Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners: First-year Students’ Academic Confidence and Student Engagement

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Overview

- Academic confidence and the FY
- FY student engagement expectations
- Why student engagement matters
- Research objectives
- Data source (BCSSE)
- Results
- Fostering high self-efficacy and academic confidence
Academic confidence is an indicator of Academic Self-Efficacy.

“People who have strong beliefs in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. Such an affirmative orientation fosters interest and engrossing involvement in activities”

Bandura, 1997, p. 39
Engagement Expectations

- Consequences for unmet expectations are high. Disappointed students fail to optimize their college experience, leave institutions, and sometimes abandon higher education all together.

Why Student Engagement Matters

- Time on task (Tyler, 1930s)
- Quality of effort (Pace, 1960-70s)
- Student involvement (Astin, 1984)
- Social, academic integration (Tinto, 1993)
- Good practices (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)
- Student engagement (Kuh, 2001, 2003)
Objectives

• What types of high school academic experiences are associated with students’ academic confidence?
• How does a students’ academic confidence relate to their expected academic engagement, academic persistence, expected transition difficulties, and importance of supportive campus environment?
• How do we use this information to effectively help students entering college with low confidence?
Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

Purpose of BCSSE:

• To measure entering first-year students’ pre-college academic and co-curricular experiences.

• As well as their expectations and attitudes for participating in educationally purposeful activities during the first college year.
BCSSE Content

- High school academic and co-curricular engagement
- High school academic preparation
- 6 scales used in this study
  - High School Academic Engagement
  - Expected First-Year Academic Engagement
  - Academic Persistence
  - Expected Transition Difficulty
  - Academic Preparation/Confidence
  - Importance of Campus Environment
BCSSE 07 Respondents

- 67,040 respondents at 127 institutions
- 58% female
- 69% Caucasian; 11% Black/African American; 7% Asian American; 5% Hispanic/Latino
- 39% first Generation
- 93% graduated HS in 2007
- 84% graduated from a public high school
Results

What types of high school academic experiences are associated with students’ academic confidence?
High Schools Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Confidence</th>
<th>B- or lower</th>
<th>B, B+</th>
<th>A-, A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAT and ACT Scores

- Low: 17.6% (900 or lower), 43.3% (901-1100), 32.6% (1101-1300), 6.5% (1301 or more)
- Medium: 10.6% (900 or lower), 37.0% (901-1100), 40.4% (1101-1300), 12.0% (1301 or more)
- High: 10.5% (900 or lower), 31.9% (901-1100), 41.8% (1101-1300), 15.8% (1301 or more)
High School Academic Engagement

**Academic Confidence**

- **High**
  - Low: 20.7%
  - Medium: 32.1%
  - High: 47.2%
- **Medium**
  - Low: 32.5%
  - Medium: 36.6%
  - High: 30.9%
- **Low**
  - Low: 48.2%
  - Medium: 32.6%
  - High: 19.2%
Results

How does a students’ academic confidence relate to their expected academic engagement, academic persistence, expected transition difficulties, and importance of supportive campus environment?
Expected Transition Difficulty

- **High**
  - Low: 44.0%
  - Medium: 27.5%
  - High: 28.5%
- **Medium**
  - Low: 29.1%
  - Medium: 31.6%
  - High: 39.4%
- **Low**
  - Low: 22.1%
  - Medium: 32.0%
  - High: 45.9%
Expected Academic Engagement

- **High Academic Engagement**: 23.8% Low, 27.6% Medium, 48.6% High
- **Medium Academic Engagement**: 35.2% Low, 31.3% Medium, 33.5% High
- **Low Academic Engagement**: 46.5% Low, 29.1% Medium, 24.4% High

Academic Confidence levels are categorized as Low, Medium, and High, with corresponding percentages indicated.
Academic Confidence

- Low: 51.3%
- Medium: 32.9%
- High: 15.7%

Academic Persistence

- Low: 34.2%
- Medium: 45.0%
- High: 53.0%

- Low: 12.8%
- Medium: 26.2%
- High: 34.2%
Importance of Campus Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
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<tr>
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<td>26.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expected Grades

Academic Confidence

High
- B- or lower: 4.1%
- B, B+: 42.7%
- A-, A: 53.2%

Medium
- B- or lower: 7.3%
- B, B+: 56.1%
- A-, A: 36.6%

Low
- B- or lower: 15.7%
- B, B+: 58.9%
- A-, A: 25.4%
Summary of Results

Students With Low Academic Confidence:

- Enter college with lower academic skills and experiences out of high schools; and
- Expect to be less engaged in college, have more transition difficulties, less likely to persist when faced with adversity, and less likely to place importance on a supportive campus environment.
Summary of Results

Students With High Academic Confidence:

• Enter college with higher level academic skills and experiences out of high school; and

• Expect to be more engaged in college, have less transition difficulties, more likely to persist when faced with adversity, and more likely to place importance on a supportive campus environment.
How do we use this information to effectively help students entering college with low confidence?
Fostering High Self-Efficacy and Academic Confidence

- Promote competence
- Social models
- Promote learning challenging tasks at a mastery level.
- Define success in terms of improvement for that individual
- Point out errors/mistakes to students in a broader context of what they did well
Other comments?
Contact Us

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