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Building a Bridge to Improve Student Success: A Collaborative Project between Western Connecticut State University and Area High School

By Paula Maida and Abbey Zink

Abstract
Western Connecticut State University (WestConn) is working with two local high schools to improve student proficiency in English and mathematics through the 3-phase "Building a Bridge" project. In Phase 1, WestConn placement exams in English and mathematics were administered to high school juniors, who later received their placement results and additional feedback. In particular, students who placed into remedial courses were advised to enroll in coursework during their senior year to improve their skills. During Phase 2, WestConn and high school faculty met to formulate curricular changes for the upcoming school year. Phase 3 occurs one year after Phase 1, when the initial cohort of juniors will take the placement exams as seniors to determine whether improvements have been made. At this time, a new cohort of juniors is tested to begin a new cycle. This article discusses the first two phases of this "Bridge" project as the third phase is currently underway.

Jump Start to Resolving Developmental Immigrant Students' Misconceptions about College

By Myra M Goldschmidt and Debbie Lamb Ousey

Abstract

The authors of this article discuss a one week Introduction to College class, designed to address developmental immigrant students' misconceptions about college. These misconceptions, often caused by discrepancies between expectations and reality, create obstacles to these students' obtaining academic success. This pre-college summer class resolves many of the misunderstandings and misconceptions - before college starts - ensuring a smoother transition to college and a greater chance of success.

Predicting the First-Year Performance of Developmental Education Students

By Randy Moore

Abstract

Most developmental education students who earn GPA's less than 2.0 during their first semester at the University of Minnesota also post GPA's less than 2.0 during their second semester, and therefore end their first year of college with GPA's less than 2.0. First-semester GPA's are strongly correlated with second-semester GPA's ($r = 0.59$) and with first-year GPA's ($r = 0.85$). Although virtually all students who earn second-semester GPA's above 2.0 also post first-year GPA's above 2.0, almost two-thirds of students who post GPA's less than 2.0 during their second semester end their first year with GPA's less than 2.0. Historically, these students (i.e., those having first-year GPA's less than 2.0) have approximately a 1% chance of graduating from the university. These results emphasize the importance of a strong first-year for the long-term academic success of developmental education students. ACT Aptitude Ratings are poor predictors of whether developmental education students earn grade-point-averages (GPA's) above or below 2.0 during their first or second semester at college.

The Value of Practice Quizzes for Developmental Students

By Thomas Brothen and Cathrine Wambach

Abstract

This study compares the behavior of developmental students with non developmental students in their use of Internet practice quizzes. These quizzes proved to be beneficial to all students, but as a group, the developmental students used them less effectively. On the other hand, the quizzes proved to be particularly effective for those developmental students who increased their use of them during the semester. We discuss the importance of not leaving the use of such learning aids to chance and suggest that instructors find ways to induce developmental students to use them.

Study of the Efficacy of Computer-Mediated Developmental Math Instruction for Traditional Community College Students

By Sven Trenholm

Abstract

According to the Fall 2000 National Center for Education Statistics report on Remedial Education at Degree-Granting Post secondary Institutions, 97% of public 2 year colleges offered remedial courses in mathematics. Of these institutions, 35% of entering freshman enrolled in a remedial mathematics course. In states, such as New York, leading developmental educators in the community college system estimate that 60-70% of freshman test into remedial mathematics and only 40-50% of these students pass on their first attempt.

The driving force of this study is the contention that these numbers are unacceptably high and demand that educational power brokers and developmental educators look for ways to improve instruction and effectively increase the success rate.

With the current traditional community college developmental math student population, compounding and perhaps a major contributor to these statistics, is the inefficiency of the didactic lecture. In exploring alternate instructional modalities, of interest, is the fact that the current generation of traditional college freshman largely represents the so cio-cultural grouping known as the millennial generation. Millennial, as they have come to be termed, have been characterized as heavy technology users.

To that end, the purpose of this causal-comparative quasi-experimental study is to examine how current and advancing computer technology can be utilized to leverage the millennial generation's propensity to utilize technology to effectively increase learning success and retention in the classroom. This article is the first part of this study comprising the problem background and a literature review.