Summer Bridge Programs: Developing Connections for At-Risk Students

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William Collins
University of Michigan
Admissions Selection Factors

- SAT, ACT, High School Grades
- Quality of school
- Rigor of coursework
- Leadership
- Overcoming Adversity
- Motivation/Determination
- Outstanding Potential
Power of the HS Curriculum

- Adelman (1999) has shown that the quality high school curriculum is the single most important factor contributing to college success and ultimately graduation.

- The impact of the intensity and quality of high school curriculum is even more pronounced for African American and Latino students.
Educational Inequalities

- Kozol’s *Savage Inequalities*
- Conley’s *Honky*
- According to *Educational Trust*:
  - *science teachers in racially isolated schools have less educational training*
  - *high poverty high schools have more underqualified teachers*
  - *poorer school districts have fewer Math resources (textbooks, calculators, computers)*
  - *poorer school districts offer fewer advanced math and science courses*
Educational Inequalities

- Minorities are less likely to own a computer and have internet access at home. (NTIA, 1998)
- Schools with larger minority student populations have fewer computers and less Internet access than other schools. (Coley, et al, 1997)
- Teachers in minority, poor, or urban schools are less likely to ask students to solve complex problems.
Risky Effects

- Statewide 950 schools failed to meet MEAP achievement standards.
- According to the Detroit News, 37% of Michigan’s “failing schools” located in southeast Michigan.
- Nearly half the schools in Detroit were “at-risk” for state accreditation because more than 75% of their students were not passing state mandated tests (MEAP).
How to Improve Prospects for Success of At-Risk Students?

- Early Intervention (DAPCEP/KCP)
- Community (Favorable “climate”)
- Involvement (Living Learning Programs)
- Faculty Contact (Mentoring)
- Comprehensive Advising & Instruction
- Summer Bridge Programs
Adjustment Challenges

- New college students need to be open to novel experiences, including different ways to learn and to grow.
- This often includes reflecting on just how they learn best, but this is not something they do naturally.
- Students may need to develop academic self-understanding.
Student Transitions:

- Faculty expectations
- Realistic self-appraisal
- Appropriate work ethic
- Managing independence
- Discarding old habits and relationships while developing new ones
Philosophical Orientation

- Importance of time-on-task
- In the confrontation between the rock and the stream, the stream always wins - not through strength of force, rather through perseverance.
  - sustained effort smoothes rough edges
  - polishing of diamonds in the rough
Summer Bridge Objectives

- To develop academic abilities in the content areas (i.e., bridge knowledge gaps)
- To develop knowledge about faculty expectations
- To develop insights about one's self, (particularly goals, strengths, weaknesses)
- To develop a familiarity with the campus environment
- To develop a support network
Summer Bridge Structure

- Intensive Academic Development
  (English, Math, Computer & Study Skills)
- Developmental Advising
  (Decision-making, Conflict Management)
- Student Development Activities
  - Build Confidence in Realistic Setting
  - Gain Personal Insights
The Summer Bridge Effect

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*a. Dependent Variable: TERMGPA*
Impact on Students

95% report that they feel they have gotten a head start on other incoming freshmen

- 88% recommend attending Bridge to friends
- 85% made friends they expect to keep
- 85% are more encouraged about their ability to handle the academic demands of college.
- 75% learned new and useful study skills in Summer Bridge.
U-M Bridge Enrollment

- 2001 - 135
- 2000 - 123
- 1999 - 83
- 1998 - 81
- 1997 - 78
- 1996 - 60
- 1995 - 68
- 1994 - 47
http://www.lsa.umich.edu/csp/

University of Michigan
References


References (cont.)