

Academic Factors Related to the Persistence of General Educational Development (GED) Recipients in Community College: An Oregon Study

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Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between select academic factors and GED recipient persistence in community college. With this purpose in mind, the study used an explanatory correlation approach to examine the relationship between persistence and seven independent variables: total number of credits enrolled in during the first term, type of course enrolled in during the first term, ratio: remedial courses to total course load, type of remedial courses enrolled in during the first term, total first term GPA, academic performance in remedial courses, and composite GED score.

Data

The data that was analyzed was an existing dataset. Academic and demographic information was collected on all students who completed their GED in Oregon between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2005, and then successfully transitioned to one of Oregon's 17 community colleges at anytime between summer term 2003 and winter term 2006. The final sample size was an unduplicated headcount of 4,785. These students enrolled in a total of 14,080 courses across the 17 Oregon public two-year institutions. Frequency and percentage distributions, as well as logistic regression analyses were performed on this data in order to determine the existence and/or strength of relationships between select academic factors and persistence of GED recipients enrolled in Oregon community colleges.

Findings

The four major findings of this study were as follows:

- Students who completed a GED in Oregon between July 2003 and June 2005 and subsequently enrolled in one of Oregon's 17 community colleges persisted in the postsecondary institution at a rate of 50%.
- The total number of credits attempted in a student's first term had a strong, positive relationship to persistence.
- Academic performance in a student's first term had a strong, positive relationship to persistence.
- Participation in remedial coursework did not reduce the likelihood of persistence, and in fact students who participated in remedial coursework during their first term persisted at higher rates than those who took no remediation.