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# Creating Environments that Foster First- Generation College Students' Sense of Belonging

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Conduct

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2018 IMPACT Summit on College Student Mental Health  
Springfield, MO



# A Defense Department dictionary helped this poet write in the language of war



BY MARY JO BROOKS *September 19, 2016 at 3:53 PM EDT*

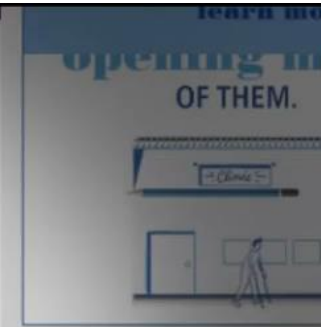


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*Poet Solmaz Sharif's book "LOOK" examines the violence of war using language pulled from a military dictionary. Photo by Arash Saedinia.*



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# Overview

- I. Introductions & Learning Outcomes
- II. Terminology
- III. Review of Literature
- IV. Theory to Practice: Strategies to Support a Sense of Belonging
- V. Campus Assessment Tool for First-Generation Student Excellence

# Learning Outcomes

As a result of participating in this session, participants will:

- Describe “sense of belonging” related to first-generation college students.
- Compare and contrast the mental health of first- and continuing-generation college students in transitioning into their first year of college.
- Describe their role in providing outreach to first-generation college students in establishing a sense of belonging.
- Identify at least 1 strategy to create environments that foster first-generation college students’ sense of belonging.

# Terminology

- **First-generation college student:** “a student for whom neither parent attended college or a student for whom neither parent attained a baccalaureate degree” (Ward, Siegel & Davenport, 2012, p. 3)
- **Continuing-generation college student:** a student “with at least one parent with a four-year college degree” (Leopold, 2014, para 2)

# Terminology

- **Retention**: “a rate or percentage of students who return from one enrollment period to another” (Habley, Bloom & Robbins, 2012, p. 8)
- **Persistence**: the process through which a student “continues to enroll at the institution after matriculation” (Habley, Bloom & Robbins, 2012, p. 4)



# Terminology

- **Cultural capital**: “the extent to which one is comfortable and familiar with the norms and culture of the institution”  
(Lundberg, Schreiner, Hovaguimian & Slavin Miller, 2007, pp. 58-59)
- **Social capital**: “resources embedded in social structures, accessibility to those resources, and use of such resources”  
(Nichols & Islas, 2016, p. 63)

# Terminology

- **Class-identity reformation:** “a shift in the social class to which individuals feel they belong” (Hinz, 2016, p. 285)
- **Transition:** “an event or nonevent that is perceived as significant by the student: something occurs that was either anticipated or unexpected, or a significant event that was expected to happen does not” (Schreiner, 2012, p. 3)





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# Review of Literature: Pre-College Characteristics





# Review of Literature: Transition to Higher Education





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# Review of Literature: Mental Health





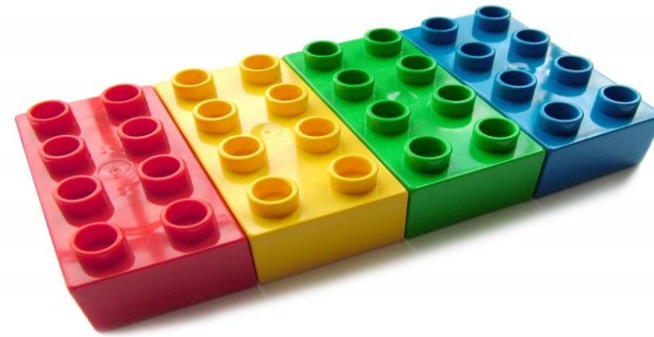
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# Review of Literature: Family Engagement & Interaction





SEPARATE  
**STRATEGIES**



INTEGRATED  
**STRATEGIES**

# Theory to Practice: Campus-Based Strategies



# Theory to Practice: Campus-Based Strategies

- Summer Orientation – parent & family track
- Summer Transition Series – New Student Online Hangout
- Golden Beginnings Pre-Orientation Program for First-Generation College Students
- First-Gen Breakfast during Fall Orientation Weekend
- Faculty/Staff/Alumni/Peer Mentorship Program
- First-Generation Thematic UNIV 101 course
- Common Reading Experience: *This I Believe*.
- First 40 Days programming – Greetings of Gratitude
- Zeneration One Living Learning Community



# Theory to Practice: Regional Coalitions



### THE CONFERENCE

The Harvard First-Generation Student Union will host the second annual 1vyG 2016, which will bring together students, administrators, alumni and community partners to strengthen and empower the first-generation community for collective change.



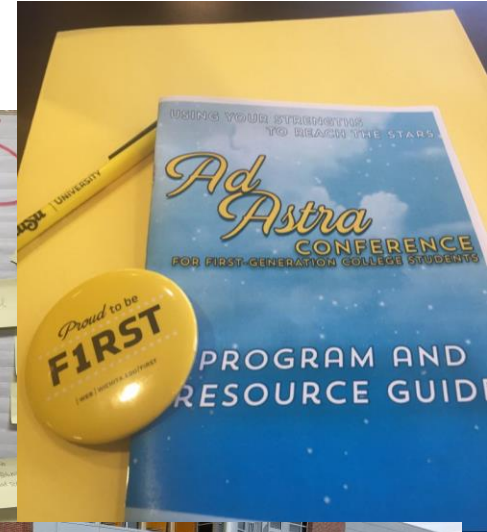
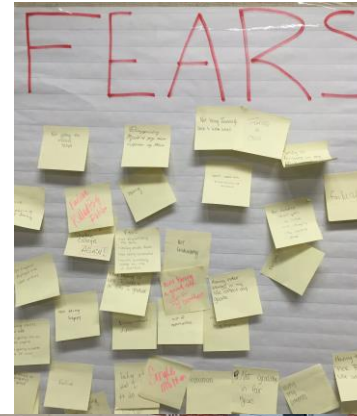
### THE MOBILIZERS

1vyG supports a cross-ivy team of student leaders dedicated to first-generation student community building, improving institutional supports, and sharing ideas across institutions.



### BEST PRACTICES

1vyG's approach is to identify, systematize, and then disseminate the best practices of support for first-generation college students, by looking at local and national practices.







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# Theory to Practice

## **CENTER FOR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT SUCCESS**

AN INITIATIVE OF NASPA AND THE SUDER FOUNDATION



# VISION

Driving higher education innovation and advocacy for first-generation student success.



# Campus Assessment Tool for First-Generation Student Excellence

Area	Sample Questions	Current Efforts	Action Plan
Training/ Professional Development	•What training or educational workshops does your campus provide for faculty and staff around the needs of first-generation students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training workshop offered through faculty development (began Spring 2015)</li><li>• Developing online learning module for faculty and staff (launching Spring 2018)</li><li>• Host webinars, documentaries, etc., open to faculty and staff (next one April 2018)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning a Symposium (Sep 2018)</li></ul>



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# How will *you* move #FirstgenForward?





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