

Learning Experiences in the First Two Years: Comparing a Two Year vs. a Four Year College Institution

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Motivation: Students Transfer

- Western Technical College transfer partnerships with UWL, three other UW schools and Viterbo University
- UW-Madison has Guaranteed Transfer Programs with all UW system two year colleges and four technical colleges

Purpose

Besides academic alignment, measure match of other essential, difficult to measure, abilities:

- 1 Mindset: Fixed vs. Growth, attitude on ability to learn
- 2 Writing ability / confidence
- 3 Information-seeking behavior: library research skills

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Dissemination

Submissions of three papers to peer-reviewed journals:

- 1 Mindset
- 2 Writing ability / confidence
- 3 Information-seeking behavior

Possible target journals:

Higher Education Quarterly, International Journal of Higher Education, Studies in Higher Education

Collaborators

Two other collaborators, with equal involvement and workload

- Sloan Komissarov, Lecturer, Western Technical College
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Single Survey

Single survey to first-year and second-year UWL and WTC students

Outcome Variables

Survey questions to measure multiple outcome variables related to:

- ① *mindset*
- ② *writing skills*
- ③ *information-seeking behavior*

Explanatory and Control Variables

- Key variable for comparison: UWL or WTC student
- Academic variables: high school performance, college credit experience, credit load, college GPA
- Demographics: Race, ethnicity, gender, parents' education
- *Interactions effects!* UWL-vs-WTC by demographics

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Mindset

- Mindset predicts academic outcomes (Dweck (2012))
- Mindset survey questions: Schmidt et al. (2015) and mindsetonline.com (companion to Dweck (2012))

Writing Skills

- Multiple choice questions from College Board's ACCUPLACER exam
- Short-answer questions on purpose, audience, or genre of students' own work

Information-Seeking Behavior

- Extends Komissarov and Murray (2016)
- Measure student experience using library search tools, academic sources

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Inform policy

- What should be included in transfer agreements?
- What resources should four-year institutions provide for transfer students?
- Policies and resources for at-risk populations

Inform Curriculum

- Classroom culture to promote growth mindset
- Writing and library research assignments

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