



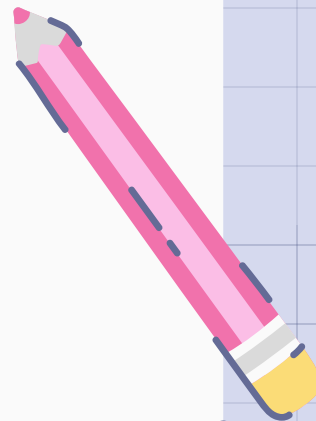
The Transition to High School



for First-Gen, low income, Middle School

Students

By Kate Hamilton and Jazzy Alam



The Need

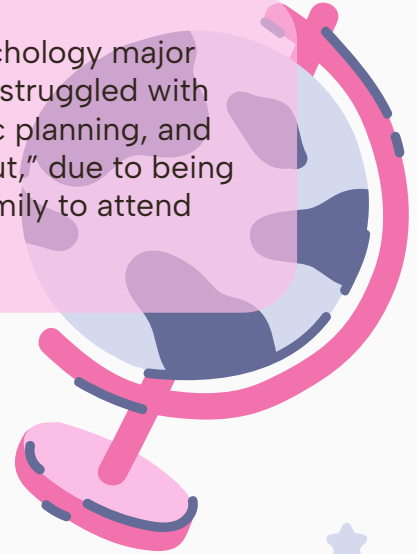
- Goal

First Gen students do not get the same opportunities as their peers when it comes to entering high school

—> Many missed opportunities

First-Gen students are more likely to face academic and emotional challenges due to limited parental support and unfamiliarity with school systems (Saenz et al., 2007).

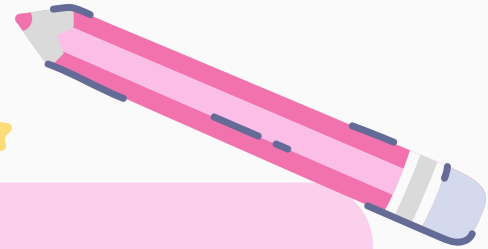
A third-year psychology major shared how she “struggled with FAFSA, academic planning, and emotional burnout,” due to being the first in her family to attend college



More evidence...

"Not knowing what to do made me really anxious. I wished there was a guide or something for First-Gen students to understand what to focus on." – First Gen student

"not knowing how to make the next step or who to ask if you are unaware. It is a HUGE weight to carry" – Director of Dream Catchers



The Project

Goal/Vision : a resource to support First-Gen/AVID students by providing the information we wished we had back when we were freshman through presentations and resources.



The steps we took...



Interviews

How to best support students and their key needs



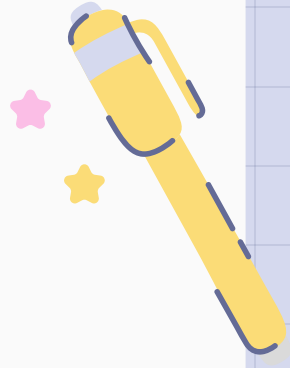
Visual/Presentation

Created our presentation and included information from any and all feedback



Reached out

Allies: AVID Teacher at Fletcher Middle School (Mr. Dorosti)

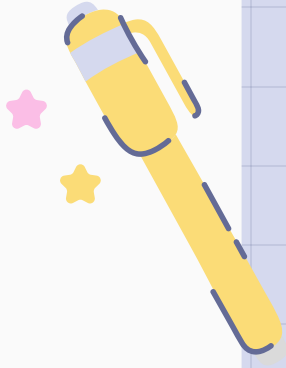


The steps we took...



Practiced!

Practiced our
presentation and got
even more feedback



Obstacles...



Not easy to schedule!

We worked around the AVID teacher's schedule and reconfigured some timing ... worked out!



Inability to Answer Q's

Some of the questions the middle schooler's had were not exactly easy to answer → dependent on their own needs and their schedules

Prototype

Added more information about Middle College, Gunn's reputation, and emphasizing extracurriculars

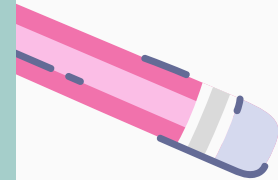


Background Info

Kate and Jazzy in middle school ...

Answer **all** your high school related questions, act as older siblings

Show you Gunn, schedules, and talk to you about classes



Common Questions

Counselors & Course Selection & Switching Classes

- Usually easy, just talk to your counselors/email them as early as possible because classes/that specific period of the class can get filled up quick
- Ask your counselor questions!!!

Preps

- Free periods!
- You get no preps during freshman year unless you do a sport which frees you from PE during that sport's season (also applies for sophomore year)
- Zero period PE

Living skills

- Living Skills is required for graduation.
- A course that helps students make informed decisions about health and well-being
- Take it early! Not senior year...

Homework Expectations:

- Depends on your classes
- Take a hard class = lots of homework
- Freshmen year we didn't have a huge amount of homework-biology took up a lot of time

Kate's classes

Biology
Communication A + Western Culture A
World History
Geometry A
PE 9
French II
AVID

CLUBS

- Don't be afraid to test them out
- Own one of your own one day!

Dungeons and Dragons Club

Improv Club

COOKING CLUB

Mock Trial Club

Lego Engineering

and Design Club

Pickleball Club

Psychology Club

Thespians Club

Science Olympiad (SciOly)

True Crime Club

Advice from Seniors <3

"Make good habits and sleep early"

"Stay positive and have a positive mindset, even in times when it seems impossible"

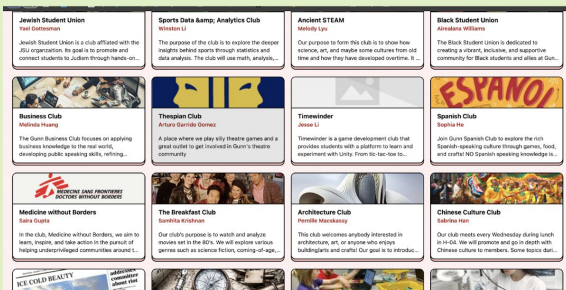
"Yolo"

"Don't take AP Lit"

"Have no regrets"

"Don't procrastinate!"

"Try new things, don't be afraid to find yourself"



Key Victories

Hearing from the students that the project helped them

The second time we went, they seemed much more open

Getting positive feedback on our presentation



The Results!

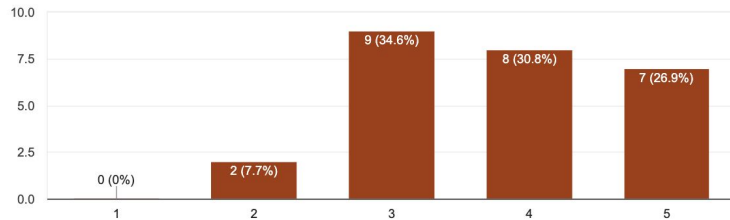


Before

How confident do you feel about going to high school? (Like do you know what classes you might take or what the campus will be like)

[Copy chart](#)

26 responses

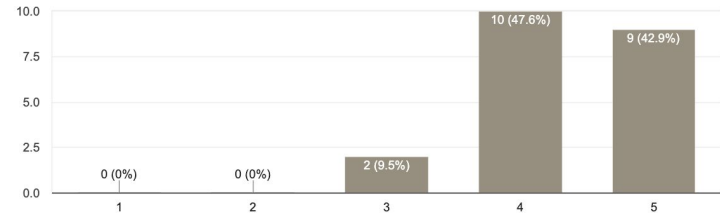


After

How helpful were the resources provided by this program in preparing you for high school?

[Copy chart](#)

21 responses



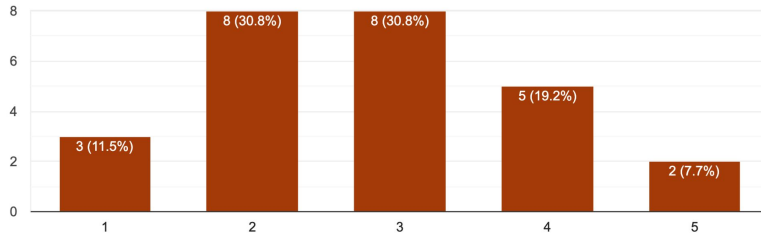
The Results!



Before

How familiar are you with the types of clubs or extracurricular activities offered in high school?

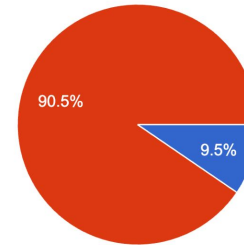
26 responses



After

How much better do you understand the clubs and extracurricular activities available in high school?

21 responses



- I don't know what clubs/extra curriculars will be offered
- I know the clubs and extra curriculars offered and know what I might want to participate in!

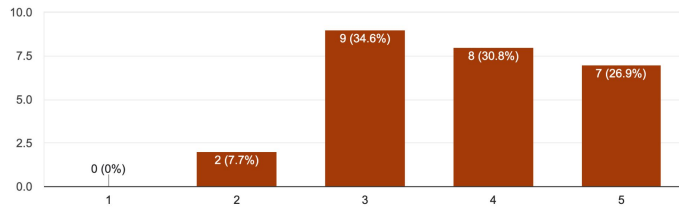


The Results!



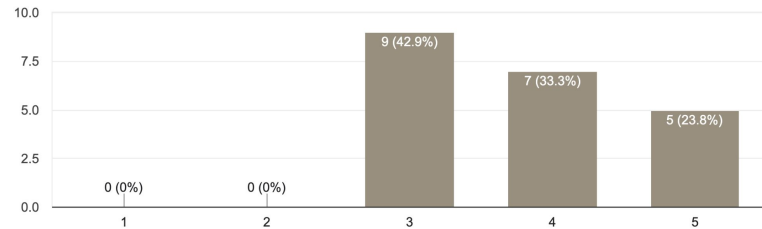
Before

How confident do you feel about going to high school? (Like do you know what classes you might take or what the campus will be like)
26 responses



After

How confident do you feel now about transitioning to high school?
21 responses



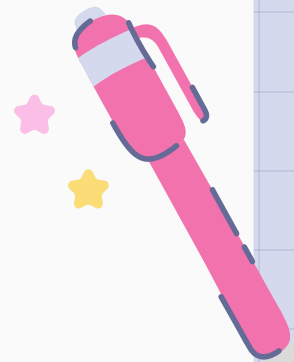
Takeaways & Next Steps



Takeaway:

First-Gen students need emotional validation and peer-level guidance.

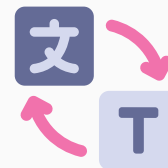
We all come from a different starting point, so it's important to fight for equity

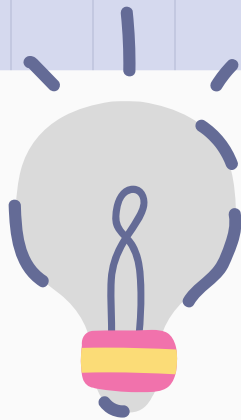


Next Steps

Present this again to a different class, program, or share this resource

Make our presentation and it's info more wide spread and applicable/generalizable



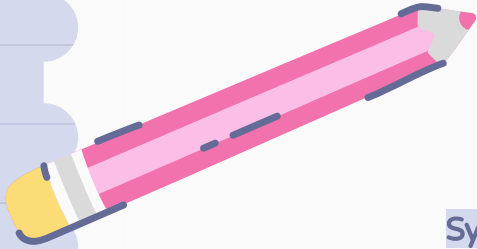


Call to action:
Support younger generations,
classes and share opportunities!



Thanks!

(to Foothill College Research & Service Leadership
Symposium, PAUSD AAR, YCS, and to our interviewees,
mentors, and everyone who shared their stories or
offered feedback)



Resources

Organizations involved:

- Dream Catchers
- AVID

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