Using Culturally Responsive Practices and Policies in College Access and Success Advising (presentation handouts)

Shawna Babula
Brainstorm:

"Culture is the lens we see the world through."

"Away to College, and a New Culture"

Cluster Diagram:
Away to College, and a New Culture

ALEX CHADWICK, host: For our freshmen arriving at college this fall, getting good grades is a big concern. Youth Radio's Bianca Butler thought she was prepared for her first year at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. She'd made top grades in high school. But all her college prep courses didn't actually get her ready for the biggest challenge.

Ms. BIANCA BUTLER (Youth Radio): Here are some new concepts I learned during my first year of college: tokenized identity, racial consciousness, and cultural capital. You might be wondering, was this in Froshmen Sociology of Education or Ethnicity in the U.S. 101? No. I learned about these ideas firsthand through interacting with other students.

I grew up in a working-class black family. Only a handful of kids from my urban public high school went to college out of state, and I was the only one who went to an elite private college. Before I left, no one sat me down and told me what it will be like to enter that world.

From the very beginning of my freshmen year, it was obvious to me that I was the exception. I was one of very few working-class black students on campus.

One of my roommates had spent a summer exploring Moorish temples in Spain. My other roommate hung out with reality TV personalities, had a vacation home, and partied at upscale New York nightclubs. My only exposure to celebrities was the tabloids at the grocery stores checkouts, and the only foreign travel stories I could share came from a day trip to Tijuana. I know that getting to know different people is a part of the college experience, but I didn't expect the intense feelings of alienation that came from knowing people with lavish lifestyles.

I began to feel very conscious of my social class, so I avoided giving details about my background, like my parents' occupation and the fact that I was the first generation to attend college. Everyone I met was friendly enough, but our conversations were often superficial.

One white girl who loved hip-hop couldn't understand why I was offended when she used the N-word, and I didn't bother to explain because it was too complicated. One day I glanced through her high school yearbook. Looking at photos from her graduating class, I was shocked that there weren't any students of color. Maybe I was being too judgmental, but that alone made me feel like it would be impossible for us to really click.

I chose the school, in part, to get outside my comfort zone. Colleges like these aren't designed for kids like me, and I didn't show up with all the tools I needed to succeed. I graduated from high school with honors, but I wasn't fully prepared academically for the demands of college. And even though I found a supportive circle of college friends, I still struggle with culture shock.

Now that I'm a sophomore, I know what I'm in for. Bear with me while I quote from Audre Lorde's "Sister Outsider." The master's tools will not tear down the master's house, but I'm going to need those tools to navigate this experience. I spent my freshmen year convincing myself that I deserved to be here and now I'm going to spend my sophomore year proving it.

CHADWICK: Bianca Butler's story came to us from Youth Radio.
A College Dream Inspired by a Song

October 10, 2007 - FARAI CHIDEYA, host: It's time now for our Staff Song Pick of the Week. The song is Bon Jovi's 2000 smash hit, "It's My Life." It's off their double-platinum album, "Crash." This single revitalized the New Jersey band's career after a five-year hiatus. The success came a new crop of young Bon Jovi fans including NEWS & NOTES producer Jenee Darden.

JENEE DARDEN: Has someone ever told you that you can't achieve your dream? But deep inside you hear a soft, gentle voice that says, don't give up, you can do anything. Well, sometimes, that voice inside of me isn't very soft. It actually sounds more like this.

Mr. BON JOVI: (Singing) It's my life. It's now or never. I ain't going to live forever. I just want to live while I'm alive.

DARDEN: I got hooked on Bon Jovi when I was a junior in college. Their song, "It's My Life" influenced a big decision I made back then.

Like so many young black girls, my dream was to move to Atlanta and attend the historically black college Spelman. I always pictured myself on that small Southern campus, analyzing society with intelligent, ambitious black women. I was accepted to Spelman but I didn't get enough financial aid to go.

I remember sitting on my bed in Oakland, staring at my acceptance letter. My dream was shot and I was devastated. I decided to save money and go to the University of California San Diego instead. It was just my luck that UCSD offered an exchange program to Spelman.

Four years later, I'm sitting in my San Diego bedroom, staring at another Spelman acceptance letter. Only this time, I was accepted into the exchange program. This is my last chance to get a taste of that black college experience I always wondered about.

Some people in my family didn't think it was such a good idea. They would say, you have one more year to finish school. Just stay in San Diego. What about your apartment? And, of course, how are you going to pay for this? I thought it over and prayed. Then one day, I was watching T.V. and turned to VH1. There was my answer. Four guys with long hair from New Jersey blaring to me.

Mr. BON JOVI: (Singing) It's my life. MY heart is like an open highway. Like Frankie said I did it my way. I just want to live while I'm alive. It's my life.

DARDEN: Then it hit me. I can't live for everybody else. This is my life. I dipped into my savings account, packed my bags and flew to Atlanta that fall. I had the time of my life. All the football games, marching bands, step shows, parties, fried catfish in the school cafeteria - what an experience. And to be surrounded by black female professors empowered me.

Who would have thought a Bon Jovi song led me to a black college? To this day, "It's My Life" is stored on my mental play list. Now, when others try to block me, I tune up the negative, crank up Bon Jovi, and keep living my life.
### Caution—Speech Zone Ahead!

(Language Registers—Dr. Maria Montaño-Harmon)

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<td>ceremony, ritual, never changes</td>
<td>law, contracts, political business</td>
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<td>daily, business, education, semi-formal situations</td>
<td>close friends, significant other, inside jokes</td>
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<th>Casual</th>
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<td>informal situations, specialized terminology</td>
<td>insult, humor, vulgarity, profanity</td>
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TABB Reflection

*Please complete this TABB as a processing activity for today's session.*

**T**—**THING:** What one THING will you take away from today's discussion to ensure success for your students?

**A**—**ACTION:** What ACTION will you take on that one THING?

**B**—**BARRIERS:** What BARRIERS do you foresee that may come up as a result of you taking ACTION on that one THING?

**B**—**BENEFITS:** What BENEFITS will result because you overcame those BARRIERS and took ACTION on that one THING?
Shape Up Summary

Three main points to the session...

Four ideas that square with my beliefs...

A question still circling around my mind...

Dr. Michele Scott Taylor
Chief Program Officer
College Now Greater Cleveland
E-mail: mscotttaylor@collegenowgc.org

Shawna Babula, M. Ed.
Program Director
Partners In Education of Toledo
Email: sbabula@partnerstoledo.org