

Annotated Bibliography of Recent Research Related to Academic Advising

Centra, J. A. (2003). Will Teachers Receive Higher Student Evaluations by Giving Higher Grades and Less Course Work? *Research in Higher Education, 44*(5), 495–518.

Some college teachers believe a sure way to win student approval is to give high grades and less course work. Neither field experimental studies nor correlation data provide convincing evidence for the conclusion that student ratings of courses were influenced by the grades they had received. Centra investigated whether mean expected grades and the level of difficulty/workload in courses, as reported by students, substantially influenced student ratings of instruction.

Centra analyzed the Student Instructional Report II used in over 50,000 college courses between 1995 and 1999. Approximately 32% of these classes had been offered in 2-year colleges, and 68% had been held in 4-year colleges; 63% of the classes were part of the student's major or minor curricula or was an elective (37% were college-required general education courses); 68% of the courses were at the junior or senior level. In addition to the two primary independent variables, the regression analyses included eight subject area groupings and controlled for factors such as class size, teaching method, and student-perceived learning outcomes in the course.

In conclusion, the author reported that courses were rated lower on student evaluations when they were judged as either too difficult or too elementary. Courses rated at the "just right" level received the highest evaluations. Differences were found between academic disciplines. The author concluded that teachers will not likely improve their evaluations from students by giving higher grades and less course work. They will, however, improve their evaluation and probably their instruction if they respond to consistent student feedback about instructional practices.

Crews, K. D. (2003). Copyright and Distance Education: Making Sense of the TEACH Act. *Change, 35*(6), 34–39.

Crews states that educators, particularly those offering distance education, will be challenged to stay within the boundaries of the new law that protects copyrighted works. The Technology, Education and Copyright Harmonization (TEACH) Act, enacted and signed into law in late 2002, allows for

a wide array of uses of copyrighted works, without risk of copyright infringement, but only within defined limits and only if the instructor and the institution take careful steps to implement the law.

The law is replete with detailed provisions that tacitly demand the active engagement of many participants inside an educational institution. The TEACH Act is a clear signal that Congress recognizes the growing importance of distance education, the significance of digital media, and the need to resolve copyright clashes. Under the new law copyrighted work is permitted in the context of "mediated instructional activities," which are akin in many respects to those conducted in traditional classrooms. The limits and conditions of the TEACH Act can be generally grouped into three requirement categories: institutional and policy, technology, and instructional/planning. The benefits of the law can apply only when all of the relevant conditions have been met.

The use of many copyrighted works essential for effective teaching may be outside the scope of the TEACH Act requirements. Therefore, educators should be prepared to explore alternatives such as a) employing alternative methods for delivering materials to students, such as innovative library services that teachers can use to deliver resources available to students; b) securing permission from copyright owners for the use of materials; c) applying the fair use doctrine, which may allow uses beyond those detailed in the TEACH Act.

Derby, D. C. & Smith, T. (2004). An Orientation Course for Community College Retention. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 28*(9), 763–73.

Orientation and retention programs are common in institutions of higher education. Derby and Smith stated that the potential association between orientation programs and student retention, particularly within the community college sector, has long been neglected. In part, because students have varied goals for entering into community college, tracking and studying retention is more difficult than it is in a 4-year public or private university, where students' primary goal is obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Derby and Smith present an institutional view of the potential associative relationship between an orientation course and student retention measures. The sample consisted of 7,466 matriculates attend-

ing a midwestern community college from fall semester 1999 through spring semester 2002. The median age of the students was 24 years; 53% were female; 85% were White. Using Astin's (1997) model of retention as a road map, Davis and Smith developed the following operational definitions for the study: a) "Successful" students have completed the requirements of a transferable degree within 2 years; b) "Drop-outs" completed less than 3 semesters of course work within 2 years, had an average load of three or more courses, earned a grade-point average (GPA) less than 2.0 (on a 4.0-point scale); c) "Stop-outs" completed 3 or more semesters of course work, had an average load of three or more courses, earned a GPA greater than 2.0 (on a 4.0-point scale), and had also reenrolled after a break of 1, 2, or 3 semesters; and d) "Persistent" students had an average load of three or more courses and completed 4 semesters of course work within 2 years without completing the requirements for a transferable degree. Davis and Smith initiated the study to assess the relationship between taking an orientation course and student success in obtaining a transferable degree within 2 years and the rates of student drop out, student reenrollment after a stop-out, and student persistence.

Taken by newly entering and reverse transfer students, the orientation course was designed to facilitate self-development through a variety of exercises and activities that relate to personal and educational development. For the purpose of this study, the data for nontransfer and reverse transfer students were analyzed separately.

A chi-square analysis revealed a significant association among orientation program attendance, degree completion, retention, and enrollment persistence. For the nontransfer group, Davis and Smith found a significant association between the orientation course and degree obtainment. It appears that associations exist between taking an orientation course and student retention, particularly with respect to associate degree attainment within the 2-year traditional time frame. Moreover, enrollment in such an orientation course could aid in deterring students from dropping out, assisting students in reenrollment after stopping out, and helping students persist beyond the traditional time frame to earn a degree. For those students identified as nonreverse transfer students, enrollment in an orientation course was associated with graduating within 2 years.

Davis and Smith discussed several implications of their study with regard to retention theory. They expressed caution that they had focused on those students who indicated that they were working

toward a transfer degree. Students planning transfer make up only a portion of those attending community colleges; therefore, the results of this study tell only part of the story of retention in the community colleges investigated.

Jones, S. R. & Hill, K. E. (2003). Understanding Patterns of Commitment: Student Motivation for Community Service Involvement. *Journal of Higher Education*, 74(5), 516–39.

In this constructivist study, Jones and Hill investigated college student perceptions of their motivations to participate in community service in high school and college. The guiding research questions of this study were: What are students' reasons for participation in community service in high school? What are students' reasons for participation in community service (or not) in college? How do students explain and understand the relationship between high school and college involvement? To what do students attribute differences/changes in their motivation as well as experience?

Using a grounded-theory approach, Jones and Hill analyzed data from interviews with 24 college students, one half of whom had continued their high school involvement in community service and one half of whom had not. Results show that patterns of commitment are mediated by early socialization experiences, the influence of peers, and how closely service is connected to an emerging sense of self.

The results of this study provide policy implications for institutional requirements for community service. The participants in this study were adamant about the negative, albeit unintended, consequences of community service requirements. The results also have implications for practice. Institutional leaders interested in experiencing the positive outcomes associated with community service must take active, intentional steps. College faculty and administrators can enhance the likelihood of students' community service involvement by making opportunities visible and easily assessable as well as helping students negotiate demands on their time.

Rose, M. A. (2004). Comparing Productive Online Dialogue in Two Group Styles: Cooperative and Collaborative. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 18(2), 73–88.

Rose examined the influence of group structures upon six groups of distributed (working at a distance) graduate students engaged in problem-based learning activity and how it differs under cooperative and collaborative interaction approaches. Those who promote a cooperative approach gener-

ally argue that learners engage in higher order thinking when they are given the structure and task specialization with which to engage in discussions that lead to high conceptual understanding. In contrast, proponents of the collaborative approach contend that “too much structure on the task that involves higher order thinking skills is dysfunctional because it impedes conceptually oriented interactions.”

Specifically, Rose examined a) the function, cognitive skills, and level of processing found among graduate students in discussion; b) the cohesion (interconnectedness) of the messages being communicated; and c) the learners’ perceptions of their interdependence and intersubjectivity.

Twenty graduate students participated in the study. Only one student had taken an on-line course. These students were enrolled in a 3-credit-hour course on health and wellness offered fall 2000 in a state university in midwestern United States. The course was delivered entirely over the Web using Blackboard’s Course Info 4.0, through which instructors can integrate a variety of learning tools. The learning problem-based task for all groups consisted of the same learning goals, contexts, inquiry expectations, time requirements, and deliverables.

Rose used Herri and Rigault’s (1996) content analysis framework and Howell-Richardson and Mellar’s (1996) guidelines for interconnectedness of messages to analyze the graduate students’ communication. In addition, learners’ perceptions of interdependence and subjectivity were gauged from a self-reported survey developed by Rose.

The primary implications of this study for instructors, course designers, and researchers employing small group problem-based task approaches in similar context are threefold. First, learning efficiencies may be gained through assigned roles and closely monitored group interaction. Second, the relative proportion of dialogue serving a cognitive (41%) versus organizational (36%) function was dramatically different for problem-based approaches than for other instructional strategies reported in the literature. Third, Rose found a relatively small percentage of in-depth clarification skills (9%) and deep processing skills (33%) among the graduate students. These levels indicate that employing problem-based task strategies does not necessarily engender higher order thinking and learning. Therefore, on-line facilitators of problem-based task strategies should employ specific scaffolds to encourage learners to deeply, critically engage the problem.

Rose reported several limitations to this study with regard to sample size and generalizable

claims. This study may be useful for advisors who are conducting group advising on-line through a course management system.

Kaplowitz, S. A. (2004). Drinking, Alcohol Policy, and Attitudes Toward a Campus Riot. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(5), 501–16.

Kaplowitz set out to provide an explanation for the cause of a major riot that occurred following Michigan State University’s (MSU) loss of the Final Four game of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament. This was the third riot within a 2-year period at MSU. While fan violence at sporting events is not a new phenomenon, this type of violence has recently become common on American college campuses.

Undergraduates completed an in-class survey through which they were asked about their views of the riot, background, experiences at MSU, and attitudes toward various aspects of MSU. Kaplowitz collected data from over 20 different classes in April 1999 for a sample size of 2,008 (response rate of 62.7% of those enrolled). The sample was comprised of 56% female and 44% male students. African Americans were underrepresented in the sample, while Whites and Asian Americans were overrepresented.

Results showed that students’ riot attitudes were mixed. Close to 62% of respondents reported approval for imprisonment for actions that destroyed property or endangered people. A similarly sized majority (64%) indicated disapproval of rioting. However, over 56% agreed to survey statements that stated that MSU had no right to restrict drinking. Almost one half had been close enough to see one of the MSU riots, and approximately one third said that they thought it might be fun to participate in riot behavior.

Predictive causal models were tested using structural equation modeling. Results of this analysis indicate that drinking behavior played a significant role in predicting riot behavior. According to Kaplowitz’s survey, objecting to restrictions of alcohol was the greatest predictor of condoning the riot. Alcohol consumption had had a substantial direct positive effect on student enjoyment of the riot and a substantial negative direct effect on their perception of negative consequences. With regard to the measure of enjoyment and perceived negative consequences, alcohol consumption had a noticeably greater total effect than did objections to alcohol restrictions. In addition, alcohol consumption was the strongest predictor of the degree to which one objected to restrictions against alcohol.

MSU has taken several steps to prevent future riots: a) more severe penalties for rioting, b) increased police interventions, c) increased number of alcohol-free social activities, and d) improved communication with students so that students' views on alcohol restrictions and campus drinking policies are taken into consideration.

Rioting behavior impacts the entire university community. It is the responsibility of all community members to participate in creating an environment that is respectful and ensures the safety of faculty members, staff, and students. Academic advisors are prime candidates for involvement in campus-wide committees that focus on developing policy to strengthen the campus community.

Kitsantas, A. (2004). Studying Abroad: The Role of College Students' Goals on the Development of Cross-Cultural Skills and Global Understanding. *College Student Journal*, 38(3), 441-49.

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, Kitsantas wanted to examine how study abroad programs impact students' cross-cultural skills and global understanding. Second, Kitsantas wanted to know the role of students' goals for participating in study abroad programs in the development of these skills and understanding.

Participants in this study consisted of 232 American students enrolled in study abroad courses in England, Italy, Greece, France, and Spain in 2002. Students were enrolled in a variety of courses that included archaeology, history, language, multicultural health psychology, and Greek art. Response rates in the courses ranged from 40 to 60%. The largest ethnic group represented in the sample was White ($n = 169$), followed by Black ($n = 30$), Hispanic ($n = 16$), Asian ($n = 5$), and other ($n = 12$). Thirty freshmen, 112 sophomores, 63 juniors, 25 seniors, and 2 undeclared students participated in the study. The length of the courses ranged from 3 to 6 weeks, and most of the programs provided opportunities for local and distant excursions and 3-day weekends for travel.

Pretest measures included a Personal Data Questionnaire, the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) (Kelley & Meyers, 1995), and the Study Abroad Goals Scale (SAGS). The CCAI is a 50-item survey that is used to assess cross-cultural effectiveness and self-awareness. The SAGS consists of 15 questions that are used to identify student goals and reasons for attending the study abroad program. Participants completed the CCAI and the Global Perspective Survey at the end of the study abroad program. The Global Perspective Survey

is used to examine the students' global perspective.

Kitsantas utilized a repeated-measures design to determine the effects of the study abroad programs on students' cross-cultural skills and global understanding. Results indicate that study abroad programs enhance students' cross-cultural skills and global understanding. Results of a factor analysis of the SAGS indicate that students join study abroad programs to a) enhance their cross-cultural skills, b) become more proficient in the subject matter, and c) socialize. However, only students' reported desire to enhance cross-cultural skills was predictive of students' global understanding and cross-cultural skills.

The results of this study have several implications for administrators, study abroad faculty directors, and students. Kitsantas suggested that predeparture programs can be used to emphasize the role of goals on students' development of cross-cultural skills and help students identify their goals for their international experiences. Academic advisors who work with students planning to study abroad can encourage students to participate in predeparture workshops and can help students begin to set study abroad goals early in the process.

Smyth, M. L. & Davis, J. R. (2003). An Examination of Student Cheating in the Two-Year College. *Community College Review*, 31(1), 17-32.

To examine the prevalence of unethical attitudes and behavior in the current college environment, Smyth and Davis examined the issues of cheating at a 2-year public community college. The 2-year student population is often overlooked in studies of student attitudes, and therefore, the conclusions of previous research on cheating in 4-year institutions may not apply to community college students.

Two hundred sixty-five community college students in the southern United States were surveyed in spring 2002 about their attitudes toward and experiences with cheating. In addition to questions regarding various aspects of cheating, a number of demographic variables were collected. To determine differences between various demographic groups surveyed, Smyth and Davis used a two-tailed independent t test for equity of means for each of the cheating variables.

Almost 74% of the respondents have observed collegiate cheating; 43% have witnessed the detection of cheating; over 45% have confessed to cheating at least once. Males report a significantly higher incidence of cheating than do females, but Smyth and Davis found no differences in cheating experiences between freshmen and sophomores, dorm residents and students living off-campus, and full-

and part-time students. Both male and female dorm students report a statistically significant willingness to assist another student in cheating. Although a substantially high percentage of all respondents agree that cheating is ethically wrong, nearly one half of the respondents find cheating to be socially acceptable. In conclusion, Smyth and Davis stated that the cheating experiences of students at a community college are consistent with much of the research conducted at 4-year colleges; specifically business students cheat more than other majors and between 40 and 50% of students in all demographic categories have cheated.

Steiner, S. (2003). Smart Ways to Fund High-Tech. *Community College Journal*, 74(2), 10–12.

Steiner outlines three key funding strategies used to achieve state-of-the-art application of technology at a 2-year institution in New York State. First, to address the needs of the entire institution cost effectively, stakeholders must collaborate in the planning and administration of both administrative and academic technology needs. Second, to provide breadth and depth of resources at less cost and with coherent staffing and planning, they must outsource the project. Third, they need to seek out grants aggressively to support technology applications and extend technology options.

Taylor, J. A. & Bedford, T. (2004). Staff Perceptions of Factors Related to Non-completion of Higher Education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(3), 375–94.

Student noncompletion of higher education is a growing concern and has prompted increasing research on the causes of it. Taylor and Bedford, using a case study approach, investigated the perceptions of the academic staff in relationship to students' noncompletion at a large Australian regional university. At the studied institution, the majority of the programs are offered in on-campus, distance education, or on-line formats.

Taylor and Bedford use the following two strategies to address noncompletion: A written questionnaire was designed and sent out to all academic staff teaching undergraduates, and face-to-face interviews were conducted with a sample of the academic staff. The strategies were selected to obtain data from which academic staff's opinions about a wide variety of aspects of noncompletion could be identified (the questionnaire data) and from which the staff's interpretations of the data could be inferred (the interview data). The questionnaire had items grouped into five general categories:

student characteristics and environmental factors, student-institution interaction factors, teaching staff expectations, student-teacher interaction factors, and course design factors. For the interviews, a sample of 20 faculty (engineering and surveying, 32%; education, 30%; arts, 29%; sciences, 23%) representing a cross-section of the academic population of the university was interviewed. The interview transcripts were analyzed for specific themes using an interpretive form of thematic analysis.

Results from the questionnaire and interview suggest that staff focus on student-based factors related to noncompletion rather than on factors related to teaching practice or curriculum design. Staff believe the major contributing factors are related to student level of preparedness, motivation, and ability to manage study. The mismatch between student and university expectations, especially for on-campus students, was also seen as important. In an interesting finding, the staff was uncertain about influences of student-teaching staff interactions and course design on noncompletion even though some of these factors related to assessment, feedback, and personal support. The respondents' views of the causes of noncompletion match what Biggs (1999) termed a "level 1 focus of teaching." Biggs stated that teachers operating at level 1 believe that differences in learning (or participation) are due to students' abilities, motivations, and other student-related factors. The academic staffs' perceptions and behaviors are typical of a reactive rather than a strategic (Level 2) phase of managing noncompleters.

Taylor and Bedford suggested that a tentative interpretation needs to be examined within the context of today's Australian higher-education academic-work environment. Many academics believe that, within the general organization culture of universities, teaching is less valued than is research, although the work of teaching appears to be growing in importance within the universities.

Umbach, P. D. & Milem, J. F. (2004). Applying Holland's Typology to the Study of Differences in Student Views About Diversity. *Research in Higher Education*, 45, 6, 625–49.

Current research on diversity in higher education tends to focus on the educational benefits that result when students interact with diverse people and have the opportunity to hear diverse ideas in college. This study takes a different approach than previous research by examining student beliefs toward diversity at the time they enter college. More specifically, this study applies Holland's (1966, 1985) theory of personality types and environments to the study of

differences of first-year students' beliefs and attitudes about diversity.

Data for this study were collected in summer 2000 through surveying first-year students during orientation at a mid-Atlantic research university. The return rate for this study was 76% of the entering class (2,911 respondents). Student who had not declared a major were removed, leaving a sample size of 1,950 students. The majority of the sample consisted of White students (68.3%). Other ethnic groups represented in the study were African American (9.2%), Asian/Pacific American (13.7%), and other people of color (8.8%). The gender breakdown was 49.8% male and 50.2% female. Among Holland's typology, the largest category represented was investigative (35.2% of the sample). Social and enterprising majors each comprised one quarter of the sample, and artistic and realistic majors each represented 6.7% of the sample.

The data were analyzed in three stages. Basic relationships were explored using a) descriptive statistics, b) multivariate analysis, and c) least squares regression. Results of the descriptive analysis indicate that segregation persists in society. In this study 7 out of 10 White respondents reported that they had had no substantive interactions with people of color prior to matriculation. Furthermore, the results indicate that a significant relationship exists between interactions that respondents had had with people of color before entering college and an interest in working to bridge social identity differences. Certain Holland categories were found to be more significant predictors of bridging differences than others. Students in social majors were significantly more likely than students in investigative, artistic, and enterprising majors to show interest in becoming involved in activities that would bridge social identity differences. These results support the usefulness in Holland types predicting differences in students' attitudes and beliefs toward diversity prior to college entry.

The primary limitation of the study was the low representation of students of color in the sample. Due to the significant differences in student views about diversity across majors, these authors suggest that students in selected disciplines could benefit from instructional activities designed to help them understand and engage differences. First-year seminar courses for all majors should include readings on diversity and exercises that encourage discussions about understanding and valuing differences.

Walker, A. A. (2003). Learning Communities and Their Effects on Students' Cognitive Abilities. *Journal of the First-Year Experience*, 15(2), 11–33.

This study investigated the effects of learning communities on the educational development of first-year college students at a large, urban, highly selective, research university. Previous researchers have addressed the impact of learning communities on students drawn from at-risk populations rather than students from highly selective and academically well-prepared populations. At the university in Walker's study, the learning communities were developed to provide purposeful linking of courses or course work so students find coherence in their studies as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and other students. These communities, known as "clusters," comprised a year-long sequence of theme-oriented courses that were team taught and that included interdisciplinary lectures and small seminars.

Walker asked how involvement in a learning community at an elite research institution enhances highly prepared students' cognitive abilities during their first year in college. Walker explored the critical thinking, analytical thinking/problem solving, reading, and writing skills of the students in this study.

A total of 475 students participated in the longitudinal study for an overall response rate of 30% over 2 years. Forty-eight percent ($n = 228$) of the respondents were cluster students and 52% ($n = 247$) were noncluster students. Each student received two surveys: the Student Information System Form at the beginning of their first college year and the College Student Survey at the end of the first year. Walker acquired additional demographic information from the Registrar's Office and added them to the data base.

Findings showed that cluster participation was significantly and positively associated with all four cognitive outcomes: critical thinking, analytical thinking/problem solving, reading skills, and writing skills. The most substantial mediated effect was related to writing skills. Students who participated in clusters took fewer physical sciences courses, which was found to facilitate the development of writing skills. In short, this research provides clear evidence that learning communities can have a positive impact, even at highly selective research institutions.

The bibliography is compiled by George Steele and Melinda McDonald.