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Academic Libraries and Student Retention: The Implications for Higher Education

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Data analysis provided by Rachael Passarelli, MS Research Analyst GVSU Office of Institutional Analysis

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ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AND STUDENT RETENTION

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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GVSU CORRELATION BETWEEN LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT RETENTION

p-value = .0001 for all years

Year	Librarian in class	Number of students	% Retained
2012-2013	No	8762	70.90
	Yes	8763	73.70
2013-2014	No	9925	72.10
	Yes	8560	74.90
2014-2015	No	10040	71.00
	Yes	8340	76.10
2015-2016	No	9819	71.20
	Yes	8799	75.20

GVSU METHODS

- H_0: There is no relationship between library instruction and student retention

- Definition of retention: Re-enrollment the following fall semester

- Partner: Office of Institutional Analysis

GVSU METHODS

- Pulled student records from course enrollment

- Only courses with at least one library session

- N = ~17,500 to ~18,500 each year

- Chi-squared test of independence using SAS

- Used a fixed p-value of .05 to test significance

- Controlled for ACT score, high school GPA, socioeconomic status, and first-generation using generalized linear model

GVSU RESULTS AND LIMITATIONS

- Findings are statistically significant and have been replicated for four years

- Magnitude positive (but small: odds ratios between 1.13 and 1.15)

- *Correlation is not causation*

- Limitations:

  - Human error in instruction data entry

  - Estimated attendance

  - Online instruction added winter 2016

  - Results not generalizable

  - Retention is very complicated

INTERESTING FLIP

p-value = .0001 for all years

Year	Faculty who worked with librarian	Number of students	% Retained
2014-2015	No	7555	71.30
	Yes	10825	74.70
2015-2016	No	6583	70.67
	Yes	12030	74.39

ANY MORE CORRELATIONS AT GVSU?

- Retention and library instruction in intro writing course – No*

- Retention and seeing a librarian more than once – Yes*

- GPA and seeing a librarian more than once – Yes*

- GPA and seeing a librarian compared to not seeing a librarian – No*

- Persistence to graduation and first-year library instruction – No*

*many, many caveats

IN THE LITERATURE

- Library use and retention/persistence/GPA (Murray, Ireland, & Hackathorn, 2016; Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2016; Stemmer & Mahan, 2016; Thorpe, Lukes, Bever, & He, 2016; Allison, 2015; Haddow, 2013; Stone & Ramsden, 2013; Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2013; Wong & Webb, 2011; Haddow & Joseph, 2010)

- Library staffing and retention (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2011)

- Expenditures and retention (Crawford, 2015; Mezick, 2007)

- High-impact educational practices and student success (Kilgo, Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015; Murray, 2015; Hubbard & Loos, 2013)

BEAN & EATON: PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

Four types of programs that increase student success

- Service-learning

- Learning communities and freshman interest groups

- Freshman orientation seminars

- Mentoring programs

(Bean & Eaton, 2001-2002)

TINTO: MODEL OF INSTITUTIONAL ACTION

Four conditions that foster success

- Clear and high expectations

- Academic, social, and financial support

- Frequent assessment and feedback

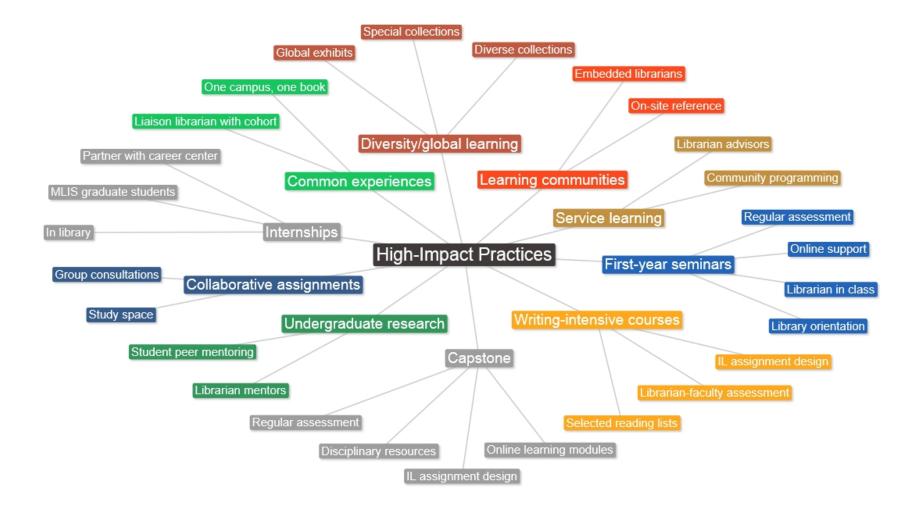- Active engagement with faculty and other students

(Tinto, in Seidman, 2005)

KUH AND AAC&U: HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES

- First-year seminars and experiences
- Common intellectual experiences
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive courses
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Undergraduate research
- Diversity/global learning
- Service learning, community-based learning
- Internships
- Capstone courses and projects

(Kuh, 2008)

ONE WAY TO LOOK AT IT

PULLING IT TOGETHER

We look for library factors

- Correlation between <u>library instruction</u> and student retention

- Relationships between <u>library use</u> and student retention or other measures of student success, such as GPA and persistence to graduation

- Alignment between <u>library services and resources</u> (both human and physical) and known high-impact educational practices

PULLING IT TOGETHER

And we find faculty factors

- Correlation between <u>faculty engagement with a librarian</u> and student retention

Using Tinto's model as a lens

- Faculty set **high expectations** for quality scholarly sources
- Faculty frame the library as a source of **academic support**
- Faculty **assess** and stress the importance of information literacy skills
- Faculty and students **engage** with the library and each other through scholarship

PULLING IT TOGETHER

The library is active in many student success programs

- Bean & Eaton: Service-learning, learning communities and freshman interest groups, freshman orientation seminars, mentoring programs

- Tinto: Expectations, support, assessment, engagement

- Kuh: First-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, capstone courses and projects
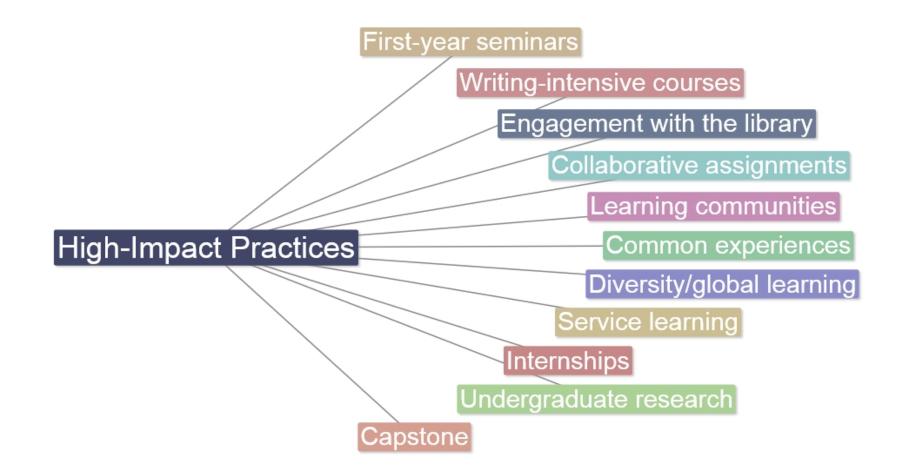
IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

If student retention is correlated with library use AND with faculty engagement with the library AND with faculty who encourage student engagement with academic support services AND with student engagement with faculty AND with library-intensive high-impact practices such as undergraduate research, writing-intensive courses, and first-year experiences…

IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

…is engagement with the library a high-impact practice?

IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

LINKS

Previous presentations on library instruction and student retention:

Correlation between library instruction and student retention. Presented at the Southeastern Library Assessment Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on November 16, 2015. http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_presentations/55/

Getting started with assessing student retention. Webinar in the Carterette Series for the Georgia Library Association on September 28, 2016. https://vimeo.com/185130648

Publication forthcoming.

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