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Problem

Compared to their peers, low-income students are 90% less likely to graduate within 6 years and are more likely to drop out. At the local site, this problem was also evident in that the retention rate for the Fall 2014-15 cohort was 78.3%, but just 60.2% for those defined as low-income students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of low-income 1st year college students' **perceived confidence in their use of technology** and how it influenced their decision to stay in college.

Significance

Understanding the role technology plays in the decision to stay in college will shed light on ways to offer support to increase retention of these students.

This research project is unique because it addressed the role of confidence in using the technology of low-income first-year college students in the college examined in the study-an issue that to this point has not been addressed at the institution.

The results and identified themes from this research study may provide a much deeper understanding of the role of low-income first-year student confidence in the use of technology and the role of confidence in using technology has on retention.

Social Change Implications

Social change should occur when the number of low-income first-year college students' dropout rates decrease, and more students are retained in college because of the improvement in their academic grades, confidence, and technology literacies.

Theory or Framework

The conceptual framework that guided the study was Confidence Based Learning (CBL) methodology (Bruno, James), which supports the importance of confidence as it relates to retaining technology literacies, ultimately the retention of low-income first-year college students. Less is more here.

Relevant Scholarship

Confidence

•Park, Lawson, and Williams (2012) argued the lack of confidence is a major influence on whether students fail or experience academic challenges and increased confidence reduces learning hindrance.

•Student who enter college with the lack of technology beyond the basics, pose barriers to their confidence, academic achievement, and retention.

Technology Barriers

•A variety of barriers that hinder low-income first-year college student confidence in the use of technology that might prevent them from remaining in college past their first year; these barriers are connected with technologies and educational responsibilities during various stages of learning.

•Keengwe et al., (2012) argued the value of technology integration and the unfamiliarity with new technology beyond the basic internet skills are barriers to success in College that needs to be addressed because the usage of a variety of technologies are required to increase student learning and persistence.

Retention

•Frydenberg and VanderClock (2016) found that students need to be acclimated to the variety of advanced technology responsibilities to thrive in higher education institutions.

•Bruno contended students are more successful in the classroom when confidence is associated with knowledge and information retention, specifically of newly learned material such as the using technology that is needed to be successful in college (Adam & Ewen, 2009).

Research Question

How do low-income 1st year college students describe their confidence in the use of technology as a factor in their retention?

Participants

A homogeneous purposeful sampling approach was used to select 10 low-income 1st year college students.

Procedures

A qualitative descriptive design was used

Data were collected with face-to-face interviews at a private office over a three-week period. Interviews were audio-recorded.

Eight researcher-developed open-ended interview questions, as well as probing questions were presented.

Analysis

Analysis consisted of manual coding to identify themes from the interview data. After a third round of coding of all the open-ended interviews, I analyzed the data and patterns, then organized the codes into themes.

Findings

Six major themes that emerged from the study:
* *essential to academic achievement,*
* *motivation and acquiring knowledge,*
* *confidence and computer application literacy,*
* *overcoming distractions and unfamiliarity,*
* *pre-college technology programs,*
* *and technology proficiency increases success.*

Interpretation

The findings suggested low-income 1st year students do not have confidence in their ability to use technology and remain in college.

The findings also indicated barriers that hinder low-income first-year college students mirrored the ones documented in the literature review.

Limitations

The study may have been limited because

•Self-reporting cannot guarantee that the participant responses will be in agreement with their individual experiences, or perceptions (Polit & Beck, 2010).

•Allotted time to be conducted in a short amount of time before the students left campus for the summer.

•Researcher bias (Amalia, Resosudarmo, & Bennet, 2013).

Recommendations

A policy recommendation to reinstate the information literacy policy for low-income 1st year students could help to raise low-income 1st year college students' confidence using technology and supports them to persist in college.

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