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Students' Readiness to Produce Original Work: Private vs. Public High Schools

Nik Sokol

Clark University, esokol@clarku.edu

Fu Su

Clark University, fusu@clarku.edu

Rebecca Willis

Clark University, rwillis@clarku.edu

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Students' Readiness to Produce Original Work: Private vs. Public High Schools

Nik Sokol '22, Fu Su '22, and Rebecca Willis '21 – (Sponsor: Professor Nancy Budwig)

Introduction

- The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) aims to help colleges and universities implement more engaged learning. Capstone and signature work require students to practice the kinds of sustained work that will be part of their lives whatever they do, enhancing students' abilities to become critical thinkers who are skilled in analysis and argument around a complex problem (Budwig & Jessen-Marshall, 2018).
- In regard to hiring competencies: "More than 75 percent of [corporate employers] surveyed...want more emphasis to be placed on critical thinking, complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in *real-world settings*" (Taylor, 2014).
- The goal of this study is to examine whether high school students present original work outside the classroom and any connections to school types (e.g. private vs. public) as an indicator of college readiness and later ability to produce signature and capstone work.

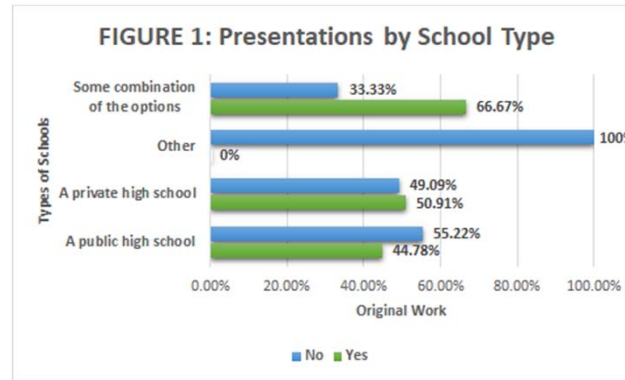
Methods

- The participants' responses were analyzed based on school, school type, and whether or not the student had completed a signature work during high school. Total sample: $N = 271$ (School #1: $n = 90$, School #2: $n = 53$; School #3: $n = 99$; School #4: $n = 29$)
- Materials
 - A 23-item survey about different types of high school that students went and their engagement and their perception of their own readiness to produce signature works in college.
- Procedure
 - Schools working with AAC&U on signature and capstone work were asked to circulate a link to their first-year students to invite them to participate in a survey.
 - Participants' responses were analyzed based on school, school type, and whether or not the student had completed original work during high school. Data were analyzed overall and between schools for differences in the kind of high school attended and whether the students had presented original work in high school.

References

Budwig, Nancy, and Amy Jessen-Marshall. "Making the Case for Capstones and Signature Work." *Peer Review* 20 (2018). Print.

Taylor, W. (2014). Assessing what we value. *Independent School*, 73(2), 24-28.



Results

- A chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between the type of high school and the prevalence of presentations of original work beyond the classroom, $\chi^2(1, N = 256) = 0.6537, p = .418792$.
- Approximately 74% of the students in this study attended a public high school, 20% of students attended a private high school, and the remaining 6% of students were categorized as other or some combination of education types. While differences between individual schools are seen, there are no consistent findings that suggest an association between the presentation of original work beyond the classroom and the type of high school attended (see figures 2A-2D).

Discussion

- The comparative analysis of the four individual schools does not support the idea that private schools require more public presentations outside of the classroom. However, the aggregated raw data from all participating schools does, which demonstrates that more students reported they had to publicly present outside of the classroom compared to those who did not.
- Limitations: Should we assume that students who have presented an original work in the past are completely and equally ready to do it again in the future?
- Future Research: What are the greatest challenges preventing more schools, teachers, and students from incorporating presentations of original work into their curricula?

