gap explanatory framework theoretical lens, this study will collect data on how the Upward Bound program creates or limits opportunities through the use or the lack of use of opportunity-related practices.

The study was conducted through an opportunity gap explanatory framework theoretical lens through the interview process and through the coding process. Interview questions for both administration and educators are rooted in Milner’s opportunity gap explanatory framework. Each interview question was based on one of the constructs of

the opportunity gap explanatory framework. In both sets of interview questions, question one corresponds with color blindness, question two corresponds with cultural conflicts, question three corresponds with the myth of meritocracy, question four corresponds with low expectations and deficit mindsets, and question five corresponds with context-neutral mindsets and practices. It was important to include one question from each construct of the opportunity gap explanatory framework because the framework's constructs can reveal both positive and negative practices within the Upward Bound program (Milner, 2012). Including interview questions that examined all components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework created a better understanding of how opportunities existed comprehensively throughout the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

The data collected through ethnographic interviews were then analyzed by thematic analysis. Thematic codes were created in an inductive manner and data was grouped according to the five constructs of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. By framing themes based in the opportunity gap explanatory framework, the data highlighted the positive and negative practices conducted by both administration and educators within the Upward Bound program (Milner, 2012). The thematic codes within the data assisted in explaining how opportunities are created or restricted based on the opportunity gap explanatory framework.

#### Interview Questions - Administration

1. How, if at all, do you consider students' racial identity, background, and experience when creating programming for the Upward Bound program?

2. How, if at all, do you feel the Upward Bound program is inclusive of different cultures, worldviews, and belief systems?
3. Do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned, or that there are inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or a certain socioeconomic status? Please explain your reasoning.
4. Please explain the process that the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound uses when reviewing applications to the program.
5. Please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve. Do you believe that you live in the same social context as the students you serve?

#### Interview Questions - Educators

1. How, if at all, do you diversify your Upward Bound curriculum to be inclusive of students' racial identity, background, and experience?
2. How, if at all, do you include your students' culture within your Upward Bound lessons?
3. Do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned, or that there are inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or a certain socioeconomic status? Please explain your reasoning.
4. Have you ever changed your Upward Bound curriculum based upon your expectations of student performance? Please explain.
5. Please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve. Do you believe that you live in the same social context as the students you serve?

#### Data Collection



Interview questions were split into two categories of subjects: administration and educators. The purpose of including two groups of subjects is to increase diversity of experiences for data collection (Stage & Manning, 2003). Subjects who were considered administration include, directors and assistant directors. Subjects who were considered educators include educators who taught educational classes in the Upward Bound program during the summer of 2021. Each survey subject had prior experience working with the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program to ensure that relevant data was collected for the specific case study site.

Five subjects were interviewed for data collection. Two administrators, one program director and one assistant director, were interviewed. Three educators who taught in the summer program of 2021 were interviewed. Subjects were interviewed via a secure online video platform. The interviewer transcribed the interviews following the completion of the video interviews. The interviews and the transcriptions of interviews were stored on a secure institutional server. Once the study was completed the interviews were deleted and destroyed to ensure confidentiality.

No data was collected from vulnerable populations, minors, or current students participating in the Upward Bound program. Minors under the age of 18 were not interviewed for the purpose of this study. The study did not collect any data on specific students. Any data collected with general student information was stored on a secure institutional server and was destroyed following the conclusion of the research and thesis completion.

## Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine if opportunity gaps exist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The qualitative research study used a case study methodology and thematic analysis to understand if opportunity gaps existed and if opportunities were created within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

Chapter three included a statement of the problem, the research question, the research methodology, and data collection. Ethnographic interviews were conducted at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program to collect data. Qualitative research through thematic analysis was used to analyze the results of the ethnographic interviews.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTERPRETATION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to understand if opportunity gaps, or opportunities are created for first-generation and low-income students at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. This study focused on understanding opportunities at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound Program through the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The opportunity gap explanatory framework examines educational programs through process-based evaluation (Milner, 2012). The results of this study aimed to understand how the educational practices and processes create opportunity gaps or opportunities at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

Qualitative data was collected through ethnographic interviews. Interviews were conducted via a secure institutional Zoom server. Two sets of interview questions were asked based upon the subject's role in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The two administrators who were interviewed were asked five questions from the question set "interview questions - administration". The three educators who were interviewed were asked five questions from the question set "interview questions - educators". Interview questions for both administration and educators were rooted in Milner's opportunity gap explanatory framework.

This chapter provides the results of the data analysis and an interpretation to address the following research question: Does the opportunity gap explanatory framework identify if opportunities or opportunity gaps are created for first-generation

and low-income students in the area that the program serves by the people and policies at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program?

#### Interpretation - The Opportunity Gap Explanatory Framework

The data collected was analyzed through inductive thematic analysis using the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The researcher identified ten themes throughout the five ethnographic interviews that were conducted. The themes included color blind, Hispanic, hard work = success, recognized inequities, expectations, similarity to the target student population, access, culture, individual student focus, and perception of student motivation. Themes were grouped according to how each theme fit and described the five components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The themes could describe how the opportunity gap was created, or how the opportunity gap was diminished. Themes that did not reflect the components in the opportunity gap explanatory framework were not grouped in the components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework but are included within the analysis.

The first component in the opportunity gap explanatory framework is color blindness. Color blindness is the practice of omitting an individual's race when making decisions, forming impressions, and enacting behaviors (Apfelbaum, et al., 2012). Within the data, operating in a color-blind mindset was demonstrated through one theme, color blind. This theme entails data where subjects did not consider or had limited consideration and inclusion of a student's race when forming programming for the Upward Bound program or creating curriculum for the Upward Bound program.

The data suggest that color blindness appeared as an opportunity gap for the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. Only one theme

populated from the data, which was color blind. This theme assists in explaining how administration and educators create an opportunity gap due to a limited or non-existent consideration of the races of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University's Upward Bound student population. One excerpt of the color-blind theme is stated by Subject 5,

*"Hmm...Umm Sorry [referring to background noise], I don't know. I think the only time I really am considering racial identity and background is when we're pairing them in the dorms"* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

Another excerpt of the color-blind theme is from Subject 4,

*"Umm as far as adjusting it to their racial background umm specifically in the physics class. Umm I actually have a section about once a week where I ask them to bring in a video umm that we can analyze the physics of it"* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

As the data from the interviews suggests, the subjects have little to no consideration of the students' racial identity. The educators and administrators appear to be operating in a color-blind mindset when considering the educational and social standpoints of a student. When they operate in a color-blind mindset, they are not creating programming that is inclusive of the whole student (Johnson, 2002). When the whole student is not considered, including the student's racial identity, the student can suffer (Milner, 2010).

When some participants spoke of racial identity, they would backtrack and avoid talking about race at all. For example,

*"Umm Most of the consideration is on individual need but as part of that individual need um their racial background of course their racial cultural*

*background of course come into it because of uh one of the biggest thing about the programs specifically the summer program and some of the others is making sure they are comfortable in the program itself. So that's where a lot of the racial cultural background comes from digging into it making sure that's their understanding that background and understanding a lot of where the parents are coming from” (Subject 1, 3/03/22).*

When participants did discuss race, they often mentioned the Latinx community and presented it as a Hispanic population in the community. It was almost exclusively the only race the Upward Bound educators and administration talked about, but it was rarely discussed how programming and curriculum was adjusted to meet the needs of the Hispanic community that the program serves.

*“Um so while I was in the program the majority of the students were um Hispanic or um tangentially related to Hispanic uh and I didn't outright do anything in the class. Uh again and in teaching a class but I did uh I did I...I...I really can't say I did anything specifically to include any kind of cultural bit into this that or the other I was teaching math classes” (Subject 3, 3/18/22).*

The data suggests that there is an opportunity gap within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program in reference to color blindness. Because administrators and educators within the program educate without consideration of students' racial identity, perhaps unknowingly, they create an opportunity gap that can be harmful to educators and students alike (Howard, 2010; Milner, 2012). The demographic divide between Upward Bound staff and students can make it difficult for educators to recognize the systemic disparities in educational policies that lead to opportunity gaps

within the Upward Bound program (Milner, 2012). It is critical for educators to recognize their racial experiences inside and out of the classroom while also identifying their students' racial background (Irvine, 2003). When Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound staff members recognize their own racial identity and the racial identity of their students, they can teach and create programming that is inclusive of a student's whole identity, thus limiting the opportunity gap (Irvine 2003; Milner, 2012).

The second component in the opportunity gap explanatory framework is cultural conflicts. When educators have different cultural reference points than their students, or do not try to incorporate their students' culture into the classroom, a cultural conflict is created (Milner, 2012). The data exposed one theme that demonstrates the creation of or the diminishing of cultural conflicts, Hispanic. The theme Hispanic includes anytime subjects explicitly discussed students who were Latinx, Hispanic, or Mexican. The theme also includes anytime a subject discussed students who spoke Spanish, without explicitly mentioning the student's race. This theme contains generalizations that subjects made about the Latinx community. This theme does not include generalizations of culture of the geographical area.

*“Um so while I was in the program the majority of the students were um Hispanic or um tangentially related to Hispanic uh and I didn't outright do anything in the class. Uh again and in teaching a class but I did uh I did I...I...I really can't say I did anything specifically to include any kind of cultural bit into this that or the other I was teaching math classes” (Subject 3, 3/13/22).*

The Hispanic theme helps identify cultural conflicts that may exist between subjects and the students enrolled in the Upward Bound program. Many of the interviewees described a different cultural understanding than that of a Hispanic student.

*“Uh but I did get to know a lot of those students and being in the Prescott area a lot of the population is of that culture, of the Hispanic culture, and I had a plenty of friends growing up that were a part of that culture, but, I myself, not at all”*  
(Subject 3, 3/13/22).

*“I usually will just call them and as long as they speak English it's easy, but if they don't my Spanish is not that good so...”* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

This can create a cultural conflict because the differences in cultural understanding between educators and students is vast (Milner, 2012). Conflicts, inconsistencies, and incongruence can limit students' learning opportunities in the classroom (Irvine, 2003).

*“And speaking this in generalities is within Mexican culture after the 15th birthday umm there is a lot of expectations to go back to Mexico, find a husband and that's it. And so that is very much contrary to the mission statement to the program. So being able to say you can do that and and you can fulfill both these things and that's okay. Depending on... depending on the person and depending on the family is generally a very hard thing to do”* (Subject 1, 3/03/22).

The data suggests that there is a cultural conflict between Embry Riddle Aeronautical University administration and educators, and the students of the program. When educators create expectations, students will typically meet those expectations (Milner, 2010). By creating low expectations and cultural conflicts in the Upward Bound



program, the administration and educators of the program are establishing an opportunity gap.

The third component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework is the myth of meritocracy. Meritocracy creates a false narrative that all people have equitable opportunities. Meritocracy ignores the systemic barriers such as sexism, racism, discrimination, and classism that are embedded in societal and classroom practices (Milner, 2012). Two themes were identified to describe the myth of meritocracy, hard work = success and recognized inequities. Hard work = success is used to define meritocracy when educators and administrators say that hard work alone can help students overcome obstacles and achieve success. This theme does not include any context of meritocracy being a myth.

Many Americans falsely believe that all children have the opportunity to overcome obstacles if the children receive education and work hard enough (Randolph-McCree & Pristoop, 2005). The data suggests that the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program staff hold this belief as true.

*“It’s a hard road and you’re going to have to work really hard to do it’s not going to be handed to you. But if you want to, nothing can stop you”* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

*“But I do believe that given that extra time given that extra attendance, given that extra studying I any student has the capability to succeed going forward”* (Subject 3, 3/13/22)

These statements indicate that the staff at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program do not understand that educational practices and opportunities are not always equal or equitable (Milner, 2012). Hard work alone cannot lead to success and help the student participants overcome every obstacle they may face. When asked if there was a difference between students that subject 4 taught during the regular academic year and students he taught in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical Upward Bound program, Subject 4 responded,

*“Yes, the students in the upward bound program are way more motivated to succeed than the average student in a regular class” (Subject 4, 3/18/22).*

This statement suggests that the educators and administration within the program overlook the educational opportunities that students enrolled in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program have already encountered. This data indicates that the educators and administrators in the program may believe that the students enrolled in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program have earned their success. This concept is further indicated by a statement from Subject 1 who said the following when asked about student applicants,

*“This program, as with most things in life, is what you get out– what you put into it. If the student is willing to put in more they will get out more. As much as I would love to help a student that is is kind of ambivalent who doesn’t really know. The student who knows they will get more of what is going on. To me they are more deserving of that spot” (Subject 1, 3/03/22).*

The data points presented suggest that an opportunity gap may exist in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program in regard to the myth of

meritocracy. It appears that program staff believe that successes are earned, which is the myth that is meritocracy. However, the data also suggests that the educators and administrators at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound recognize the inequities that students face.

The second theme that relates to the myth of meritocracy is recognized inequities. Recognized inequities are defined when Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound staff make statements that recognize the inequities that do exist for the target student population. This theme identifies that the staff understands that meritocracy is a myth. In contrast to the theme hard work = success, the theme recognized inequities suggests that educators and administrators demonstrate they understand educational opportunities are not equitable.

*“I do think that in the majority of situations, students can buckle down and achieve what they want. However, um I do realize that this is an idealized viewpoint and uh and that just some students based on their background don’t have the same level going into things. Where they may need a little bit of extra help they may need a little extra time to get to the same concepts”* (Subject 3, 3/13/22).

*“Umm I do believe that there are hurdles like socio economic hurdles that kids would just never umm if it weren't for programs like Upward Bound, or if they don’t get into upward bound then their socioeconomic status will keep them from getting a higher education”* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

This theme counterbalances the theme hard work = success because it identifies how program staff identify the myth that is meritocracy. The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound staff understand that the students who have a lower socioeconomic status do not have an equitable position in their educational experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

*“Do I believe that they [inequities] prevent their success? Umm yeah on think on some, yeah, 100% of them no, but a majority I would say yes...are...are.. You know...They no longer have access. They don't have as much access”* (Subject 2, 3/11/22).

The data indicates that the educators and administration understand the target population of the Upward Bound program do face inequities which limit the population's available opportunities. This suggests that opportunities are created for the target population of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program because the staff understand that educational opportunities are not equitable (Milner, 2012).

The fourth component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework is low expectations and deficit mindsets. Some teachers' expectations are drawn from many factors including the students' prior achievement, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and diagnostic labeling (Peterson, et al., 2016). The theme that defines low expectations and deficit mindsets is expectations. This theme includes all expectations of students that Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound staff expressed during their interviews. These expectations could be positive expectations of students or negative expectations of students.

Overall, the data suggests that opportunities exist within the context of low expectations and deficit mindsets. This is because the data indicates that many program staff have high expectations of the students. Some of the data suggest that opportunities exist because the expectations of educators and administrators within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program are high expectations. One example of these high expectations comes from Subject 2,

*“I still have really high expectations. I just modify the activity or the assignment to meet their needs, right? They all have different needs depending”* (Subject 2, 3/11/22).

Opportunities are created when educators have high expectations for their students.

*“Um so when I initially taught the actual classes for the program when I was their math instructor, I did not change the way that I thought about the students' performance at all”* (Subject 3, 3/13/22).

*“Umm for the program they are required to meet umm maintain a certain GPA or they are forced out, like they have to leave the program if they are not maintaining it. And I have yet to meet a student that was not maintaining it. Umm There are a couple students that have gotten like maybe a little bit close and umm the program leads will talk with them and the next day they are back on task and doing really well”* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

Additionally, the data suggest that when educators do have a low expectation, such as not attending college, the educator still believes that the student will do great things.

*“Umm I know not every one of them is continuing and going to make it into college just because of circumstances. But umm yeah even if they don’t that’s not a big deal like I still have confidence they’ll achieve things in their community in their lives and their families that are valuable”* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

The data suggests that the educators of the Upward Bound program do not have low expectations or deficit mindsets for the students enrolled in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The data points above suggest that the educators have high expectations for their students and in turn, the students meet those high expectations. This is an opposite effect of what low expectations and deficit mindsets describe. Throughout the interviews, the data suggests that opportunities are created for the students who participate in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program because of the high expectations that staff have.

There was one outlier in the data that suggests low expectations exist.

*“Umm I’ve seen students earn their way out of what in all statistical likelihood means jail”* (Subject 1, 3/03/22).

Subject 1 did make a statement that identified a low expectation and a deficit mindset for some of the students participating in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. However, this data point was not consistent with the rest of the data.

The fifth and final component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework is context neutral mindsets. Some educators believe that their students live in the same social context as themselves, which creates a context-neutral mindset. The dilemma with a context-neutral mindset is that the mindset doesn’t allow for educators to consider the

realities or inequalities of other social contexts (Milner, 2012). The theme associated with context neutral mindsets is similarity to the target student population. This theme includes any data in which a subject shared how their own personal or educational life was like that of the target population that the Upward Bound program serves, first-generation and low-income students. This theme also includes data where subjects identify how their lives are like the students participating in the Upward Bound program based upon the social context in the geographical area and social context of students that the program serves.

Four of the five participants related their own personal lives to that of the students they serve. Only one of the participants did not relate their educational or personal life to the same social context as the students served at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. Milner (2012) states, “Educators and students live in social contexts that have a huge bearing on their development, thinking, and behaviors. Social contexts of schools and communities can reinforce the status quo or in fact disrupt or interrupt it. Context-neutral mindsets do not allow educators to recognize deep-rooted and ingrained realities embedded in a particular place, such as a school in a particular community”.

*“Uh and I would say that social context is massive and to be honest umm having seen some people work with this program that come from outside of this area it is a challenge to overcome because especially as “rural” as verses if we’re looking at Maryvale verse Bradshaw Mountain High School rural and not. Umm is there's a huge outsider complex with students who are you and why are you here. Umm and it does show as sad as it is” (Subject 1, 3/03/22).*

In the statement above, Subject 1 describes an environment where context-neutral mindsets exist throughout the community. The data suggests that the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program exists in a context-neutral environment which does not allow educators to recognize inequities and integrated realities within the program (Milner, 2012). Additionally, four of the five participants recognized their similarities to the students that the program serves which expands upon the data that supports a context-neutral environment.

*“When I go out recruit in Chino Valley high school. I don't know you, I was you. Cause I fell off that stool over there and almost broke my butt. Umm and to be honest that actually gives me a little bit more candid. It gives me more connection with students. Cause while times changes, things change, not everything changes. So having that social context is that's that first bridge in trust that first step in trust and that trust is the basis of the entire program”* (Subject 1, 3/03/22).

*“I grew up in the same school in fact I sat in the same desks as those in Chino umm they were—I know they are the same because I can tell by the shape they're in”* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

*“I live in the same quad city areas. I went to Chino Valley High School. I'm you know I'm... I'm...basically them”* (Subject 2, 3/11/22).

*“In all honesty I was born in Prescott. Uh born and raised in **Prescott**. I had a lot of ideas of population in Prescott Valley verses Chino verse Prescott verse*



*Kirkland verses Mayer verse wherever so when I would meet with certain students  
uhh I would try and bring more stuff into like...” (Subject 3, 3/13/22).*

The data indicates that the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program does operate in a context-neutral mindset. This could lead to educators and administrators of the program to have blind spots regarding their local context, which creates an opportunity gap (Milner, 2012). To overcome this opportunity gap, educators must understand how the social context itself impacts the opportunities available to the student population that the program serves (Milner, 2012).

There are opportunity gaps that exist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The data suggests that opportunity gaps existed within three of the components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. Those three components included colorblindness, cultural conflicts, and context-neutral mindsets. A fourth component, the myth of meritocracy, included data that indicated both opportunities and opportunity gaps existed. A fifth component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework, low expectations and deficit mindsets, did not indicate an opportunity gap.

#### Interpretation - Themes not associated with the opportunity gap explanatory framework

There were four themes the researcher identified that did not describe the opportunity gap explanatory framework but were still important and relevant findings in the research. The first theme represented outside of the framework is access. Access includes any data collected from the ethnographic interviews in which the participants explained how they provided students with the opportunity to access experiences and

educational opportunities. Access also consists of opportunities that were created to include students in participation, and empathy that was shown towards students.

*“Umm so I I try to get more on the same page of their socioeconomic issue because or their social status or situation or whatever it is because I think it’s very important to understand it if you want to understand that child’s drive to go to college. So if you can understand where they are in a social niche then umm it’s gonna help you help them better so... I don’t know. Help me help you”* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

*“I don’t know if their socioeconomic needs I don’t see that I just see them okay struggling, you need support”* (Subject 2, 3/11/22).

The theme of access was an important finding within the data because the theme of access identifies how educators and administrators within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program demonstrate access and create opportunities for the students the program serves.

*“Bringing all the parties together and finding a way to make it all work. Because umm the program is generally fairly flexible when it comes to time, specifically the time needs”* (Subject 1, 3/03/22).

*“Umm one of the best parts about the program I think for students in that kinda situation is that meals are provided as part of the program. Umm so they get breakfast when they show up, they get lunch. Umm except for like the covid years they were also staying overnight there they would get dinner as well. So they*

*would all their meals are provided for them giving them a steady source of food”*  
(Subject 4, 3/18/22).

*“But we also umm our classes that we teach in our summer camp, we try to bring in outside careers so this year I taught a class there was a lot of request for *Adulting 101* and then we kinda adapted it to financial literacy and once we got going they all had questions like umm real estate investment and buying houses and so it got like - it got to where I was like whoa okay now it’s like your questions are over my head so we actually brought Debbie Opitz in because she’s now a real estate broker. So we brought her in and she could answer all their questions and she talked a lot about the different careers in real estate”* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

This is relevant to the study because while it is important to identify the opportunity gaps and identify opportunities that are created within the opportunity gap explanatory framework, the data suggests that there are other methods used to create opportunities for student participants of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

The second theme that symbolizes an important finding outside of the opportunity gap explanatory framework is individual student focus. Individual student focus explains how staff at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program support individual student needs.

*“Sometimes it's as easy as sometimes I have a sitdown conversation and go okay how are you feeling how are you doing and go what do you need?” (Subject 1, 3/03/22).*

*“oh well if you're if so and so paid you this much for this amount of time then duh duh duh something like that try and hone in on specific examples for those situations um but that took a lot of getting to know the students and the majority of that came from just treating them as the individuals that they are and understanding that what works for one students is not going to work for another student” (Subject 3, 3/13/22).*

*“And I'll talk to the students at the start of the class and try to find out their interest. And So the umm test questions that I make for the class are... are based on that. So if I have fans kids who are fans of marvel... marvel movies I'll make the questions about marvel movies” (Subject 4, 3/18/22).*

This theme within the data indicates how staff of the program create opportunities for students by focusing on the student's individual needs. The opportunity gap explanatory framework does not address how educators and administrators can create opportunities for students through focusing on individual student needs. However, the data suggests that within the context of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, opportunities are created for students by staff providing for individual student needs.

The third theme the researcher identified that does not explain the opportunity gap explanatory framework is the perception of student motivation. The theme perception of student motivation was used to identify when interview participants attempted to understand or perceive why students would participate in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

This theme only occurred within the interviews of administration. This theme was identified when subjects discussed why they believed students chose to participate in the Upward Bound program. Both administrators specifically mentioned parents, or other family members being a reason for students to join the program.

*“Umm and I get to know them and I can really get a sense if they’re doing it for them or if they’re doing it for their parents. Because if they’re doing it just because their parents tell them to, umm then it’s going to be real hard to motivate that kid. I could expose them to everything, but if they don’t wanna do it...that’s okay..Upward Bound’s not for them, but make room for someone else who wants to do it. So that’s what I look for the most. Why they are doing it. Why they want to be in Upward Bound” (Subject 5, 3/21/22).*

*“And Umm it was... in my eyes..I didn’t think she wanted to do it. I got the vibe that her parents wanted her to do it. Which uhh doesn't mean... to me that meant that the kid wasn’t that into going to college, the parent wanted the kid to go to college. And uhh the student was always like late for things or just not showing up or not turning things in or just blowing us off... And I just thought... so we didn’t*

*and we had one too many, like it was going to put us over the limit, so that's the only person I've ever seen had to get a regret a regret letter"* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

*"Mom and dad are pushing me into this and I don't want to do it. Umm Mom and dad or grandparent"* (Subject 1, 3/03/22).

*"Umm Yeah that actually does happen from uh time to time. Hey mom and dad don't think that is a good idea because of this. And actually, what's funny the converse is actually more common. Mom and dad are pushing me into this, and I don't want to do it. Umm Mom and dad or grandparent. Umm So that does happen I wouldn't say with very regularity, so it does usually-usually what is known colloquial known as a helicopter parent or umm or on the other side of this we get some very neglective parents"* (Subject 1, 3/03/22).

While the data points related to the theme perception of student motivation didn't directly relate to the opportunity gap explanatory framework, the researcher found this data relevant to the study. How administration perceives student motivation is important to the context of the program.

The fourth and final theme found in the data was culture. This theme was defined by a statement made by administration or educators where a perception was made about the student population that the program serves. This theme didn't exactly match the definition of a cultural conflict and did not necessarily align with the opportunity gap explanatory framework.

*“I like the idea of building a community as the director I like the idea of building a community with my students, staff, and the total program itself is building a community and part of building that community is listening and people going how about this, what about do we don't we do this” (Subject 1, 3/03/22).*

*“I can't speak to a lot of other areas, but I can I only speak to ours. And that is umm like one of our biggest problems. And speaking this in generalities is within Mexican culture after the 15th birthday umm there is a lot of expectations to go back to Mexico find a husband and that's it. And so that is very much contrary to the mission statement to the program. So being able to say you can do that and and you can fulfill both these things and that's okay. Depending on depending on the person and depending on the family is generally a very hard thing to do. But one of the things I've learned to mitigate this is getting family to buy into the program as well” (Subject 1, 3/03/22).*

*“Umm and also I feel like also you're you're race can sometimes play into that because scholarships have a window like umm this gets a little personal like I'm umm I'm Hispanic and I had like in high school a like 3.8 and I got a lot of scholarships, but my umm husband is he had like a 4.0 but he's Caucasian he didn't get any. I'm like that's so crazy you were like a way better student than I was but it was it's like umm its a little gap in opportunity because his parents made too much money but not really enough to send him to college. So he ended up working three jobs but umm I also think that you're socioeconomic expo-limits exposure to opportunities umm so it if all you've ever been around are umm*

*blue collar kind of jobs and blue collar kinda life then you becoming a doctor or a lawyer or going to college would be something that might not even be on your radar. You haven't been exposed to you haven't even thought of it. So we could have this amazingly talented student but if they've never been exposed to college or other careers they might not of even thought of that and they could easily wind up never going to college or just becoming a dishwasher because they like it but they might not ever be able to reach their potential simply for lack of exposure"* (Subject 5, 3/21/22).

*"I wanna say... it was somewhere around 80% of the student body one umm one of the years I was teaching. I may have been higher. I know it fluctuates but yes that's the whole school district at that level. It's just a really low-income community. There are a number of undocumented immigrants as well"* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

*"There are a lot of similarities between Prescott and Chino. Umm but there are certain differences that are also ... there umm because we serve everything from Paulden umm to the airport and everything from umm the western rang-mountain range to the eastern mountain range so it's one of the biggest school districts in the state by square miles"* (Subject 4, 3/18/22).

*"I had a lot of ideas of population in Prescott Valley verses Chino verse Prescott verse Kirkland verses Mayer verse where ever so when I would meet with certain students uhh I would try and bring more stuff into like okay if the student was*



*from the Chino area, for example, I may include a little bit more of examples that were related to livestock because there was a larger 4-h program at the Chino Valley High school. Of if I were to work with students from Prescott Valley, I may include more umm like mechanical car mechanic or some kind of plumbing, or some kind of carpentry, or contracting or something example because the majority of the student not necessarily the students the majority of the population in Prescott Valley kinda filled into those roles” (Subject 3, 3/13/22).*

The data does not suggest that this code aligns with opportunity or with opportunity gaps. The researcher found that these data points were relevant and important to understanding the context of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

#### Discussion of Implications

The perceptions of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program administration and educators provide insights into how the program operates. The perceptions also help to identify how the administration and educators understand their local context. The deep context from ethnographic interviews provides an ability to analyze what organizational change may look like within the context of one Upward Bound program.

The opportunity gap explanatory framework provided a good foundation for understanding the opportunity gaps and the opportunities that exist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The data suggests that both opportunity gaps and opportunities exist within the context of the program. The data suggests that opportunity gaps existed within three of the components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. Those three components included colorblindness, cultural

conflicts, and context-neutral mindsets. A fourth component, the myth of meritocracy, included data that indicated both opportunities and opportunity gaps existed. A fifth component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework, low expectations and deficit mindsets, did not indicate an opportunity gap.

Additionally, the data presented four other themes that didn't fit into the context of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. Those four themes were access, individual student focus, perception of student motivation, and culture. The data suggests that access and individual student focus could create additional opportunities for students enrolled in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. The themes perception of student motivation and culture were perhaps less relevant to opportunities but were still relevant within the context of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

To lead organizational change and ensure that opportunities are being created within the context of an Upward Bound program, understanding the program through the lens of the opportunity gap explanatory framework is a good place to start. However, to understand the entire context of the Upward Bound program, the data suggests the opportunity gap explanatory framework can not explain all of the opportunities and opportunity gaps that exist. The data suggests that it is important to look at individual people that work in the program to identify the gaps. How people perceive their local context matters in how programming and curriculum is created.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to understand if the opportunity gap exists at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. Five staff members

at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program participated in the study. Three of the participants were educators within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program in the summer of 2021. Two of the participants were administrators with the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

The results of the study identified ten themes throughout the five ethnographic interviews that were conducted. The themes included color blind, Hispanic, culture, hard work = success, recognized inequities, expectations, similarity to the target student population, access, individual student focus, and perception of student motivation. Seven of the codes identified in the data were grouped into corresponding components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework include operating in a color-blind mindset, cultural conflicts, myths of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mindsets, and context neutral mindsets (Milner, 2012). Four themes identified did not explain or expand the opportunity gap explanatory framework. These four themes were access, individual student focus, perception of student motivation, and culture. While these themes did not reflect the opportunity gap explanatory framework, the themes did add value to the study.

This chapter presented the data analysis findings associated with the study and provides an interpretation of the data analysis accompanying a discussion of the implications of the findings. Chapter five presents a conclusion, discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations of future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

This chapter will conclude the study by summarizing the key research findings. The research findings will be related to the research aims and questions. This chapter will also discuss the value this contribution makes to existing literature. Finally, this chapter will include limitations and suggestions for future research.

#### Findings

This study aimed to understand if an opportunity gap existed at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, or if opportunities were made available to first-generation and low-income high school students enrolled in the program. The research question of the study was, does the opportunity gap explanatory framework identify if opportunities or opportunity gaps are created for first-generation and low-income students in the area that the program serves by the people and policies at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program?

Further findings show that both opportunity gaps and opportunities coexist within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. By analyzing the data through the opportunity gap explanatory framework, the data suggests that opportunity gaps existed within three components of the opportunity gap explanatory framework. The data indicated that one component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework created opportunities. The data suggested that the final component of the opportunity gap explanatory framework demonstrated both opportunities and opportunity gaps. Four additional findings appeared in the data that did not relate to the opportunity

gap explanatory framework. However, these findings were still significant to the context of the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

### Contribution

This study contributes to the existing literature of first-generation and low-income students' college readiness and access. This study also contributes to the opportunity gap explanatory framework. There has not been a significant amount of research on how effective the opportunity gap explanatory framework is when applied towards educational programs. This study contributes to the opportunity gap explanatory framework by inductively applying the theoretical framework to the data collected at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

This study can also contribute to the organizational change within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program. If the program wanted to create organizational change, the program could use this thesis as a basis for creating additional opportunities and limiting opportunity gaps within the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program.

### Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

One limitation in the research was the assumption that all subjects had a professional educational background. Not all the subjects who were interviewed had an educational background. Some of the subjects had taught only within the context of the Upward Bound program and were not trained in the field of education. This made it difficult for the subjects to discuss how they created or adjusted their curriculum. Not all the subjects knew what the opportunity gap explanatory framework was, which could have discouraged them from expanding their answers. In future research, it would be

appropriate to better understand the background of the subjects and ask questions in ways that are more accommodating of the subjects' backgrounds.

Another limitation in the research was the sensitive nature of the questions being asked. Although all subjects were told their responses would remain anonymous, the topics discussed were still sensitive in nature. Because some of the questions in the interview pertain to diversity in race and culture, it is possible that subjects were apprehensive to answer the questions in depth or with their true thoughts and feelings.

A third limitation is the size of the Upward Bound program. The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program serves approximately 65 students annually (*TRIO Map Viewer*, 2021). There are only two administrators within the program and a few educators on staff. There was not a huge pool of subjects to interview due to the size of the program, which led to less data collection. Additionally, the Upward Bound summer programs of 2020 and 2021 were greatly disrupted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound summer program was not conducted during the summer of 2020, and the summer program of 2021 was limited. This study aimed to interview subjects with recent experience working in the Upward Bound program to collect data from subjects with a recent memory of their time working for the program. This restricted the time frame in which subjects needed to have taught or been an administrator in the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program to the summer of 2021. This further restricted the subjects eligible for this study.

Another future research consideration includes conducting research at different Upward Bound research sites to understand if the findings are generalizable to other

Upward Bound programs. Because Upward Bound programs can create their own curriculum and admission priorities, some programs may create more opportunities than others. Some programs could be more restrictive than others and create a large opportunity gap. Additionally, analyzing Upward Bound programs that serve a different student population than the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program could further explain where opportunity gaps exist within the program. Future research could analyze how programs in urban areas create or limit opportunities under the opportunity gap explanatory framework. This would expand the research outside of the context of a rural Upward Bound program.

Another consideration for future research is to collect the demographic data of participants. This could aid in the understanding of the perspectives of the participants. Additionally, in future research it could be helpful to further explain and research the current social contexts of society. For example, this study occurred in the social context following the Black Lives Matters movement that became more prominent in the summer of 2020.

Lastly, interviewing low-income and first-generation students who participate in the program would create an interesting addition to the research on Upward Bound programs. Analyzing the opportunity gap explanatory framework through the viewpoint of a first-generation or low-income high school student could lead to further understanding of how the Upward Bound program creates opportunities for Upward Bound's target population. Creating an understanding of how the program is or is not accessible for the target population of the program could provide the program with

valuable data on how to create additional opportunities for first-generation and low-income students.

### Conclusion

This study aimed to understand if an opportunity gap existed at the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound program, or if opportunities were made available to first-generation and low-income high school students enrolled in the program. Using the theoretical framework of the opportunity gap explanatory framework, the perceptions of administration and educators were uncovered thus revealing a deep understanding of the context of the program and what organizational change could be. Understanding how opportunities can be limited through people and policies is the first step in creating organizational change to lead to additional life-changing opportunities for first-generation and low-income students.



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APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - ADMINISTRATION

### Interview Questions - Administration

1. How, if at all, do you consider students' racial identity, background, and experience when creating programming for the Upward Bound program?
2. How, if at all, do you feel the Upward Bound program is inclusive of different cultures, worldviews, and belief systems?
3. Do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned, or that there are inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or a certain socioeconomic status? Please explain your reasoning.
4. Please explain the process that the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound uses when reviewing applications to the program.
5. Please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve. Do you believe that you live in the same social context as the students you serve?

APPENDIX B  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - EDUCATORS

### Interview Questions - Educators

1. How, if at all, do you diversify your Upward Bound curriculum to be inclusive of students' racial identity, background, and experience?
2. How, if at all, do you include your students' culture within your Upward Bound lessons?
3. Do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned, or that there are inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or a certain socioeconomic status? Please explain your reasoning.
4. Have you ever changed your Upward Bound curriculum based upon your expectations of student performance? Please explain.
5. Please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve. Do you believe that you live in the same social context as the students you serve?

APPENDIX C  
IRB APPROVAL





EXEMPTION GRANTED

[Robert Kirsch](#)  
[CISA: Leadership and Interdisciplinary Studies](#)

-  
 Robert.Kirsch@asu.edu

Dear [Robert Kirsch](#):

On 2/18/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Access to Opportunity: Evaluating the Upward Bound Program through the Opportunity Gap Framework
Investigator:	<a href="#">Robert Kirsch</a>
IRB ID:	STUDY00015400
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recruitment_methods_email_02-16-2022.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Site Permission, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc);</li> <li>• Wasem CITI, Category: Other;</li> <li>• Wasem Consent, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Wasem Interview Questions, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Wasem Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> </ul>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 2/18/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at [research.integrity@asu.edu](mailto:research.integrity@asu.edu) to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

*REMINDER - Effective January 12, 2022, in-person interactions with human subjects require adherence to all current policies for ASU faculty, staff, students and visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's COVID-19 Management Strategy can be found [here](#). IRB approval is related to the research activity involving human subjects, all other protocols related to COVID-19 management including face coverings, health checks, facility access, etc. are governed by current ASU policy.*

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc:

Leslie Wasem

APPENDIX D

SUBJECT 1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION – ADMINISTRATION

Wasem: ok umm [Subject 1] and I do have your permission to record correct?

Subject 1: That is correct

W: ok umm My first question for you is how if at all do you consider student's racial ID background and experience when creating programing for the upward bound program?

S1: uh there is a little bit of consideration. Umm Most of the consideration is on individual need but as part of that individual need um their racial background of course their racial cultural background of course come into it because of uh one of the biggest thing about the programs specifically the summer program and some of the others is making sure they are comfortable in th program its self. So thats where a lot of the racial cultural background comes from digging into it making sure thats there understanding that background and understanding a lot of where the parents are coming from um i know some (sic) ... going into the dorms and being apart of the program because people run into one another something times it works sometimes it doesn't as far as programing is concern. Well I actually very much rely on the students to come up with a lot of different programing umm so their making those decision them selfs. Uh but as far as other programing for me is I also try to move student's outside of their standard cultural experience. To show them things to show them there are other things and other ways of being in the world.

W: uh huh

S1: I that is another big, big part of the program it's self. Umm and so I think hopefully that covers what you're looking for.

W: Yeah umm I have a follow up for that so when you say you rely on the students for programing what does that look like can you provide me with an example?

S1: well uh when in just thinking about programing. Well we of course are mandated by law uh to have a math course, a science math course, a science course math course english courses um but as far a cause while upward bound is just not academics its cultural social side as well that is is um games we play together when their still on campus. Uh activities that we do. Umm Perfect perfect examples uh like we had a soccer game last year. We also had a bob ross painting hour umm where everybody got a canvas and they did what they, they did the best they could everyone had a blast

W: Awesome

S1: So I would have never come up with that they came up with that so um and thats again is that uh uh not really again but really for the first time is uh its a very community based thing uh I like the idea of building a community as the director I like the idea of building a community with my students staff and the total program its self is building a community and part of building that community is listening and people going how about this, what about do we don't we do this. And then its basically what my job as director then going okay how are we going to pay for that but umm and so again leaning on the students for that community basis is to me very much key because A they're are buying into the system.

W: uh huh

S1: because not only are they getting but getting they're putting in and they're getting out. Instead of just pulling out uh resources and all the rest. So its again its that give and take that I really do think makes the program what the worth while.

W: yeah thats great I really like what you say about you know making it community based. Umm Okay my next question is how if at all do you feel the upward program is inclusive of different cultures, world views, and belief systems?

S1: Umm I would say are highly inclusive of those. Because again going again back to the community idea is. We are...In upward bound we are a community. And having the students understand that we are a community. You don't have to say it out loud "we are a community you are pushed together" letting that happen naturally in so by having those kind of systems. Having So the dorms, the residential summer program academic term. Umm is having those students there in that situation they bring their community they bring their background with them and bring it into that community. Cause so while I could say dictative we want this, this, this and this is ... it is actually better for the students if they build it themselves. There is little things we can do we can do to guide shall we say. Cause a lot of the time cause especially for like the first two weeks everybody of the six week program is feeling everybody out and who each other is. But so its thats where a little bit of the "hey lets do this" lets do pod games lets do umm little easy competitions of sorts. Umm as well as umm you're looking at working at group project in the academic realm uhhh just trying to think what else would fit this. Ummm but as far as inclusivity we are inclusive of all and that actually goes to my recruitment method and that is umm and this is were we in the upward bound program are intensively lucky verses other upward bound programs through out the county is that we are the only one in the county and the counties the size of pretty much north georgia. Granted we don't have as many people but we get to pick from you know five plus school that anybody says hey thats neat can I do that. If they qualify they qualify. So they get, I get to have the ability to say to my students if you want to be apart of my program I want you to be apart of this program. You need to show me you want to be apart cause in umm that's a little... kinda created a little bit of exclusively in that point uhhh but it means those who want to be apart are apart. And umm It also I think that also lends to our high succes as it comes to our metrics. Umm as well as we actually get actually umm above average distribution of specifically female, specifically umm umm racial minority in our program uhh because Yavapai county is not exactly a umm. When I looked at the numbers last I think it was less than 10% african american, but more than 30% hispanic. I would have to say we're probably looking at umm 50% percent or so are hispanic are our students or at least identify as Hispanic. I would say more than 40% uh Spanish are spoken at home. Umm and then as I said it's a good mix of ... we have a lot more females than males. Uh as of recent we've actually gotten our male quotion up as I actually really like. Because that's been a uh a umm uh lot of studies are finally actually catching up but it's something I've seen has been sagging as of recent in the last ten years umm just male burnout on college. I don't want to do this, I don't need to do this. But when you have somebody that can. Has the ability to and has all the advantages of being someone that is available who is uh is eligible those are the words I'm looking for. Is eligible for upward bound but not to go is kinda sad because. They have a lot of things in their back pocket they don't think they have. And that's a part of the program as well as making sure they understand that. So they can you know where everyone else is going to cost X amount of dollars. There its gonna cost Y amount of dollars. So umm and again leaning into their advantage and specifically the student advantage. So

W: Uh huh

S1: Uhh I think that's a good answer. I'm trying to go back to the questions

W: Have you experienced any cultural conflict like student to student or like student to teach or student to administrator.

S1: Usually student to student ummm and that's surprising enough that's within Hispanic cultures. That's where uhh I would say good most of my experience in that cultural difference umm there have been hispanic to white back and forth but umm. But umm the other good news about that is its usually something that's easily correctable. In the fact of "hey don't do that" and they go "oh I'm sorry" cause they're teenagers Its the big bravado umm they're saying things they don't truly usually understand. Umm but then a correction that's the other thing part of my culture we are upward bound. Doesn't matter where you come from doesn't matter where you are you're here and you're us. We're together. Umm and it does take a little bit of instilling that culture over time. But once that culture is instilled you look at what's nice is the older, you have students who umm that are in the program either one year or up to three or four years. The students in program longer actually end up enforcing that on the new people. Because they felt welcomed they felt loved they felt safe in what they were doing. Safe enough but safe enough to grow. Umm that when they see that sometimes it doesn't get reported to us I've sometimes I'll find out after the fact. Like at that point I'll say okay I can't really write you up but it the students will often enforce that kind of stuff as far as like I can't say it doesn't happen. When it does happen its such minor problem. It usually isn't too much of a problem but it usually takes a little bit of correction, disciplinary correction to solve that issue.

W: Uh huh, Yeah do you feel like some of it like this cultural conflict in this new space, they're building this new community. They're also like away from home possibly for some of them possibly for some of them for the first time. They're living in a dorm room off site like off site from home.

S1: I would say 100% agree with that. Is in that that's where I would say a lot of that would come from. And in the fact cause the area we serve is a rural area and people are in enclaves. As weird as that sounds. There are cultural enclaves around and people tend to have tend to self section off in that way. You might not be you might have experience with that other culture or you've had bad experience with that other culture. Not at upward bound so umm but uh as I said that conflict is usually entirely... very very minor like I can think of three instincts which for purpose sake I won't go into. But three instances in the last eight years that I've been working here that would actually amount to what I would describe uh which is something minor something that as I said something bravado that you know I'm away from home for the first time and the fight or flight response kicks in and its always interesting to see who responds to what in a physiological frame but umm yeah that's what I would say to that question.

W: Thank you umm, my third question do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned or do you believe that there are inequities that may preventing from achieving success or certain social economic status please explained

S1: So earned success or--or umm social economic reasons

W: Yeah so

S1: I wanted to write that down so I didn't lose it

W: Yeah is it, is it earned or are there potential inequities that that might prevent achieving

S1: I think the answer is both.. Umm but the answer is both. Umm I've seen students earn their way out of what in all statistical likelihood means jail. And I've, but I've also seen social social and economic of students that have held them back and-and or held them back from a full 100% experience in the program. Umm and uh so I would say it is very much both. There are the students umm they want they go get it. Then there are the students and that's actually part of our goal to pass those things. So just we just try and take it a hurdle at a time and go for go for the small victories so um because they always add up. I would observe uh yes social economic part. Cultural is definitely a part of it especially in our area. I can't speak to a lot of other areas but I can I only speak to ours. And that is umm like one of our biggest problems. And speaking this in generalities is within mexican culture after the 15th birthday umm there is a lot of expectations to go back to mexico find a husband and that's it. And so that is very much contrary to the mission statement to the program. So being able to say you can do that and and you can fulfill both these things and that's okay. Depending on depending on the person and depending on the family is generally a very hard thing to do. But one of the things I've learned to mitigate this is getting family to buy into the program as well. Because it's not just the student buying into the program its the parent-parents buying into the program as well. And that's in providing security for their students and know that they're providing learning and know that they're proving growth because the parents get to see the growth that's happening in their students as well. And again that's why I think thinks program really really works so.

W: Without being you know too specific. I don't want to break any policies of FERPA. But Can you share any of other obstacles you've faced with parents you know there's a conflict of I don't really want my kid to do this. Kinda like what they might say. Or what a student might come to you if the student has something their parent won't really share. Hey my parent is really objecting because of X or Y.

S1:Umm Yeah that actually does happen from uh time to time. Hey mom and dad don't think that is a good idea because of this. And actually what's funny the converse is actually more common. Mom and dad are pushing me into this and I don't want to do it. Umm Mom and dad or grandparent. Umm So that does happen I wouldn't say with very regularity so it does usually-usually what is known coloquolie known as a helicopter parent or umm or on the other side of this we get some very neglective parents. So umm yes I've gotten that that. Who the hell are you and what are you doing with my daughter. Umm I'm from upward bound hi uhh but with that being said. Usually-usually once I bring the parent into those kind of conversations. And also letting the student know that conversation, you brought this me this conversation is going to happen. Bringing all the parties together and finding a way to make it all work. Because umm the program is generally fairly flexible when it comes to time, specifically the time needs. Thats usually the run in they have to be in church at 6 o'clock on wednesday duh duh duh, this this this like using the example but of a helicopter parent is umm uh you know they have a very controlling life style and coming into the program the program is now control the student's lifestyle the parent is not But. And again its bringing all parties concerned together and say this is what we're doing this is how we're doing it. What do you need out of this we'll make some of your needs happen but we'll some of the students needs. Making that making sure that and this is

a through line with both of these examples making sure that the students needs are met. Because the student takes priority. Because otherwise what are we doing. And so moving on to the other side of the spectrum here the aloof parent umm I've had aloof parents that you know umm don't show up to pick the kid up.

W: Oh wow

S1: At the end of day. So I drive them home. Or I have one of.. me or usually we take can either take them home that's what usually what usually ends up and why we have a specific form for umm family friends, other parts of the family uncle, cousins, or who ever. Generally somebody else inside of the program who drives or lives near each other will usually drive them home. Sometimes its as easy as the parents are working and something happened or they slept in or something happened. I understand and sometimes its kinda neglect. And you know you report when it's legally there to report but there's only certain so far that goes. But in then again back to the through line doing the best for the students so understanding the parent sometime you can't make it okay. Lets find other ways to get student X home. Uhh or you know sometimes it's hard to understand what we're doing. Bring them together saying this is what this is what we're this is how we're doing it if you have needs to be meet lets meet those needs but lets meet those students needs as well. It is a lot of talking it is a lot of cat wrangling, but again its what's best for the students and that is the whole point of this program bettering the students.

W: Yeah, do you mentioned. Sometimes students have resistance after parents or grandparents might encourage it. Do those students generally join the summer program. Is there...

S1: The answer to that is yes. Usually they do the Gram told me to come here and I'll come here for a week and leave. And then they find out what the program actually is and what the program is actually like. Whether that they're just afraid cause again for the most time. This is the first time these students have been not living at home whatever their home situation is. For especially for more than a week. Most of them haven't really been out house for more than a couple of days. When you're looking at six weeks that's a big time frame. Secondly is most of them are Freshman, just finishing their freshman year of high school. So they're still feeling who they are what they are what's going on. How am I acting in this but with those student's I usually ask and usually sit them down and sometimes the parents are there sometimes the parents are not. Umm Usually the parents are not because the usually the program has started at that point and umm usually by the end of the first day the Sunday before the Monday the start of the program. I actually shepard the parents to go home to leave. They're in the program now they're save. You hoovering around actually isn't helping. Umm cause I need them to start getting used to this new situation. Umm that being said I've had some people with some umm anxiety issues and other things like that that love the program couldn't really handle being in the dorms. So said okay we do you think talked to the parents. To bring up a more specific example and talk to the parent and okay can you think you can drive them in everyday the parent sometimes yes sometimes no but its generally yes. That's what they do, they go from...basically study from home. As they start to learn what is happening through all their peers and they classes generally the next year they'll be in the dorm rooms. Sometimes its as easy as sometimes I have a sitdown conversation and go okay how are you feeling how are you doing and go what do you need? Again again what is awesome having that cohort of umm upperclassmen to use the phrase is because those upperclassmen were generally welcome in the program they will welcome other students into the program. So again Its a mul-having this.. The only way this truly really works is having this be a



multidirectional basis. Because if it's just coming from one authority it's too hard. Sometimes for a lot of times they can't overcome that. Umm so again it's a multi-basis thing.

W: Thank you. Please explain the process embry riddle aeronautical university upward program uses when reviewing applications into the program.

S1: Umm that's actually fairly simple. As far as reviewing applications is umm again we first look at the application complete. Was it turned in on time. Uhh those are, those are really big red flags surprisingly enough. Especially the on time. Inside of the application we actually give a uh we actually have umm essay question that ask. And they are to answer the essay questions. And they basically on the point of what are your goals and dreams and why do you want to join the program. I usually say please keep it short. This is a paragraph not a book. I received an application last year. Those two students were six pages long. Umm...

W: From a high school student.

S1: Wonderfully written.

W: Wow that's a lot for a high school student

S1: Because I'm going through a stack of applications that are this high. That's great but.. Umm but as I actually said it was really fantastically written and poignantly in it. It wasn't just fluff. So then there's that and then they have to get two recommendations. I usually like to see one recommendation from a teacher and somebody they know from the community. I usually take like two teachers or a coach. That's just the app—that's just in the application. As far as the process once the application was received it's denoted when that application was received and umm and then uhh cause if you turn your application in a lot earlier than everybody else. Going back to the criteria I want in the program. The earlier they turn it in the better. Umm so that's another step there we also have a form that shows umm the qualifications. Umm because while we are mandated to have umm low income and first generation umm we actually given incentives uhh to have uhh upward from 65% of the program low income and first generation. Umm so unfortunately there is a bit of a uhh a preference towards those cause they are the underprivileged of the underprivileged. Umm but there is a little bit of preference given towards to be honest I have turned a bother away because of uhh uhh recommendation letters written. You don't deserve this person does that 90 cause I'll say we usually anywhere from 75 to 85% cause both year because two thirds have to be both. We usually run 80 to 77% for both low income and first generation and that's just the nature of the area as well. Umm so-uh so that's looked at as well as references, taxes, all the rest was it a part do we have a hard time getting it in. One of the final- and the final thing we look at is. Because recruitment usually happens in the fall umm and the students the prospective students will go through meetings throughout the year. So are they turning in the lessons. Cause if they are turning in their lessons again it's showing they want to be there. Are they showing up to the lessons cause maybe they didn't turn in their lessons maybe they're not good at turning in the stuff. Maybe they're not.. Maybe they're not umm confident enough to be here's my paper work. I actually want those students who are not confident enough. Cause those are the people this program is going to help the most. So but i they just show up and lurk and then write their name down. Looking at attendance umm. One of the other big things is we uh usually have volunteer throughout the year. And those volunteer efforts are we look at that as well because those perspectives come to those volunteer can come to those volunteer efforts as well. You have to show me you want to be here. Umm and that's that is our selection criteria so

then it basically ends up of. Ok so they went to all volunteer efforts, they showed up to every meeting, they turned in all the mini lesson, they have a complete package and they turned in three weeks before everybody else A number 1 and of course like its so when it comes down to. This is the last slot to fill in I have 3 students again it comes down to who showed up more. Usually actually it comes down to the letters that they have written. Cause while I end up take into consideration our number for-that out number that is required of us for our incentive. Um and it is..If i'm actually remember it's required by the law. Basically saying you can't recruit the best over here and then forget about these people uh is as long as that number is met. As soon as that two thirds has been met. I stop I basically leave the uh leave the income level the first generation or low income that moves away as a uh as a uh as a selection criteria. Then I that lets me okay that's been satisfied lets worry about the students. I will tell you I never really disselected just because.. Because they were both I never needed that ratio has always been good. While it is part of the calculation. To me that is the worse part of the calculation what they want than that. Usually it comes down to the letter they wrote. Are they enthusiastic about it are they are they seeing what the program can do for them as well. Cause unfortunately you can also walk...this program as with most things in life get is what you get out- what you put into it. If the student is willing to put in more they will get out more. As much as I would love to help a student is kind of ambivalent who doesn't really know. The student who knows they will get more of what is going on. To me they are more deserving of that spot.

W: Uh huh how do you feel your own expectations play of each individual student into the decision process. Umm so for example you mention maybe a student who isn't maybe isn't confident in turning in work or has that ability to get work done in a timely manner turn it in verses a student on top of it A game like has their paper ready stapled whatever you know looks perfect. How do your own expectations play into that decision making process and like what determining like for lack of a better words who needs it more?

S1: That always, and that's always the hardest question and thats a-a- it has caused more than one sleepless nights for me I will be honest. But the good news there is 90% of the time they-the either one selected or not comes back the next year and gets it. Cause I do actually give preference to students who say Hey I want to but can't I want to continue and they keep showing up. I give preference to those students first cause that's showing. As far as my own expectations umm it's always really hard umm. Cause it's very much a case by case bases cause sometimes its on a the level of. And not to mention I'm not the only one making the selections this is the entire staff making these selections.

W: Thank you for clarifying that

S1: Yeah I'm like wait a minute I'm saying a lot of I messages here. Let's get into how that actually works. So but it comes down to a decision who's more deserving between the three of us. So that's usually how that ends up. As far as my expectations sometimes and the exceptions of the staff umm sometimes we'll actually hard look case over a not a good case. I hate to say it but you'll be fine you'll need it. Umm so like I'm as I said on the cut and dry side of course we're going to go to of course here's our metrics that we're going to look at. But again there's also that also that dig in and look at okay for real who's going to benefit this more and that's again recruiting and having the student's basically getting to know the perspective students over time is very critical because a lot of the people don't really want it will weed themselves out a lot of while the people that want it will stay. Its the student doing their own self selection out so we usually don't have to do it. But as I said its a very case by case basis and as far as my own

expectations it does come into play and the expectations of the staff they do come into play. Because I've said we've gotten to know the student over a period of months and its like will they benefit will they not. Are they mature enough right now... actually it really comes down to the question are they mature enough right now. And like is it like do they keep kind of showing good good take a deep then it's like yeah I think the program can help them because its like bridging that gap bridging start instead of the slide back you have is you have a better trajectory build so yeah. I would say it does come into play I would be dishonest if I said it doesn't

W: Right. Umm so I imagine or please correct me explain if I'm wrong. It's expectations of students exceeding in the program are there also the expectations of fulfillment of the grant and the purpose of the program is the students going to achieve you know higher education. Are they going to a two or four year university.

S1: My answer to that is. While we do have to keep an eye on the metrics that the grant requires. And this is absolute look I define as the absolute unfortunate fact and the dirty part of this program all together is unfortunately is to give out this money to do this program. Things...boxes must be checked, things must be shown. But what I also do know is if you run your program if an upward bound program runs its self with a student in mind with a student success in mind. If you focus as a director as a program on the student success those metrics will be met. Those metrics will be met much more than you expect. Umm because again.

W: Focus on success of the program like..

S1: I'm saying focus on the success of the student over the success of the program

W: Okay thank

S1: Because the success of the student is the success of the program. The success of the program will be seen in the success in the students. One of the hardest bits is uhh and this is one of the things I wish would be changed to be completely honest is umm cause this is one of the harder things getting a kid to go to community college is actually fairly easy especially when they get so much money to do it is students wanting to go to the military. Because when they graduate this is the worse things about the metrics is one of the metrics for the success for the program is how many students start right out of high school. And that's where that military service actually has a disruptive umm because 90% of the time they'll do their four year military service and go on to college and have their GI Bill pay for it. Inside for the program success they have to get a bachelor degree inside of six years. Sometimes that happens sometimes that doesn't uh again this is a little bit of a soap box on my score this actually one of the bigger hazards because of and I know why that exists statistically we know a student who starts right after high school finishes. If there's a break there's a percipertive drop off. Buts that's why I'm like my expectations is the military thats actually one of the biggest problems as far as filling that specific metric we have you know we have two or three go into the military. Usually those who are military focus I try get them into ROTC cause its a great way to unfortunately it fulfills the thing for the grant and that makes it look better. But there is also if you are interested in the military I hate to say it you're probably going to have a better time as an officer than would as an enlisted man. So umm those are conversations I tend have with the students who are military focused. Sometimes I want to be a Marine, I want to be a grunt, I want to do the thing and I can't help but say god bless you go for it and do it. Cause again I'm more focused at least me and how I run the program personally I'm interested in the student success. If the student sees their success in the military who am I to stop

them. Unfortunately does it hurt us statistically to a degree but the answer is again if you're taking care of your students and making sure they're getting what they want. They're going to make you meet your metrics. Umm you know sometimes I've missed those metrics by one student but that's okay cause the fact it's the student is the, the students are the goal not the as much as I would want this program to continue on forever and ever and ever and I know the program does go but it's again what are we making this money available for why are we going through all this headache. It's because the success of these students is something worthwhile to our society.

W: Do you have a percentage of program participants who do end up going into military post graduation?

S1: Umm any given year uh out of..

W: Average

S1: Any given year out of 15 and 20 graduates. One to three... just depends on the students. So again it's like less than 10 percent. Umm but then you do have of course oh I deferred oh no this oh no that. Life happens and I do understand. And the other thing I understand is the only thing I can truly do in my position in upward bound the upward bound grant for the students is ask. Hey can you do this do you want to do this. I-We can't force anybody to do anything.

W: Right...right

S1: Coercition never gets anybody anywhere

W: Right the the purpose of the program is to provide the opportunity to push them into something that they don't want to be in or they're not ready for

S1: Well and that's setting up the student for failure and there's enough in this world and we don't need another one

W: Yeah umm for clarification. When you're writing the grant is..what is considered a student who like who completes the program what are you graded on. In terms of students who enroll post graduation is that the student was in the summer program their junior to senior year. wh-wha-What counts as that if they were in the program ever.

S1: Umm they have to be active inside of the program. And what active inside the program means attending meetings attending... They can just attend... once so they a participant as defined by the grant is a student who is accepted we've gotten their application we've handed a letter saying congratulations you've been accepted into the program. Thusly they've made on to our rolls that we report. Then it's about umm service. So service is actually it's strangely defined inside the grant is. Basically did they at any time throughout the year receive did they go to a meeting. Then they have been served and they can be counted that entire year. As far as service in the summer program. They have to be there for two weeks. Two of the six weeks. So basically you might have somebody who comes up gets in burns out they cannot actually because of their service but we try generally to accept April May timeframe and generally they are going to meetings before that. So they can be counted as served. Umm and uh so that's that's really what what really the definition there. We look at acceptance they get on our rolls and are they receiving service and we

have to have of course proof of that. So uh thats and that that what feeds that uhh that that governmental monster. Soo...

W: Soo students can students—students be enrolled and be served through uhh like the academic school year and not participate in the summer program.

S1: That's correct

W: But it doesn't work vice versa where they can go summer not academic

S1: It actually does work vice versa as well so if they attended the summer program. Like if they were a prospective student. I had a person back out first day of summer

W: Okay

S1: If they're there for fourteen days fourteen calendar days they are counted as served and of course put on our rolls. That is usually done in the fall and winter for our annual report. For again they received a service from us. It is very rare that somebody just attends the summer program and doesn't attend the academic year. But I can happen and that is a possibility as well.

W: Okay and if a student attends, you know let's say the academic year their sophomore year of high they attend the summer of sophomore year and junior year and they stop attending are they still counted in your population looking at those six years post high school graduation.

S1: Uh umm they're actually dropped. So like So this happens in several ways. Most of the time it's moved out of the area. Cause we have a student that been ho moved out of the area. Technically I've had students go not for me I tried it whatever... I don't want to continue they are then dropped from our rolls uh they're then dropped from our rolls and thusly given another slot for somebody else to come in.

W: And they're not counted when you're doing your grand doing your numbers like X percentage of students graduated with their bachelors degree six years post.

S1: Unfortunately technically once they're put into the government system with the annual performance report they're there.

W: Okay

S1: But they are not counted because they have been exited they are not counted against us they and counted as an active student until umm so lets see... so lets say the cohort of 2015. Umm now that so when 2025 comes around umm they will be dropped from the rolls all together. They're there for that ten year period of their time generally their time in high school and the six years period after. Technically they exist in the paperwork side they can be reactivated can be made and say oh hey I got a bachelors degree neat why didn't you tell me umm but I can mark that down and I can mark for our help in some areas and in some cases so.

W: Okay, and everything is tracked though correct. Like there's some kind of government system that tracks the individual in the program.

S1: Umm the Department of Education keeps up a umm an on going file it has an opening and a closing so we can't access it all the time. But I keep track on umm a spreadsheet I have. Where they are what they're doing. As far as a little bit of how the sausage is made. Umm summer is done take a vacation. School starts up again we start kind of start the recruiting process and then you start going back the academic (sic) start going back out to schools as the director what I like to do is. Thats when I start to check up on my students is umm you know hey are you there are you continuing sometimes for the sake of expediency uh the A number 1 to hit on that list are the people who in this time that's their cohort for the six year beyond its okay did you get a bachelors degree yes or no. What's cool is because I try and check on everybody in that time and try and get it updated umm is that oh yeah I got a bachelors degree two years ago. And thats already been marked down I've already marked that down in the system. So but its usually hey I've moved, I dropped out for a bit, oh hey I'm back sometimes that'll actually go through. Those its you know usually its one or two you check on then I go on to the next cohort and the next cohort and then if there is enough time to do all of them. Uh and I hate to say it social media has been a hell of a tool for this case. When You see... a picture on their Instagram of somebody walking on stage neat I now know that happened.

W: Check

S1: And then I go to... because the government and especially now they're asking for us to provide more of the physical paperwork side. I'll go to the school, I'll go to the thing national student clearing house. And I'll ask hey these are the people I'm looking at are they A continuing B did they graduate. So umm creating the paper trail that way. Again with social media is nice umm is uh I can... I know the outcome now I just do the paperwork so.

W: Yeah

S1: So that's easy enough to trace down.

W: Very cool. Thank you. I feel we got a little side track I appreciate you sharing like the process.

S1: Especially when it comes to some of the stuff you're going to run into you're going to need that information so.

W: I appreciate it. Umm my final official question please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve do you believe you live or lived in the same social context as the students that you serve.

S1: Let me write that down to make sure I have it. But yes, 100% yes. Umm I think has actually made me better at my job uh because and again this is personally for me. Is a person who isn't coming from. I've worked around upward bound for a lot a worked around upward bound for college but I'm not an education major. I've fallen into education is having that social context is that I grew up in the area in which I serve. Uh it's what I would always--when I go out recurrant in chino valley high school. I don't know you I was you. Cause I fell off that stool over there and almost broke my butt. Umm and to be honest that actually gives me a little bit more candid. It gives me more connection with students. Cause while times changes, things change, not everything changes. So having that social context is that's that first bridge in trust that first step in trust and that trust is the basis of the entire program. So trust me come along with me lets see

what you can do. Uh and I would say that social context is massive and to be honest umm having seen some people work with this program that come from outside of this area it is a challenge to overcome because especially as “rural” as verses if we’re looking at Maryvale verse Bradshaw Mountain High School rural and not. Umm is there's a huge outsider complex with students who are you and why are you here. Umm and it does show as sad as it is. But as I.. understanding.. I would say my answer is yes. Understanding that social context is everything. The thing with this program is there is academics to it. White the academics are important the academics because the academics are they’re the.. The academics are the car if I’m going to make a weird analogy here. The academics are the car and the social is the fuel. Because without the social you’re not going to go anywhere. But without the academics there’s nothing for the social to push. Like I said weird-wierd analogy.

W: It works

S1: And again so understanding that social context means that those students that’s its part of the success of the students because sometimes, cause a lot of this job is getting students out of their own way. Cause most of the time they’re well I can’t do this or I don’t want to do that. I shouldn’t do this or I don’t want to do that. Just being able to say we go you and yes you can and understanding where they’re standing from. In saying what they’re saying is being able to go and being able to understand that and say I understand what you’re saying but you can and I’m not going to let you fail. Umm that is—is the success of the program. Is so going back putting all of this on a nice little bow. The success of the student is the success of the program. So understanding all the intricate parts and it is intricate and it is difficult. But understanding it and doing it is 100% necessary for the success of the program.

W: Thank you

S1: You’re welcome.

W: Those are the last of my questions is there anymore commentary you have or anything you’d like to add to the interview.

APPENDIX E

SUBJECT 2 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION – EDUCATOR

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Wasem: Alright [SUBJECT 2] and I do have your permission to record this interview, is that correct?

Subject 2: That's correct

Wasem: alright thank you. Alright so the first question I have for you is how if at all do you diversify your upward bound curriculum to be inclusive racial identity, background and experience?

S2: racial identity, background and experience?

Wasem: uh huh

S2: Um background, racial identity. So racial identity, background, experience. Um, I'm sorry, I'm trying to think of the middle one. Background and experience. See background and experience, but I mean I don't know, are those - how would you differentiate background and experience?

W: ummm Background... verses experience. That's a good question. I guess essentially they've very similar in just like their life experience and where they came from.

S2: Their life experience. Okay gotcha

W: Their life experiences, where they came from, what they experience maybe at home. Or what they experienced at one school verses another school. Umm they moved around to a lot of different places. You know they came from Phoenix moved to Prescott or whatever that might be.

S2: Okay yes, so the curriculum I use I think is, I think it is very diverse. A lot of the videos have a lot of umm... well actually at upward bound I haven't used this curriculum yet. But actually even the old curriculum the videos were umm... you know they had students in them. They had young people in them umm.. Signing various signing styles ummm people from different racial I would say racial backgrounds were shown in the videos ummm.. And different age groups. What I'm using now oh my gosh it's amazing in that category, but last year, in the years prior, I'd say moderately inclusive of disability, ethinc, racial, ummm gender right the one I'm using now. But you know it's higher it was more moderate umm last no last curriculum. And then in terms of their background, I would modify their assignments to be. I get they're still in high school, right? Umm, I get generationally you find ways to connect with them. I would modify some of the assignments. Okay we don't have to do a children's book translation. Let's do a song or let's do it in a group right. I noticed there because there was a diverse gamut of learners that some of the assignments warranted a group activity because it couldn't be done at an individualized level so I made it into groups. I put you know a teacher would these kids with these kids and umm you know it was more project based learning so that you can include everybody. Did I answer the question? I don't know.

W: Yeah definitely, you certainly did answer it umm. And then I wanted to confirm, you teached american sign language in the upward bound program. Is that correct?

S2: American sign language yup

W: okay awesome, and how long have you been doing that for?

S2: Ummm ... I think since 2012.

W: Okay, awesome we must have just missed each other because I graduated in 2012. Okay cool

S2: We must have just missed each other because I was very very pregnant my first year and then my mom subbed for me the last week because I gave birth and then umm my second year I was pregnant again but didn't give birth. And then I might have skipped two years. I've done about eight years.

W: Okay cool that's awesome. My second question is How, if at all, do you include your students culture within your upward bound lessons?

S2: Culture...Umm not a whole lot, but I do I do recognize that there's a percentage of spanish speaking students. Ummm in so when we talk in terms of language I do use Spanish as a way to - Right because first day is does anybody know a different language. That's one of the first questions right out of the bat. So the concept is if you have one language if you already have two languages you can learn a million more after that right? Your brain is already wired. You're my sponge. So I really connect with the Spanish speaking people ummm because they already have that second language. So they'll actually be surprised they're the stronger ummm in terms of language acquisition. They pick up things a lot of faster. And the grammar (inaudible) Those are the only terms of people in terms of culture would just be the language the concept of does anyone have a second language. I connect to those people and I group them according because they're some of my stronger students.

W: uh huh I'm not trained in education at all. When you say group them accordingly does that mean you kind of like split them apart into different groups to help maybe students that might have weaker....

S2: Yeah yea yea yes, right. When going back to the first question differentiation right? You want to make sure you have students who are struggling and you know some students who are getting it. Lot of it group

W: Okay

S2: You know...Because its high school and upward bound, they're not used to so much rigger so I'm like you lets you know bridge that gap umm .... and encourage them to do their homework together, right? I'm trying right, I'm trying umm... If you have no one to talk to your language you know it's gonna mean nothing. So group work is really important and so yeah their grouped on skills, ability but going going back to the background to the culture that language that concept...I did have one did someone speak russian one year? Yeah yes. We always talk about different languages. You know we talk about how that's a benefit and how really cool it is that there are million different sign languages and it's not universal.

W: Very cool umm. My third question, do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned, or do you believe there are inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or certain socioeconomic status? And then please explain your reasoning ... and I can repeat myself.

S2: Right so so socia I... I... I understand that socia.. You know socioeconomic status impacts access to higher education I...I know that. Umm and I believe that to this day. And I believe that programs like upward bound and I'm a talent search kid right

W: Okay cool

S2: Yea so I'm a talent search kid. And So the fact that I was a part of upward bound is really important to me. Because I know that connection and I...I... used the support and I have a masters degree so I am you know. I have that you know they were there to guide me along the way. I would have liked to have been in upward bound. I think that's a great opportunity for kids. Just a hey let me try college, oh look I can do it. And look you're going to pull me up every month and help me get funding, help me fill out these applications, umm jump through the hoops right? It's a lot of jumping through the hoops, and I think kids who come from different socioeconomic - They don't they're not used to jumping through hoops. Their parents didn't jump through hoops their grandparents didn't jump through hoops so I think playing college is not you know. It wasn't taught to them and it's not taught in the college... high school. You're not directly jump how to play college. And I think programs like upward bound bridge that.

W: Uh huh, right

S2: Did I answer your question.. I don't know.

W: Umm

S2: I'm sorry my..

W: You're fine, umm

S2: Socioeconomic

W: So, I'm trying not to put words in your mouth... (inaudible)

S2: Oh, hold on one second (inaudible)... We're frozen, are you there? My sound just completely went out. I cannot hear you. Oh I know why my power went.. Hold on. Okay there we go. I have my laptop plugged into my car and if I turn my. Can you hear me now?

W: I can hear you

S2: Oh I can hear you. Oh how weird it likes to have power to turn (inaudible). Do I believe there are inequalities? Yes I do.

W: And do you (inaudible)...

S2: Do... do...I believe they prevent what?

W:(inaudible)

S2: Do I believe that they prevent their success? Umm yeah on think on some, yeah, 100% of them no, but a majority I would say yes...are...are.. You know...They no longer have access. They don't have as much access.

(inaudible)

S2: Dang it, go ahead and say that again

W: The fourth question is How (inaudible)

S2: I don't know why this is happening. All I hear is static. No. Yeah I'm just gonna go for my phone. I'll just umm turn this off.

S2: Go ahead and say something

W: Can you hear me

W: (inaudible)...

S2: Okay that's better, can you hear me now?

W: I can hear you now.

S2: Okay, I can hear you through my speaker. Perfect. Umm, Okay, number four go ahead.

W: (inaudible)

S2: all I hear is like static crunching still.

W: (inaudible)

S2 Are you using your ear buds as speakers?

W: Yeah I'm going to see. Can you hear me now?

S2 Oh Yeah you're clear now.

W: Maybe it was me. I sincerely apologize.

S2: Oh no, you're fine. I can hear you very clearly now.

W: Okay, well that's great! I apologize. I will keep my ear buds out so you can hear me now. Umm the fourth question is Have you ever changed your upward bound curriculum based upon your expectation of student's performance. Please explain yes or no.

S2: I differentiate the learning. Thats I'm a former.. I'm a special ed teacher so. It's something that you just do so that everybody can access the standard. Does that make sense?

W: Uh huh

S2: But ask your question one more time

W: Of course, have you ever changed your upward bound curriculum based upon *your* expectations of student's performance?

S2: No, I still have really high expectations. I just modify the activity or the assignment to meet their needs right. They all have different needs depending. I don't know if their socioeconomic needs I don't see that I just see them okay struggling, you need support. That's just what I do because I come from special education. Okay umm

W: Uh huh

S2: Umm but I know you're asking in terms of

W: Umm you might modify the assignment but you never lower your expectations based upon your students performance or based upon their behavior?

S2: No...no... not based upon their behavior. I... i... I still have the same expectations for those kids yeah

W: Perfect thank you.

S2: Yeah

W: My final question is umm, Can you please explain how you understand the social context of the community that you serve within the upward bound program. Um do you believe that you live in the same social context as the students that you serve?

S2: I live in the same quad city areas. I went to Chino Valley High School. I'm you know I'm... I'm...basically them. I tell them that you know. It's like Hey I went to chino valley high school twenty years ago but you know umm. I live in the quad cities, I work in the public education system during the day. Sometimes I see them during the school year. I'll see them every summer. I'll see them after upward bound. I live in their community. It's good to see them being successful umm after upward bound. It's...it's a really good feeling to see that.

W: Uh huh that's wonderful

S2: I'm just trying to think if I. Yeah, I need to hear your question again, it's so formal.

W: I apologize. I appreciate the feedback too, that's helpful. Umm Please explain how you understand the social context of the community that you serve. And then I think you did answer the second part of that question. Which is, Do you believe that you live in the same social context as the students that you serve?

S2: Oh But how did I understand that social context?

W: Yeah just any details about, general details about umm. The social context of the students and how you understand and work within that context.

S2: I mean it would be nice to know more about that. Does that make sense if they did come with, not that upward bound needs a training like a. I differentiate I mean I don't. I differentiate my lessons already, but I don't really need that information but I do understand. I.. I understand that they they don't you know, they've come different backgrounds and they don't have access. Umm and I do see them in the community you know. Umm say the beginning one more time.

W: Yeah, umm please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve.

S2: Kids wanting to go to college you gotta have high expectations for them regardless and umm. Differentiate based on their needs, but don't you know, don't change the outcome.

W: uh huh that's helpful

S2: Yeah that's all yeah

W: Umm I don't have any other questions, umm if there is anything you want to add to summarize or any final thoughts you might have umm now's a great time or if you have any questions for me. I'm also happy to answer any questions that you might have.

S2: Are you going to write this up and share it or is this just practice. Like what is this?

W: Yup so this is a umm like an official interview for my Thesis project so it will become data for the project. We won't use your name or any identifying information. Umm a... I'll essentially like to listen to it and transcribe it and then I'll go through the... the interview and umm do thematic coding so identifying umm things that you and other participants have said that kind of group together and support umm.. If the upward bound program has umm accessibility limitations based in the opportunity gap framework.

S2: Okay

W: If that makes sense

S2: No but I would love to read, it kinda does. I would love to read.. I would love to read your... your thesis project if you ever share it. If it ever gets

W: Yeah I'll be happy to share it with you. I have your email umm so once uh it's published I hope to officially graduate in May of this year and everything is official

S2: Good job, good luck, good luck.

W: Thank you so much. Thank you for your time

S2: You're welcome best of luck

W: Thank you, have a good rest of your day and a good weekend. Bye, thank you.

APPENDIX F

SUBJECT 3 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION – EDUCATOR



Wasem: Okay, [Subject 3], we're here recording and I do have your permission to record, correct?

Subject 3: Yup

Wasem: Perfect, Okay. Um, so I have 5 standard questions that I have been asking umm everyone across the board, and then I did want to confirm your role in the upward bound program.

S3: Sure

W: Um Are you an educator or and I also heard that maybe you were a tutor. So So What exactly do you do in the program?

S3: Umm So I actually also went to the program when I was in high school. Uh, after I left high school I went to Embrly Riddle. Where at the time Lynn Nuttal was the director and he invited me to kinda stick with the program as a tutor. When Lynn retired and uh through other people, but eventually Mike ran the program talking with me and kept me on as a tutor until the end of my senior year. Which was, uh, May of 3031 um he invited me on to be the math instructor for uh that summer course.

W: okay thats great, very cool. I knew Lynn too. Lynn was the director when I was in the program. I was in the program from like 3010 to 13 I think.

S3: Okay, yeah I think mine was 13-17

W: Okay so like we like just missed each other

S3: Yup

W: Very cool okay.

Um So my first question is, how, if at all, do you diversify your upward bound curriculum to be inclusive of students' racial identity, background, and experience?

S3: So, umm in all honesty when it came to actually prepping for courses, I did not put much emphasis on that because umm I was told relatively last, asked relatively last minute by Mike, so I was prioritizing getting all of the students ready for their next semester. However, uh when I was tutoring the years before that I spent a lot of time either getting to know the students themselves or the students in their individual situations and trying to be as helpful as I can for those certain situations. There are... you went through program you know what it's about. So there were many times where I would go out to Chino in the middle not in the middle of the night...relatively late at night to meet them at a uh coffee shop or mcdonalds or something to work with them on some of their homework or go with them to the prescott valley library late at night or something like that. Um uh and so the majority of the time spent tutoring was getting to know the students on top of trying to assist them in the best way possible for their certain situations.

W: And how did you like, where there any certain methods that you employed or you know how did you get to know these students and how did you umm get to help them like what I...I...I

don't want you to like break any FERPA, but how did uh you how did you help these students and guide them students through their certain situations without being too specific?

S3: um the majority of the time was really spent with trying to either put myself in their situation to see what I could offer as a an idea or something along those lines but it really wound up looking at the individual situations and for the tutoring stuff coming up with say examples that were more related to something that they had known before. If I had a student whose family ran a mechanic shop or something like that then we would be talking about some of the algebraic stuff or uh some of the algebraic equations I would talk about oh well if you're if so and so paid you this much for this amount of time then duh duh duh duh something like that try and hone in on specific examples for those situations um but that took a lot of getting to know the students and the majority of that came from just treating them as the individuals that they are and understanding that what works for one students is not going to work for another student.

W: That's great, thank you. Um the second question is how if at all do you include your students culture within your upward bound lessons?

S3: Um so while I was in the program the majority of the students were um hispanic or um tangentially related to hispanic uh and I didn't outright do anything in the class. Uh again and in teaching a class but I did uh I did I...I...I really can't say I did anything specifically to include any kind of cultural bit into this that or the other I was teaching math classes. So, not as many uh avenues to specifically include bits of culture into what a line is, for example. However a lot of the examples that I would use I did try and bring more into context that not necessarily the cultural part of these students would understand or but more of the situational or more if like they had jobs outside of work or this that and the other stuff like that. Unfortunately not necessarily cultural.

W: Yeah, thats super helpful though, thank you. Um the third question is do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned, or do you believe that there is some inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or obtaining a certain economic status. Please explain. And I can repeat that, I know it's a big question.

S3: Yeah um thats okay. I think I got it. You may need to guide me a... a little bit. I do think that in the majority of situations, students can buckle down and achieve what they want. However um I do realize that this is an idealized view point and uh and that just some students based on their background don't have the same level going into things. Where they may need a little bit of extra help they may need a little extra time to get to the same concepts. Or get to through the same concepts. But I do believe that given that extra time given that extra attendance, given that extra studying I any student has the capability to succeed going forward. It just takes extra on not only on the students part but the instructors part going forward.

W1: That's great thank you. Have you ever changed your upward bound curriculum based upon your expectations of students performance? If so, please explain.

S3: Um so when I initially taught the actual classes for the program when I was their math instructor, I did not change the way that I I thought about the students performance at all. I had in mind uh from the onset they would be uh that I would scale the grades so that the person who got the highest would have 100% and everyone from there would based on that. However, I didn't mention that to the students right away uh because I wanted them to try to work their hardest and

uh try and understand the material. So not after getting to know any of the students but I did have safety nets built in before hand.

W: okay that's great thank you.

S3: That ... on that on topic?

W: Yeah that's perfect that's a good that's kinda uh the answer..answers the question definitely. And now my final questions is can you please explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve. The second part to this question is do you believe that you live or lived in the same social context as the students you serve?

S3: Um so it depends on what form of the social what.. what... what... form of social context. Like you and I both went through the program. Which means we that we have at least something in common with the students that are currently going through the program. For me that was uh I was a first generation college student. Um however based on upward bound's other criteria for uh admittance I can I can say that I was part of a middle class white family. So my parents made decent money um I just happened I just so happen to get into the program because of the first generation college kid. So Yes I agree I was part of that community for first generation college student, however, in other aspects like the umm the income for example or the hispanic population not so much. Uh but I did get to know a lot of those students and being in the Prescott area a lot of the population is of that culture,of the Hispanic culture, and I had a plenty of friends growing up that were a part of that culture, but, I myself, not at all.

W: Right and how do you understand the like the social context of the area and what what does that mean to you and how did you incorporate any lessons into like what students may have been going through, I know you touched on that before.

S3: in all honesty I was born in prescott. Uh born and raised in *Prescott*. I had a lot of ideas of population in Prescott valley verses chino verse prescott verse kirkland verses Mayer verse where ever so when I would meet with certain students uhh I would try and bring more stuff into like okay if the student was from the Chino area, for example, I may include a little bit more of examples that were related to livestock because there was a larger 4-h program at the Chino Valley High school. Of if I were to work with students from Prescott Valley I may include more umm like mechanical car mechanic or some kind of plumbing, or some kind of carpentry, or contracting or something example because the majority of the student not necessarily the students the majority of the population in prescott valley kinda filled into those roles umm and thats thats pretty much it. I. I... I did try and build more of the examples of the geographical context other than pretty much anything else. Because of what I thought that I knew of the area.

W: yeah and did you feel like your understanding of the area changed you know coming from like you lived there you're a student there and then being like an educator there like did that kind of change how you thought about the social context at all?

S3: Umm I...mean i... i...i... always had friends that went to Chino High, I had friends that went to Bradshaw, I had friends that would drive up from Skull Valley everyday uh so I like to think that growing up I had a somewhat decent understanding of the area. But realistically I didn't spend much time out there and I understand that. So I uh I will not I cannot accurately say I knew everything about the area. I knew little things here and there and I knew some of the people out

there but that's that's about it. But so my thoughts have changed about a lot of the areas. But not drastically.

W: yea that makes sense. Okay um Well thank you so much [Subject 3], that was my final like official question. But If you have anything you would like to add to the interview or if you have any questions for me. I am happy to take those now too

S3: I uh I don't have any questions for you. I uh I uh don't know if have anything else you want me elaborate on or anything um?

W: No I think that was perfect you really did a great job explaining you know um your view points from your eyes as an educator. Um If I have any questions I'll follow up via email.

S3: sure

W: If you can just ping me back and let me know I mean we can do it over email or hop on a quick zoom call whatever is easier for you.

S3: Yeah I'm good with whatever it maybe. Also I did just send you that form again.

W: Yes I did receive it

S3: Perfect

W: I did see that come through

S3: Alright then if you have

W: Thank you have a great rest of your day

S3: You as well bye now.

APPENDIX G

SUBJECT 4 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION – EDUCATOR

Wasem: Okay [Subject 4], I've started the recording and I do have your permission to record is that correct?

S4: That is correct.

W: okay, umm so we'll go a head and get started. My first question is how if at all do you diversify your upward bound curriculum to be inclusive of students' racial identity, background and experience.

S4: umm the program I have set up when I teach the classes I just try to cover the first semester of the class, so for chemistry or physics. And I don't go deeply into any particular subject. I'm trying to get the basics down so it'll help out students when they take the courses. Umm so I aim that at a level that anybody uhh should be able to do. They do have to have certain math classes before they start these two classes. So they should already have a background of mathematics to do the basics. Umm as far as adjusting it to their racial backgrounds umm specifically in the physics class umm I actually have a section about once a week where I ask them to bring in a video umm that we can analyze the physics of it. It can be anything from a cartoon to umm a live action movie to a just a clip they found on Youtube or whatever as long as it's school appropriate and we'll try to analyze that. So they can bring whatever they want to for background into that and we'll try to umm play around with that and see what we can find out about it and whether it's accurate or not. So we'll analyze umm timestamps on the video or we'll analyze umm like actual vehicles if we know if we can figure out which vehicle is it in the scene we'll try to do that. We've done like a scene from Mulan one time the Disney cartoon. And that was a lot of fun. We uh sort of estimated a lot of things, but we were actually able to find umm some really cool uh things for it...it's the scene in the avalanche where they all go falling off the cliff. Umm and so we found out what breed of horse it was and the average weight of that breed of horse. We found out umm roughly the weight of the armor that the soldiers were wearing. And The average weight of male and female of a Chinese person. And then umm I gave them the option we could either figure out try and figure out the friction is between Chinpo's shoes and the ice or we could try to figure out how much Chinpo weighs. If we could find something that would tell us what the rough uh friction would be between them. And some body in the class found a military document declassified one that just uh. Somebody had done an analysis of the coefficient of friction of various foot gear and the various levels of ice and snow and so we just used the best possible one and uh found Chinpo to weigh roughly the same amount as the horse and it was like 1200 pounds or something like that.

W: that's amazing

S4: but that... it is actually possible umm there is there have been people has been historic. In the book of world records is like 1300 and something pounds. It was conceptually possible umm and you know like sumo wrestlers generally weigh in like I don't know 400 to 600 pounds. So it's a little bit outside of a sumo wrestler level but theoretically possible for a human.

W: Very cool.

S4: Umm either way. Yeah We do ... we do stuff like where I try to bring whatever they want to bring as their background.

W: uh huh So the students really have an opportunity to kind of help shape the curriculum and stay engaged with the materials, is that correct?

S4: Yeah exactly.

W: Wow that's really cool

S4: And I'll talk to the students at the start of the class and try to find out their interest. And So the umm test questions that I make for the class are... are based on that. So if I have fans kids who are fans of marvel... marvel movies I'll make the questions about marvel movies. If somebody's into myth and legends I'll to like try to bring in like oh what's his name... I think it's sysaphis that uh I don't know the one that's always pushing the rock up the hill umm.

W: I don't know if I'm familiar enough

S4: Yeah. There's a greek... Greek myth about uh about a guy who's punishment is to continuously push this boulder up the hill and then it rolls down the other side and he has to do it every day. Umm and so I bring that in like part of a question or something umm. And so I try and adjust it to the students umm whatever they're most interested in.

W: Very cool. umm okay the similar is... umm this question is similar so the second question is how if at all do you include your student's culture into your upward bound lessons?

S4: Ummm yeah that's probably more attach the first answer I give is more attached to culture as far as like their umm their backgrounds. I'm actually from this area too. I grew up in Chino Valley. At least for the students there I know all the streets I know towns better than they do because I've been here for... what is it now like 34 years. And so I can be... I can be like yeah I remember when that housing development was made. And That can apply to either also Prescott or Prescott Valley cause students are from there umm. I am uh not fluent in spanish but umm at least proficient enough that I can understand what people are saying and kinda communicate back and forth. I usually get the syntax or the umm whatever wrong with it but umm. They can at least understand me and I can understand them more or less. So I try to uh sometimes just throw in some things in spanish umm not a whole lot but a little bit and a lot of the students here have a spanish background or uh a Mexican background - they speak Spanish. Umm Whether or not they are from Mexico themselves it's just part of the culture here. Umm In addition to that umm I'm actually through a friend from college uh somewhat attached to umm sort of Mexican lore and or like folklore and history. So I haven't specifically drawn from that from any questions that I can think of but umm I would certainly not be opposed to that if a student came in with something like that. I might actually be able to go further than they would, uh, were themselves.

W: Yeah, that's awesome. Umm and do you feel like there's a difference in the students that you teach on a uh more regular basis during the school year than the students you teach in the upward bound program?

S3: Yes, the students in the upward bound program are way more motivated to succeed than the average student in a regular class. Umm for the program they are required to meet umm maintain a certain GPA or they are forced out, like they have to leave the program if they are not maintaining it. And I have yet to meet a student that was not maintaining it. Umm There are a couple students that have gotten like maybe a little bit close and umm the program leads will talk

with them and the next day they are back on task and doing really well. Umm most of the time the students in the classes that I'm running Umm are super into the class and really excited for it, having a good time umm they may not always like ah man this worksheet is so big or whatever but the—their really invested in it.

W: Yeah and do you know what that GPA is that they have to maintain, by chance?

S3: Uuuhhhh I want to say it's like... they're supposed to maintain a B average and if they get into a C, they're kinda like in a uh warning zone they gotta get it back up

W: Ok

S3: Umm and I do for classes like that. Umm I allow people to redo things. So if they did a bad job on the work sheet maybe they didn't understand something then umm I allow them to redo it and bring it back into me. It requires an extra time for them but the process of going back through the worksheet is actually going to help them learn the subject a lot better so that extra practice is a good thing.

W: Yeah, and do you think the motivation comes from the students... being in the program and having this desire to go to college or university umm a-a-and they're motivated to be there rather than students in school who in the regular school year that are in the classroom everyday because they kinda have to be there. You feel like it's because it's an elective program that they are taking over the summer.

S3: Absolutely, umm the fact that they get to have an experience that they've never had before. And That no one in their family likely has ever had before that's usually the students who are in there. That's how I understand. They very much want to succeed and do something different and something umm powerful that no one else in their family has had an opportunity for. And so yes I would say that is a huge umm intrinsic and extrinsic level of goal for them.

W: Uh huh. Amazing. Thank you.

S3: Uh huh.

W: My third question, do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned or do you believe that there are inequities that may prevent students from achieving certain success or certain socioeconomic status? Please explain.

S3: So one of the things I have come across in teaching classes and courses and also experienced the classroom. Is that students who have parents who can help them with umm class work with homework. Umm Help explain topics to them is incredibly powerful in their ability to uh succeed in a class. However the opposite is also true. Students who have no help at home umm struggle a lot more in the class because they don't have anybody outside the classroom they can talk to. And furthermore students who are in a poorer social and economic status at home often have extra responsibilities that others don't. So they may have to take care of younger siblings while their parents are both at work. Uh they may have to get a job especially with high schoolers a lot sooner than their peers do. And So they're working maybe 8-10 or even more hours a week. In addition to their regular school work. So homework is more difficult for them if they can't complete it in class then it's almost impossible for them to complete it at all because of their other



responsibilities. Umm and furthermore like it is still surprising to a lot of people that a lot of my students do not have internet access at home. I'm not saying the majority but there are definite students who do not have any internet access at home. They may have a cell phone that they got from a friend but they don't have like a phone plan or anything like that. And people are still like nah nah nah that's not possible. It's legitimately not only possible but it is exactly happening and some of the kids are even homeless. That umm not necessarily ones in the program that I know of. But I have talked to a lot of students who are homeless for one reason or another. Umm either their family is living in conditions that are considered homeless or umm they are now without parents for one reason or another umm. Either through death or through abandonment or uh through jail time even. So they are basically wards of the state at that point. Umm we actually had a student at the high school that was living in a... basically living in a.. local hotel. When her dad she never really known and her mom umm had ended up going to jail. And so she was alone with her younger sister. Taking care of her younger sister by herself. So it is very legitimate that the socioeconomic status has a big impact on their time. And that's another reason why I offer these students every opportunity to make up uuh work they never turned in or redo work they didn't get a chance to finish, or just didn't do well the first time.

W: Uh, do you see i... I know you had mentioned you don't. Umm you know you're not the one making decisions with applications. But in your experience have you seen students who might be interested in the program but feel like they can't join the program for any of the reasons that you had mentioned. You know they're taking care of siblings, they're working, they're doing xyz. Umm to support their family, or to maintain you know basic level needs for themselves.

S3: Umm not specifically that I have seen. Umm one of the best parts about the program I think for students in that kinda situation is that meals are provided as part of the program. Umm so they get breakfast when they show up, they get lunch. Umm except for like the covid years they were also staying overnight there they would get dinner as well. So they would all their meals are provided for them giving them a steady source of food. That's also a huge deal at our community because we have free breakfast provided for all students at the school that wouldn't eat otherwise. They won't have the opportunity to eat. And then lunches are free or reduced umm is like an enormously large percentage of the students at the school. I wanna say... it was somewhere around 80% of the student body one umm one of the years I was teaching. I may have been higher. I know it fluctuates but yes that's the whole school district at that level. It's just a really low income community. There are a number of undocumented immigrants as well. Umm but as a school that's not something we deal with. That's not something we interact with we just take care of the students we are given regardless of where they come from. And that is required by law. That uh schools do that. We-we can check into their background but we are not responsible for that part of it.

W: And do you know if that's the same within the upward bound program or not.

S3: That I don't know. They may go through because it's through the college they may go through having to have documentation rather than the public schools.

W: Yeah.

S3: So that may be a barrier I don't know

W: Yeah, Thank you for sharing that. It was incredibly heartbreaking to hear about students. But being from the area I do have some understanding of what you're talking about certainly.

S3: There are a lot of similarities between Prescott and Chino. Umm but they're are certain differences that are also ... there umm because we serve everything from Paulden umm to the airport and everything from umm the western rang-mountain range to the eastern mountain range so it's one of the biggest school districts in the state by square miles.

W: Yeah that's really large. Can you explain any of the differences that you see between the upward bound students specifically who are from different parts of the area. You know who are from Prescott valley or chino or prescott or uhh you know like Mayer is served as I believe Mayer high school. Do you see any differences when you're teaching the students in the upward bound class?

S3: Umm... maybe a little bit umm not heavily because the students that are in the program are.. are first generation college students. So its they're generally are sharing some characteristics and their dress maybe a little bit different but not heavily. And umm at first like the first day they may separate a little bit based on their classes just because they know each other. Umm where as they don't know the students from other schools. But really quickly I have seen every single person in a class walking together, talking, as a group having a good time. Umm so they make friends pretty quick in the program. As far as I've seen.

W: Yeah, that's great, thank you for sharing.

S3: Uh huh.

W: My next question: have you ever changed your upward bound curriculum based upon your expectations of your students' performance please explain.

S3: Umm not change mine specifically. Umm maybe a little bit. So I have to give a little bit of a background from teaching. Umm one of the years I was— the second year I was teaching umm here at the high school. I was teaching physics for the second year. I had a student in class who had umm brain cancer as a very young as a child and had a huge umm surgery for it. He had recovered but it, the whole the process just left him behind other students for a good bit. But he didn't ever wanted to be left behind. Like he never wanted his path to slow him down. So he fought really hard umm despite umm what would be considered disabilities. And he... he didn't want to ever stop ...ever let that, want that to stop him from being in class and so he pushed his way into physics at the high school. Umm one thing I noticed is that he had a lot of trouble with written tests where as he performed better umm like up on the board working out a problem in front of the class. And that was something that I did regularly with the uh the smaller because physics is usually a pretty small class. Like I think 12 was the biggest I've had. Umm and so one thing I did for that class is I started having tests be done as a class. They would get a random questions as they came into the classroom. And I just you know had them pull out of a hat kinda thing. They were responsible for that questions they were the only one who could write it down on the board, but the whole rest of the class could help them running the calculator or umm helping with the step, "oh you missed a step there" umm that kinda thing. And so they were the one responsible for it and they would be graded on it, but they were also graded on their participation and their help with other students and when they were doing their problems. And that was how I did test for that class the rest of that the year for that class. He did a lot better with

that he actually performed pretty well with that. I did that umm similarly when I did the physics class the one year I did it. Is that I did all the tests up on the board because I had good experience with it. I found that was more effective for every student not just for umm students who are maybe have an IEP or some kind of accomodation or similar. And so, yeah that was just how I did the class. I've been told the previous physics teacher had tried to force all umm four quarters uhh subject umm into a single month long course and that the students were like really struggling in the class even the best students were really struggling the previous year. And that he was not welcome back—or like not requested to come back for the program again because of how bad that was for the students and in fact I think he ended up being sent out of the program. The year, That year, the previous year and uh a graduate had helped out instead taken over it. This last year I did that and again I just aimed at the first semester and didn't go deep into the subject. Like it was just kind of the a basics to get them to understand how problems of each type are done the basics and then they can get into the details of like how or what happens if you change this or if you change that when they actually take the course.

W: uh huh... uh huh. Have you ever based any of your curriculum umm... like on having a student you know like in your regular school year classes or you have a student sibling in a prior year or umm anything like that. And have like that having a preconceived notion of students or a group of students in the upward bound program. Umm or a preconceived notion of low income first generation students so I'll make the curriculum easier based upon that factor have you like ever like based your curriculum around those type of...

S3: Curriculum no, umm I have had some students that were like... I have helped coach the cross country and track team so I had some students that had been on the umm cross country or track team the previous year so I already knew them. So I umm you know like joked around with them a little bit or maybe had a sibling before, or talked to a sibling before and been like uhhhh I know your brother, but that's no different than I would teaching a regular class. Umm maybe do some kind of joke we were both inside of. Otherwise, No the curriculum I didn't change.

W: Oh ok. Thank you. My final question umm can you please how you understand the social context of the community that you serve. Do you believe or that you live or lived in the same social context as the students that you serve within the upward bound program?

S3: Absolutely, umm I live in a mobile home park. I'm in a double wide right now. I've lived here like I said about in this house uhhh 30 years give or take. Umm since like 92 I would say so like 30 years. Umm I go for runs and bike rides throughout the community and I've lived here almost my whole life umm like less than 2 years old when we first moved here to Arizona. To Prescott at first, and so yeah this is the community I've known, these are the people I've known. Umm I—I my mom raised us as a single mom for a portion of my life. My parents uhh separated and then divorced when I was in middle school. I did have more of an experience of a full home when I was younger but yeah. I know alot about what the kids here are dealing with. I've umm I know I grew up knowing where the drug houses were. Ummm I grew up knowing where umm there's not really gangs specifically here but I knew where a gang shootout had happened between like some biker gangs that were active in the community at the time. Umm A lot of the kids here are growing either from ranches so like ranching involved in the umm that and some way shape or form either they their families own or operate them or—supply them in some way. Or then in otherwise there are also a lot of immigrants here umm mostly from Mexico but from other places as well. And it's also a retirement community. (inaudible) Sorry about that ... but yes that's like yeah. I grew up in the same school in fact I sat in the same desks as those in Chino

umm they were—I know they are the same because I can tell by the shape they're in. Umm in the physics class I taught it was exactly the same text book I'd used when I was a student there and umm so It had been a few years old at that point. It was like a 30 year old text book, easily. Umm but uh that said like I made it out of this community. My sister actually went to Embry Riddle and graduated from Embry Riddle. She is a freaking rocket scientist. So I also have confidence that each and everyone of these students has a hard road but can make it in this world and can do whatever it is they want to do. And That is something very much I constantly say to the students. Is that your fully capable of getting out of here your community isn't stopping you from that. It's a hard road and you're going to have to work really hard to do it's not going to be handed to you. But if you want to, nothing can stop you. And Especially with the upward bound kids they—they hear what I'm saying their nodding their heads like oh yeah, oh yeah, I'm definitely I'm doing it and I'm so excited for them. Umm I know not everyone of them is continuing and going to make it into college just because of circumstances. But umm yeah even if they don't that's not a big deal like I still have confidence they'll achieve things in their community in their lives and their families that are valuable.

W: Uh huh yeah that's great. I'm like goose bumps. Umm wow thank you so much all of your answers were very like detailed umm. It'll be really helpful in my data collection. So thank you. I—I don't have any further questions for me or anything you'd like to add to the overall data collection interview.

S3: Umm I don't think I have anything specific to add. Umm You said you were going you're writing it on the this upward program. Are you going.. What school are you going to I forgot

W: I go to ASU, Arizona State

S3: ASU... Okay cool

W: Yeah that's where I earned my undergraduate degree and ummm worked for ASU for some time. And finishing up my last little part there my masters

S3: Okay up. Alright congratulations and good luck in your future.

W: Thank you and good luck at GCU, and that's great.

S3: Thank you.

W: Have a good rest of your day and thank you [Subject 4].

APPENDIX H

SUBJECT 5 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION – ADMINISTRATION

W: Alright [Subject 5], I do have your permission to record, is that correct?

S5: Yep

W: Okay, so my first question is how, if at all, do you consider students' racial identity, background, and experience when creating programming for the Upward Bound Program?

S5: Hmm..Umm Sorry, I don't know. I think the only time I really am considering racial identity and background is when we're pairing them in the dorms. Umm I try to find similarities between kids that maybe are at different schools. Umm but we also take into account some of those things when we are communicating with parents. Umm because sometimes a different background might have different expectations or might not understand different things if they come from a different culture umm and so we we consider it when it comes to communication and grouping but umm other than that making sure we have really open lines of communication seems to make it make all that kinda mesh together easier. Is that a good answer?

W: And what does that look like, you know, when you're talking to parents? What What does, I mean without like sharing personal details of the student, like what does that typically look like when you communicate with the parents and what concerns might they have that you have to overcome?

S5: Umm So we have I can give you an example without giving you like too much. Umm Like we have a family that is here from Korea. They've lived here for a while, but the parents have they went to college in Korea, but it doesn't count over here. Umm so they have a lot of questions about how it's all done here. Umm how umm FAFSA works - that seems to be a huge one. Umm Especially for imm for families who have immigrated, they have a lot of questions about FAFSA and especially families who are first-generation they have a lot of questions about that stuff because it not only does it like change every year I feel like. I mean every year I feel like there is something new about it, but different countries don't do that. So there's a lot of questions there. Umm but yeah when I'm communicating with parents umm a lot of times I I text and I email umm but then when it gets a little umm when there's a lot of nitty-gritty I usually will just call them and as long as they speak english it's easy, but if they don't my Spanish is not that good so...

W: Okay, that's great, thank you. The second question is how, if at all, do you feel the upward bound program is inclusive of different cultures, world views and belief systems?

S5: Oh umm hang on one second. I'm just going to get him on my lap if that's cool.

W: Of course, totally.

S5: Okay, Sorry.

W: No, totally fine.

S5: Can you repeat the question?

W: Of course. So the question is how, if at all, do you feel the upward bound program is inclusive of different cultures, world views and belief systems?

S5: Umm I think, I think it's very inclusive of those of those things through the umm cultural experience things we try to do so. Yeah we take kids to colleges we take them to umm umm do all of the college tours and the Embry Riddle Camp thing, but we also try to expose them to as many umm sorry many different umm activities as possible so umm we expose them to a lot of like American culture and stuff that they're going to do maybe that they haven't done before but also we umm have had parents come in and like cook for the kids so we also get to incorporate different cultures with food and conversation and umm just like in our area of Arizona is a big melting pot and I feel like our our program is even more representative is is better representation of that because umm we have so many parents and they aren't they're a little hesitant to hop in and help but then like once they have like two or three kids in our program they're like what do you need? Yeah, I'll come help! And it's umm it's very cool to get the families of different cultures all together and it's fun to watch. I can't remember if I answered the question, I'm sorry.

W: That sounds really fun! Umm what can you give some examples of what culture cultural experiences that you provide to students?

S5: Umm so like we take them to the zoo, we take them kayaking, umm next month we will be taking them to Flagstaff Extreme Adventure Course like with ziplines and stuff. And they're going to do some leadership activities. Umm so those are those are like I I feel like those are kind of like a staple of like a younger american culture. Like I feel like um those kind of activities are pretty common amongst college age kids here umm in Arizona at least. So I I would call that a culture activity cultural activity. because it's something that they might not have done prior umm but our BBQ also where we've had parents come and umm we've had parents make like beans or rice or its like a big potluck umm so that was umm that the example in my head of the mixing of cultures. Umm we also have kids like living in the dorms that are like from different cultures and that's really cool to see. Umm I those are the examples I can think of off the top of my head

W: Yeah, that's good. How often do you guys do the cultural experiences? Is it monthly, is it quarterly, semester? What does that look like?

S5: Umm there's always a couple during the summer camp. So I'd say there's like a cluster in the summer in June a cluster in June and then at least one throughout the year. But most mostly in the summer and then one throughout the year

W: That's great. Thank you. Umm the third question is do you believe that student achievement and socioeconomic status is earned or do you believe that there are inequities that may prevent a student from achieving success or a certain socioeconomic status? Please explain.

S5: That's a heavy one. Umm I do believe that there are hurdles like socio economic hurdles that kids would just never umm if it weren't for programs like Upward Bound, or if they don't get into upward bound then their socioeconomic status will keep them from getting a higher education. Umm and also I feel like also you're you're race can sometimes play into that because scholarships have a window like umm this gets a little personal like I'm umm I'm Hispanic and I had like in high school a like 3.8 and I got a lot of scholarships, but my umm husband is he had like a 4.0 but he's caucasian he didn't get any. I'm like that's so crazy you were like a way better student than I was but it was it's like umm its a little gap in opportunity because his parents made too much money but not really enough to send him to college. So he ended up working three jobs but umm I also think that you're socioeconomic expo- limits exposure to opportunities umm so it

if all you've ever been around are umm blue collar kind of jobs and blue collar kinda life then you becoming a doctor or a lawyer or going to college would be something that might not even be on your radar. You haven't been exposed to you haven't even thought of it. So we could have this amazingly talented student but if they've never been exposed to college or other careers they might not of even thought of that and they could easily wind up never going to college or just becoming a dishwasher because they like it but they might not ever be able to reach their potential simply for lack of exposure. Which I think Upward Bound helps increase that exposure. So and it's not like that if that's what they want to do cool, but if they get that exposure and decide I don't wanna be a doctor or a lawyer, that's better. Because then they know that they're happy where they are in life.

W: That's really great. Umm I can definitely relate to that having gone through the program. How from your experience, how do you feel Upward Bound provides and creates these opportunities for students?

S5: Umm I think our summer camp is a big one because when they're on the Embry Riddle campus they totally get a taste of dorm life, they get a taste of what like they have to go to these college classes umm they get a taste of having to be responsible financially for like we give them like that little stipend every week and it's kinda cool to watch them like learn like oh if I don't blow that all at Starbucks on Monday then I can get like I can go buy something else or I can just save it or I can save it all up for and that's I think a lesson that is not taught often enough to college bound kids that you also have to be financially savvy. You can't just go in and I'm gonna blow all my grocery money on Monday and err aah on the first of the month and then I'm gonna eat you know nothing the rest of the time. Umm But we also umm our classes that we teach in our summer camp, we try to bring in outside careers so this year I taught a class there was a lot of request for Adulthood 101 and then we kinda adapted it to financial literacy and once we got going they all had questions like umm real estate investment and buying houses and so it got like - it got to where I was like whoa okay now it's like your questions are over my head so we actually brought Debbie Opits in because she's now a real estate broker. So we brought her in and she could answer all their questions and she talked a lot about the different careers in real estate. Which before that they would never have gotten that exposure. I definitely would not have gotten that was exposure for me. I was like Oh I didn't know there was that many people involved in buying a house. Umm but we also like umm let's see we had to be to make kayaking educational umm to take them on educational and cultural I had a umm it was a college student but he was working as an intern at Ruger for their environment department. So he came and he went to a school in New York, I can't remember which one. But he came and talked about all the different careers in like that you can umm apply for with an environmental degree. So we bring in outside people to talk about their careers and what they do and the other type of careers that surround their little like if you're really into the environment these are things you might want to do. Umm so it's that kind of exposure that they I mean when it starts being exposure for me and I'm a full grown adult, that like has a job in trying to get kids exposure, I feel like for me that means that I've done a good job at exposing them to things that they might want to do that they maybe didn't even know that they wanted to do. So

W: Yeah, that's really cool. I, right I was in high school, I don't know that I specifically remember those experiences, but that's such a great opportunity for those students to just like hear what else is out there. You go to a large university and you're like you can do what with and you can do what and get what degree...like such a wild experience. So exposure is so important.



S5: Yeah, definitely. That's something since I've been here I've tried I've tried to push that a little bit more. Umm because in in high in college, in high school my parents made it clear I was expected to go to college like that was just but it was just I was expected to get a four year degree. A bachelor's degree and there and after that there was no expectation so like my last two years of college I had that D's get degrees attitude. I was like let's just get outta here and then later I went back for my masters because in college I didn't even think of that as an opportunity or an option. I just didn't think people like me did that I guess. I don't know and then once I started teaching I started getting to know people with masters degrees and I'm like I should do that I should do that. So and then I did it and my parents were super proud and excited and I just thought about how in high school that never was on my radar. I never once thought oh yeah maybe I wanna be an education administrator like that never I never I...I would be surprised what like 17 year old me would have said to that if like guess what we grew up to be a principal or like OD. I was like my principal was OD and I would have probably looked at him and been like oh I don't wanna be him. I'm my own version of him.

W: Yeah, definitely. I think you..I think about how you create your own opportunities right? That's really great that you you seized upon a masters degree and the opportunity you had there.

S5: Yeah, so I hope that we are exposing kids to like this is college. I also try to include like it doesn't have to end at a bachelor's degree like you can go be a doctor if you want you can get a doctorate in whatever. You can get a doctorate in underwater basket weaving if you want. I don't know what you're going to do with that, but if I meet an underwater basket weaver I'll bring them in and they can tell you what you can do with that.

W: Yeah, yeah. I feel like that was such a learning experience when I was in the program at least. I remember Debbie had to teach literally teach me like the difference between an undergraduate degree and a graduate degree. Because I was like do I apply for gradate school? Like I want to graduate. I didn't I remember it clear as day. It was exactly what I said.

S5: Yes, I remember that confusion too. I don't know what that means.

W: yeah, I want to graduate so I'll apply for graduate school, right?  
So yea, the program definitely and then it opens up this opportunity like no a graduate degree that's like after you finish your first four years and then you start. Like you said this whole conversation of like what other doors are out there. That's really cool.  
Umm, my next question is can you please explain the process uhh that the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Upward Bound uses when reviewing applications to the program.

S5: Oh umm we've only had to turn away one person since I've been here.

W: Oh wow

S5: And Umm it was... in my eyes..I didn't think she wanted to do it. I got the vibe that her parents wanted her to do it. Which uhh doesn't mean... to me that meant that the kid wasn't that into going to college, the parent wanted the kid to go to college. And uhh the student was always like late for things or just not showing up or not turning things in or just blowing us off... And I just thought... so we didn't and we had one too many, like it was going to put us over the limit, so that's the only person I've ever seen had to get a regret a regret letter. Umm but that's for me what I look for the most is first of all they qualify, but then I look for what are the reasons their

doing it. And I really look at that that essay they write. The short little paragraph, the short paragraph I mean some people write like five pages, but I try to encourage short paragraphs. Umm and I get to know them and I can really get a sense if they're doing it for them or if they're doing it for their parents. Because if they're doing it just because their parents tell them to, umm then it's going to be real hard to motivate that kid. I could expose them to everything, but if they don't wanna do it...that's okay..Upward Bound's not for them, but make room for someone else who wants to do it. So that's what I look for the most. Why they are doing it. Why they want to be in Upward Bound.

W: Yeah, do you feel like there's a difference umm either in in background of the student whether that be racial background or maybe their umm their personal background... students from lower income I mean its all serving low income, but those students who are maybe on the lowest end or the higher end of the low end...like do you feel like there's a difference between those students and who wants to come vs like who might be pushed into the program by their family or whatever that might look like?

S5: Yeah, I feel weird about I feel like weird saying it, but like the families that are the most economically challenged that is where some of our most driven students have come from. So umm we had a student who her parents were very umm times were really tough and they did not want her to go to college if they had to pay for anything. So she was so driven to get she ended up being a valedictorian and she was constantly doing scholarships and umm this girl had like so much drive that peers were like what is up with her like she's not very friendly. I'm like it's not that she's not friendly, she's just she's goal oriented. Like she has her eye on the prize so going to the movies on the weekend is not in her that's not her jam. She would rather write an essay and get \$2,000. Umm and it's because she was so she watched her parents struggle and she wanted it so bad that she pushed herself harder and harder and harder and the parents who do struggle a lot financially is often for a lack of opportunities that they they haven't had opportunities throughout their life and so when they see their child having this opportunity and wanting to do this, they usually are very supportive and very excited about it. So yeah I see that kids who are like low income, but the higher end of it, don't quite have the drive as the the lower income. The lower low income.

W: That's really helpful. Thank you. Umm my final question is Hi buddie! Will you explain how you understand the social context of the community you serve. Do you believe that you live or lived the same social context as the students that you serve.

S5: Umm I don't think that I lived in the same social context umm both my parents were one my dad was a farmer for a while and then became a teacher and my mom has always been a teacher. So umm college was always there like we always we knew those those opportunities were there and we didn't struggle financially like some of these families do. Umm and so in that way I don't feel like I was in the same social context as they are umm but a lot of the families are Hispanic and I come from a hispanic - my mom is Mexican - and she came from, she was like one of seven kids so a lot of the things that they will talk about or bring up or they will be struggling for something and I'll I'll recognize it and umm I'm able to kinda bond with them a little bit more. Be a little bit like my grandma used to do that - yeah I know what you're doing okay. Umm so I I try to get more on the same page of their socioeconomic issue because or their social status or situation or whatever it is because I think it's very important to understand it if you want to understand that child's drive to go to college. So if you can understand where they are in a social niche then umm it's gonna help you help them better so... I don't know. Help me help you.

W: Yeah that's great. Umm you certainly don't have to know from experience their experience, but if you can understand their experience it's so helpful to to help reach that student and bring them in, right? That's great.

S5: Yeah.

W: Umm I don't have any other questions. This was a lot faster than I had anticipated it being, but that's quite alright

S5: That's okay.

W: Do you have any other questions for me or any final thoughts that you'd like to add?

S5: Umm no not really, but if you have more question you think of later that you need to ask you can just email me or umm it might be something where I'm doin this also, but ummm.

W: That's totally fine.

S5: Yeah I don't have any other questions, but if you think of something more you need from me, just reach out. I will get back to you.

W: Thank you so much. Thank you, [Subject 5] I appreciate it. Have a great day.

S5: Bye!