

Academic Probation Research And Program Review

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My colleague, Ron McGriff, Librarian, Pine Technical College, spent countless hours chasing down articles from books and journals about students on academic probation. His assistance in compiling the annotated bibliography was both inspiring and enjoyable, as we found information about what worked at other colleges to increase retention of students on academic probation.

A good portion of the data collection for this project was provided by Robert Baker, Registrar, Pine Technical College. His experience in creating queries to electronically pull out the information from student records provided the necessary data for this study. I appreciated his time spent beyond the workday to help collect the data.

I am grateful for the contributions and expertise of these professionals, who devoted many hours of their time to this project. Thank you most sincerely. *Kathy Arola*

Academic Probation Research and Program Review

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Academic Probation Research and Program Review

Executive Summary

The goals for this project were to conduct a review of the probation program at Pine Technical College and provide baseline data for developing further programming aimed at increasing student retention. The study helped us to determine the characteristics of probationary students most likely to be successful or suspended at the end of the term. We examined the records of students who were in their first semester of academic probation between 2002 and 2006 academic years. (N = 168). The data, which included demographics, academic history, and academic needs, highlighted the characteristics which were related to their success or failure. Our findings...

Overall Characteristics of Probation Students

- On average, 6.4% of on-campus students were on academic probation
- 59% of the probation students were in their first semester of academic probation.
- Of all the students on probation, 46% were successful and 54% were suspended at the end of the term.
- Of the students with children, 72% were single parents.
- Interestingly, 85% of the probation students were “first generation” college students.

Outcomes

- Students under the age of 23 were more likely to be suspended.
- When the reason for probation was addressed, the findings suggested that students with completion-only problems were more successful than those with GPA-only/GPA & completion problems.
- Students with PRE-college placement scores for Writing were more likely to be suspended, as were those with PRE-college placement scores for Reading & Writing.
- Students with College-level placements for Reading & Writing tended to have a 50/50 chance of either success or failure.
- Male students, 16-22 years old, with PRE-college level placement scores, and who have a GPA-only or GPA & Completion problems were correctly identified for suspension 81% of the time. ($p = 0.004$)

Recommendations

- Early identification and support of students at-risk for probation or suspension would be helpful prior to the probation semester.
- Interventions with the highest risk groups may include: First year experience course and monitored probation for students with developmental academic needs.
- Future discussions about supporting students on academic probation should consider the factors for age, gender, scholastic problem and academic need as high risk for suspension.

Probation Program Overview

Study Participants

N=168

First time probation students (AY 2002-2006)

Introduction

Student retention, particularly with students on academic probation, poses many challenges and questions for Pine Technical College, as it does for colleges across the country. Since our counseling program provides services to help students attain their personal and academic goals, it is especially challenging with students on academic probation. For this group, there are higher standards for completion ratio and GPA during the probation semester and they must do well in order to continue and complete their programs. With this study, we wanted to determine the effectiveness of our probation program and gain an understanding of the differences between students who are successful academically and those who are not.

The study population was students in their first semester of academic probation (N=168) who were enrolled during the 2002-2006 academic years. We looked at numerous factors that might influence their success or failure for the semester. The snapshot captured one semester for each student in order to keep the study variables constant. We found helpful information about the factors that relate to students at high-risk for suspension, which we can use for discussions and future decisions about supporting students on probation and increasing their chances for success, as well as, identifying potential students at-risk and reducing the number of students on academic probation.

Project Goal

To find out more about how to support our students on academic probation, the goal of this project was to conduct a program review of support services and provide baseline data for developing further programming aimed at increasing student retention. The following methods address the goal and are included in this report:

1. A review of the current probation program.
2. A statistical analysis of the First time Probation Student Outcomes for AY 2002 – 2006.
3. A list of strategies to increase student retention for probation students based on research findings, for further discussions with Dean of Student Affairs.
4. A review of the professional literature. The attached annotated bibliography provides the salient points from each of the sources. The bibliography is divided in two topic areas:
 - Academic probation and student retention and
 - Counseling and student retention.

Academic Probation Research and Program Review

Probation Program Overview

Pine Technical College

Satisfactory Academic Progress:

- 2.0 Cumulative GPA
and
- 67% Completion Ratio

Probation Term Requirements:

- 2.3 Term GPA
and
- 100% Term Completion

Program Characteristics

At Pine Technical College, a student is placed on academic probation if their cumulative grade point average is below 2.0 and/or the completion ratio of total credits earned falls below 67% of those attempted.

During the probation semester, students must complete all of the credits attempted and earn a GPA of 2.3 to remain in good standing. At the end of the term, students who do not meet the term requirements are suspended. Successful students may either be off probation or, for those who meet the term requirement, continue on probationary status until their cumulative GPA and Completion Ratio meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy.

Pine Technical College identifies and monitors students on academic probation. The purpose of this program is to foster a connection with high risk probation students, to provide encouragement and support, and help them to develop a success plan that meets their individual needs and goals. Students are initially notified about their probation status by the Dean of Student Affairs at the end of each term. Because students may have stopped out for several semesters or years, they are reminded about their probation status again at the time they return. Nevertheless, there are students who do not understand the implications of probation.

Students are asked to participate in the probation program provided by counseling services. After the tenth day of the semester, a letter is sent to all of the currently enrolled probation students explaining the probation requirements and asking them to make an appointment to meet with the counselor to go over their semester plan and discuss their career and academic goals. The aim is to intervene early with individuals who have difficulties and address these issues in a realistic and timely manner. As part of this program, the counselor and student discuss what happened to get them on academic probation. They define and clarify the student's goals to be successful. This success plan includes adjustments that may be needed to their course load, work hours, or personal life that will increase their chances of doing well and being successful during the semester.

Academic Probation Research and Program Review

Probation Program Overview

Findings

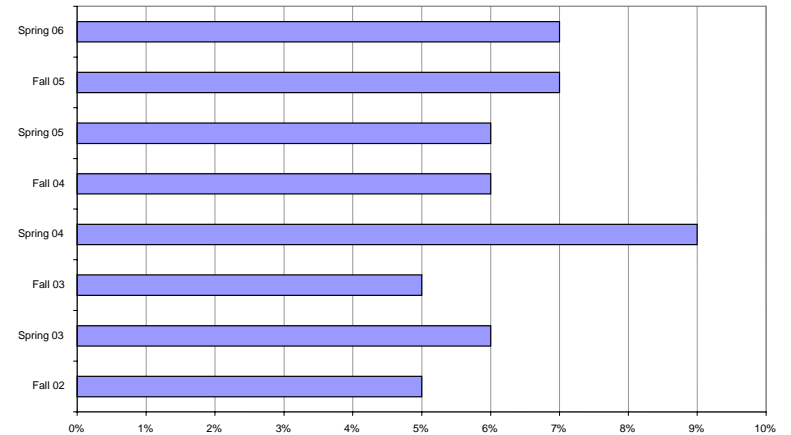
- 6.4% of enrolled students are on probation during a semester.
- 59% of probation students are on probation for the first-time.

Between AY2002 and AY2006, an average of 6.4% of on-campus students were on academic probation during a semester. During the four year study, the number ranged from 29-54 probation students per semester. During the years with the highest enrollment we saw a corresponding higher number of students on probation.

First time probation students are the focus of this study. They account for an average of 59% of the total probation group. The chart shows that the number of first time probation students ranged from 13 and 35 per semester. This group is at a very high risk for suspension

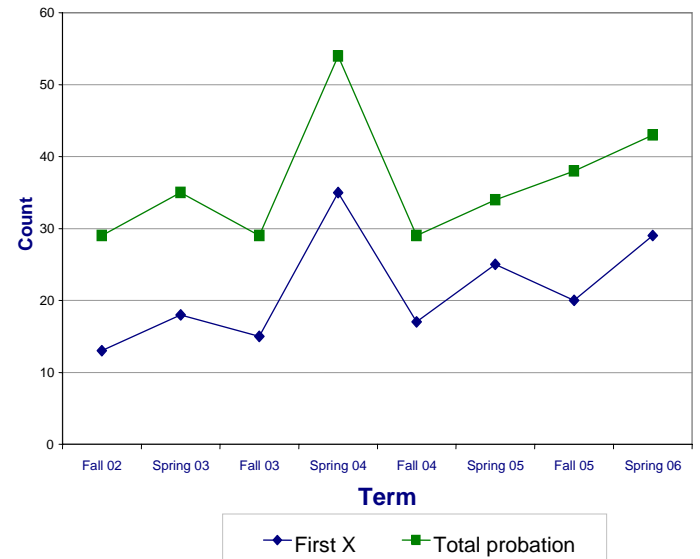
Percent of Students on Academic Probation

AY 2002-2006



First Time on Academic Probation

Four-Year Trends



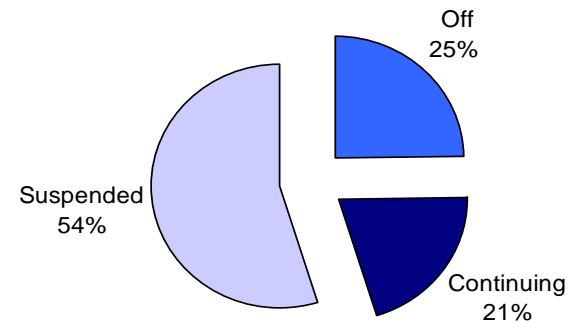
Probation Program Overview

Findings

- On average, 46% of probation students are successful; 54% are suspended.
- Averages for First-Time probation students: 44% successful; 56% suspended.

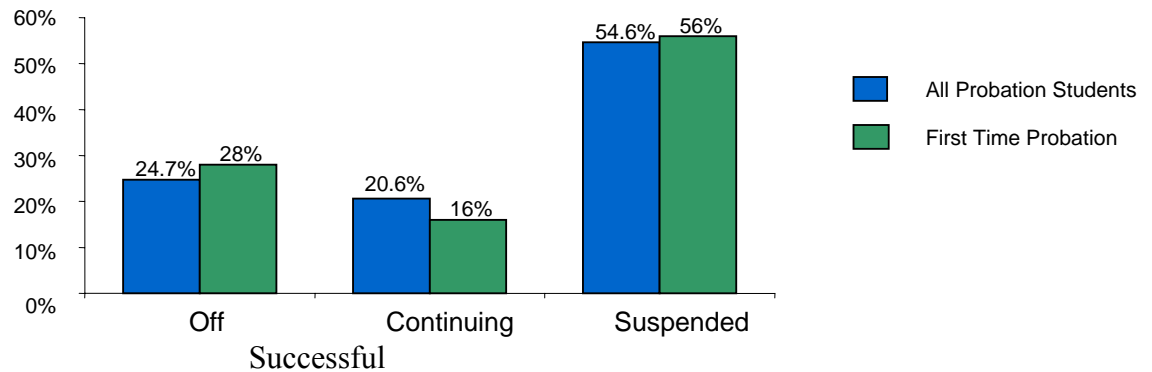
Overall, 46 % of students on probation are successful, either by getting off academic probation or meeting the requirements for continued probation. An average of 54% of the probation students are suspended at the end of the term.

Overall Probation Term Outcome
N = 291



A comparison of the term outcomes between all the probation students and the first time probation students found that the percentages for the three outcome possibilities were essentially the same for both groups. Term outcomes included students who were off probation or were continuing on probation (successful) and those suspended.

Probation Students Term Outcomes



Probation Research Study

Study Questions

Does counseling intervention make a difference on academic success/failure (term outcomes) for probation students?

Does the number of counseling contacts impact term outcome?

Do the students who self-refer have the same term outcome as students who are referred by faculty?

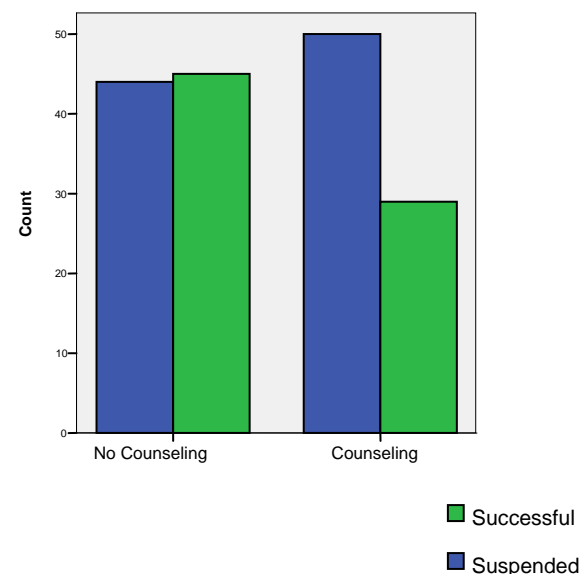
Counseling

We were unable to answer the question if counseling makes a difference for term outcome. The data for the counseling variable used to address this question were insufficient and required long-term study methodologies. This study included all contacts with the first time probation students, including students whose initial contact was to withdraw, rather than only students who came in early to develop a success plan. Consequently, the statistics using these data may provide a different perspective. Statistics approached significance for counseling and student success/failure during the term. ($\chi^2 = 3.259$, $p = 0.07$, $\phi = -0.139$). Students in the sample who did not seek counseling had an equal chance of success/failure, whereas students who sought counseling were more likely to be suspended.

Nevertheless, further questions are raised: Do students who are more confident about how to be successful, elect not to participate in the program? Are students meeting with the counselor after they discover they are having difficulties with a course? All students who saw the counselor sometime during the probation semester were included in the data for this variable, even if they were coming in to withdraw, which subsequently meant they would be suspended at the end of the semester. Although a success plan was discussed with the withdrawing students, the retention results with these data would not be realized until they returned for another semester. This was beyond the scope of this study. Future research would need to account for the variables related to the nature of the contact, and perhaps a measure of their motivation, in order to address the impact of counseling.

Other research on counseling and student retention focuses on understanding the factors that directly relate to student retention. (Yaworski, 2000), (Turner & Berry, 2000), (Noel, Levitz, Saluri 1986). The factors sited often include: intellectual capacity, motivation, an understanding of what it takes to be a successful student

Probation Program



Probation Research Study

Findings

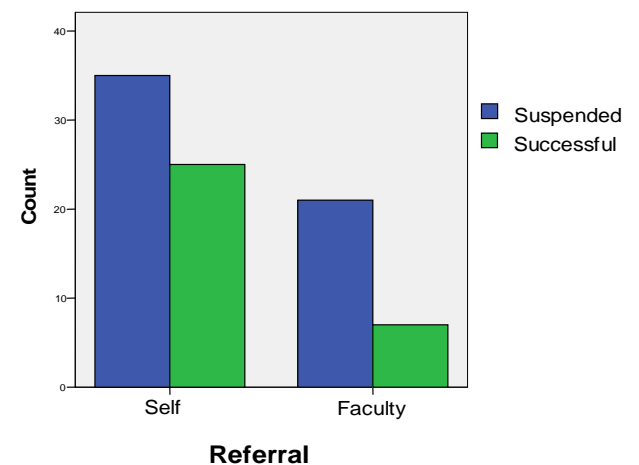
- Unable to answer the study question on the impact of counseling on student retention.
- Failed to find a statistically significant relationship with success/failure for the variables of referral source OR number of counseling contacts.

(such as: study skills, test taking skills, time management, etc.) and situational factors (such as financial status, relationships, family responsibilities, mental health, and other life events). In considering the number of factors that have a direct bearing on student retention, counseling may be able to address some, but not all of them. For example, counseling would have no impact on the student's intellectual capacity. It is also important to consider that counseling is not a quick-fix for high risk students. Several counseling sessions may be necessary for the student to come to an understanding of the problem areas and make necessary adjustment to their skills/life over time, in order to be successful. The probation students who met with the counselor were asked to reflect on their academic problem in light of the factors for a successful student. Since this process takes time, we would not likely see immediate results directly related to counseling within the one term. This is supported by our study that found no relationship with term outcomes based on the number of counselor contacts during the term. Rather than a direct relationship with student retention, counseling appears to be indirectly related in this snapshot. Nevertheless in longitudinal studies (Humphrey, 2006) (Turner and Berry, 2000) counseling has been shown to have an impact on student retention overall.

Referral

Students who participated in the program were either self-referred or referred by an instructor with a progress report directed to the counselor for follow-up. We wanted to know if the students who self-referred might be more concerned about their probationary status and perhaps more motivated and receptive to make changes in order to be successful. The study failed to find a significant relationship with the type of referral, possibly due to the low N on one of the variables. As expected, however, we observed a higher percentage (42%) of successful students in the self-referred group than in the faculty-referred group (25%). Likewise the sample set showed a higher percentage of suspensions for those who were faculty-referred (75%) as opposed to self referred (58%).

Since faculty refer once a student shows a pattern of absences or poor work, the student is presumably already



Probation Research Study

Considerations

- Focus on the direct factors for student success/ failure and determine which factors might be within the students' control.
- Develop strategies for early intervention with these factors in mind to support their success.
- Future studies: Redefine the purpose of a counseling contact for a short term study, or conduct a longitudinal study to address student retention.

in trouble with course requirements. Some of those who self-referred met with the counselor early in the semester before problems developed, others came in only after they began having trouble in a course. Data was not available for those who came in early vs. those who waited until they had problems in their courses, however, this would be an important variable for future considerations.

Discussion

In reviewing these findings, it might be helpful to think about student retention from the perspective of what is required of a successful student and what factors are perceived to be within their control. (Moxley, Najor-Durack & Dumbrigue, 2001) and (Yaworski, Weber and Ibrahim, 2000). Because we included all probation students who saw the counselor during the semester in the same data set, we were unable to differentiate between those who were planning ahead to be successful and those who needed to do “damage-control” and withdraw by the deadline (an automatic suspension). For this reason, we have no information about the impact of counseling, unless we factored for this variable and perhaps conducted a longitudinal study. Nevertheless, our goal was to further understand the probation population and the role of counseling. We can further develop strategies to be supportive of positive change and success for probation students by enhancing our program based on our findings with the characteristics of the successful/suspended students. A program with more structure and perhaps, an activity-based format should be considered, in addition to the focus on high-risk characteristics.

Probationary students are the highest risk group for being suspended and there are inherent problems with more factors leading to failure than success, as we found in this study. Additionally, our probation program is voluntary and we might want to define a program that includes workshops on student success and some measure of accountability. In addition, developing support strategies early in the students experience should be discussed. The First Year Experience course, currently in development, may be a suitable venue for instruction and support.

Probation Research Study

Study Questions

Is there a difference with academic success/failure (term outcomes) for probation students based on participant characteristics?

Demographics

Several factors were studied for possible effects on the outcome for first semester probation students, including age, gender, marital status, single parent, first generation college student (neither parent with bachelor’s degree), and low income as determined by Pell Grant recipients.

Demographics		Total	
Age	17-22	85	51%
	23+	83	49%
Gender	Male	60	36%
	Female	108	64%
Marital Status (n=130)	Single	101	78%
	Married	29	22%
Single Parent (n=127)	Yes	91	72%
	No	36	28%
First Generation College	Yes	127	85%
	No	23	15%
Low Income	Pell Award	95	57%
	No Pell	73	43%

Age was found to be a significant variable for predicting suspension. ($F_{1, 166} = 4.06$; $p=.046$, two tailed; $R^2=.024$). Students were then placed in two groups (16-22 yrs and 23+ yrs) to determine the difference with the term outcome (success or suspension). Students between the ages of 16 and 22 were more likely to be suspended at the end of the term than older students. ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $p=0.02$; $\Phi=0.178$).

Probation Research Study

Findings

- Students between the ages of 16 and 22 were more likely to be suspended.
- 85% of student in the study were first generation college students.
- Parents with one child were twice as likely to be successful as be suspended.

Gender provided information for the sample only. Males in this sample were twice as likely to be suspended as to be successful. Statistical analysis approached significance on this variable ($\chi^2=3.1$; $p=0.078$; $\Phi=1.36$). Female students in the study were more likely to be successful than male students, but failed to find a significant relationship. This means that we must be cautious in generalizing this information to the larger population of probation students.

Age and gender. Together, the age and gender variables identified those who will be suspended 75% of the time. Overall, these two variables correctly identify success or suspension outcomes 64% of the time, in contrast to 55% if not using these variables.

Number of children. 38% of the probation student in the study had children. Parents with one child were twice as likely to be successful as be suspended. This was not the case for parents with 2 or more children who had an equal chance to be successful or suspended. Although interesting, significance was not achieved with this factor that could be generalized to other populations.

Marital status, first generation college students, single parent and low income variables were not found to be significant for predicting success or suspension for the first time probation students. It was interesting to note that 85% of the students in the study were first generation college students and only 15% of the students had at least one parent with a bachelor's degree. The small sample size for the later group made it difficult to analyze.

Probation Research Study

Study Questions

Does previous academic successes (based on the number of earned credits) influence success/failure (term outcome)?

Do students who begin the semester with only a GPA problem OR only a Completion problem have the same term outcome as those with both GPA & Completion problems?

Does the number of credits attempted during the probation semester impact term outcome?

Findings

- Students with completion ratio problems were more successful than those with GPA /GPA & Completion problems.

Academic History

Academic history was defined in the study to include evidence of previous academic successes including: number of prior credits earned, the scholastic problem (reason for probation), and the number of credits taken during the probation term. A student's success/failure with their previous college courses were thought to influence their determination and motivation during the probation semester. Analysis of *the number of prior credits earned* did not indicate a difference between groups for those who were successful or were suspended at the end of the probation term. The data included only the credits earned at PTC and did not include credits previously earned at other colleges.

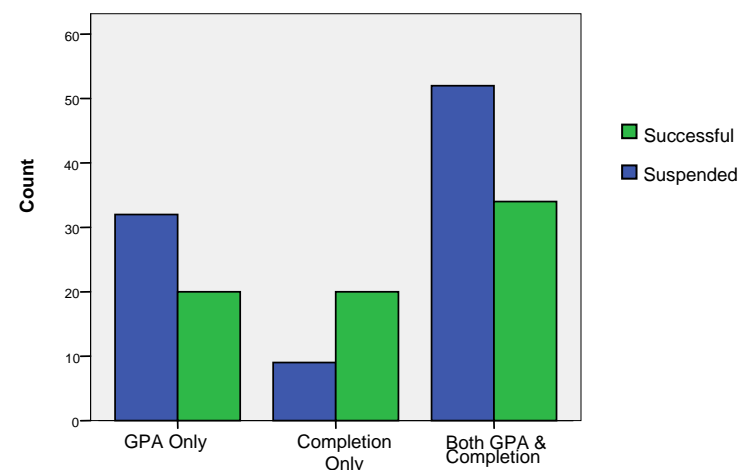
Scholastic Problem refers to the reason that the student was placed on academic probation. Three possible reasons for probation are:

- 1) A cumulative GPA < 2.0 was the only deficiency
- 2) A cumulative completion ratio of < 0.67 (credits earned/credits attempted) was the only deficiency
- 3) Both Cumulative GPA and Completion ratio were deficient.

Students who were placed on academic probation for GPA-only AND both GPA & Completion were more likely to be suspended, than students who had a completion problem only. In fact, those with only the completion problem were twice as likely to be successful than be suspended.

The analysis for *the number of credits attempted during the probation term* failed to find a difference between successful and suspended students, for this sample. However, this variable should be considered for future studies, as there are additional questions about this variable that we do not understand. Such as, which students can be successful with an overload of credits? vs. those with 6 credits or less?

Scholastic Problem



Probation Research Study

Study Questions

Do students with pre-college Writing (or Reading) scores have the same term outcome as those with college-level Writing (or Reading)?

Findings

- Students with PRE-college level scores in Writing were more likely to be suspended.

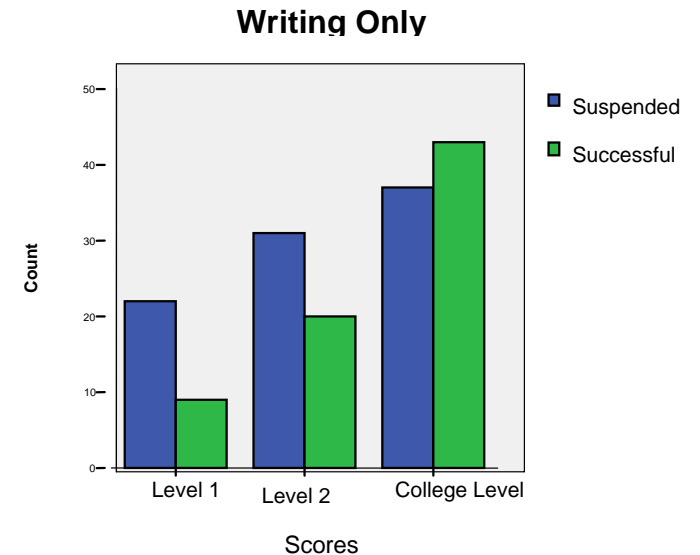
Academic Need

Students are assessed upon entry to the College to determine their skills in reading, writing and math. This information is used to determine academic needs and placement in appropriate courses. Ninety percent of the study participants had scores on Accuplacer (computer assessment) or ASAP (paper/pencil version). Students without assessment scores transferred from another college and were assumed to be at the college level reading and writing because the college policy waives the placement assessment for students who have demonstrated college level.

To determine if academic need had an impact on the term outcome (success or suspension), the assessment and transfer information was grouped into three levels: Level 1— (two courses in Reading or Writing needed prior to college level); Level 2 – (one course in Reading or Writing needed prior to college level); and Level 3 --College Ready.

Writing only. Students with pre-college level scores in writing (Level 1 and Level 2) were compared with students at the college level writing. Findings indicated a significant relationship between writing levels and term outcome ($\chi^2 = 6.35$; $p=0.04$; $\Phi=0.198$). Students needing one or two developmental courses in writing (Level 1 and Level 2) had a higher probability of being suspended than those who were at the college level in writing upon entry to the college.

This finding is supported by a study from the City College of San Francisco (Spurling and Gabriner, 2002). Placement levels were found to be the best predictors of students most likely to go on academic probation. Once on academic probation, our study found that students in pre-college level writing were more likely to be suspended than be successful.



Probation Research Study

Study Questions

Do students with PRE-college level scores in both Reading and Writing have the same term outcome as students at the college level?

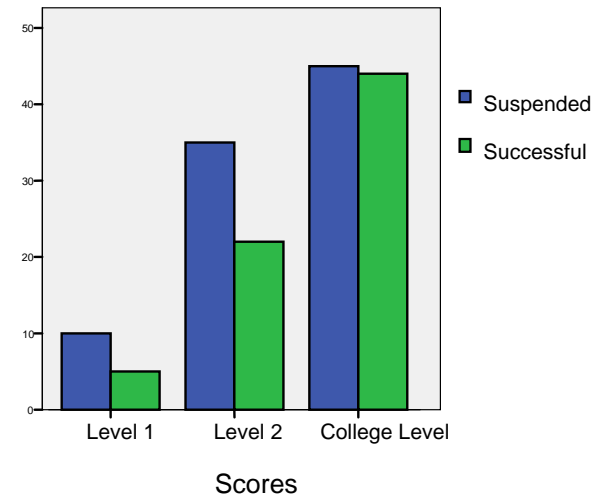
Finding

- Students with College Level scores in Reading and Writing had a 50/50 chance of being successful/suspended.
- Students with PRE-college level scores for either Reading or Writing or both, were more likely to be suspended than those with college level scores.

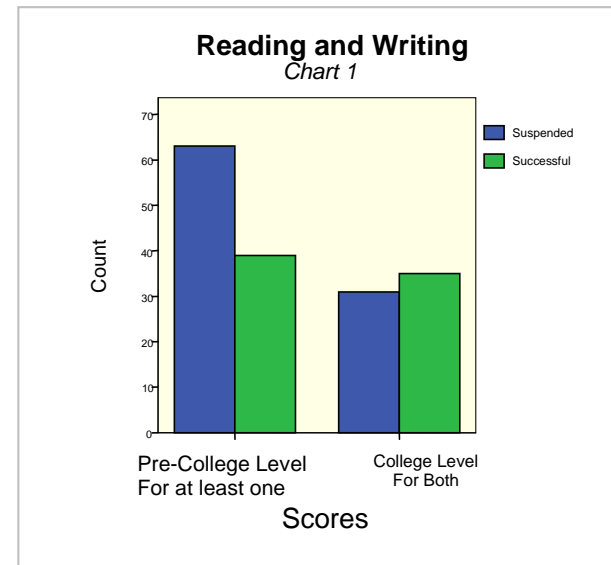
Reading only. The same was not true for the Reading only variable. Although we observed a tendency for the Level 1 and Level 2 students (Reading I and II) to be suspended, their counterparts at college-level reading had a 50-50 chance of either success/failure. The Reading variable did not reach statistical significance.

Reading and Writing. Academic need was found to be related to term outcome when both the reading and writing scores were analyzed together. Students scoring at PRE-college levels in either Reading or Writing or both, were more likely to be suspended than students at the college level for both scores. (Chart 1). PRE-college scores in both Reading and Writing, as well as, at least one pre-college level score, identified students who were likely to be suspended. ($\chi^2 = 5.7; p=0.017; \text{Phi}=0.214$). This factor is an important identifier for students at high risk for suspension.

Reading Only



Reading and Writing
Chart 1



Probation Research Study

Study Questions

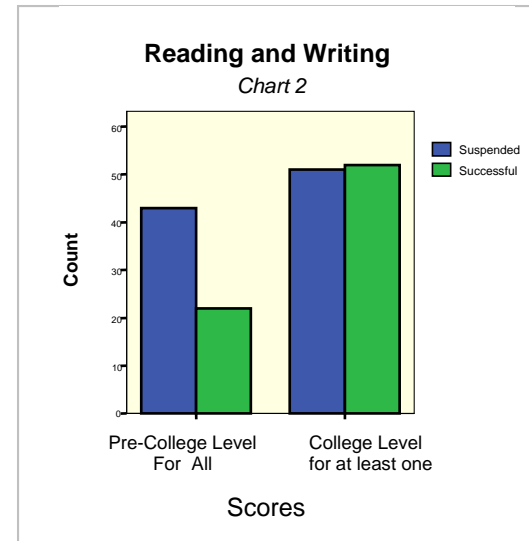
Do students with at least one pre-college level score in Reading or Writing have the same term outcome as students at the college level for both Reading and Writing?

Findings

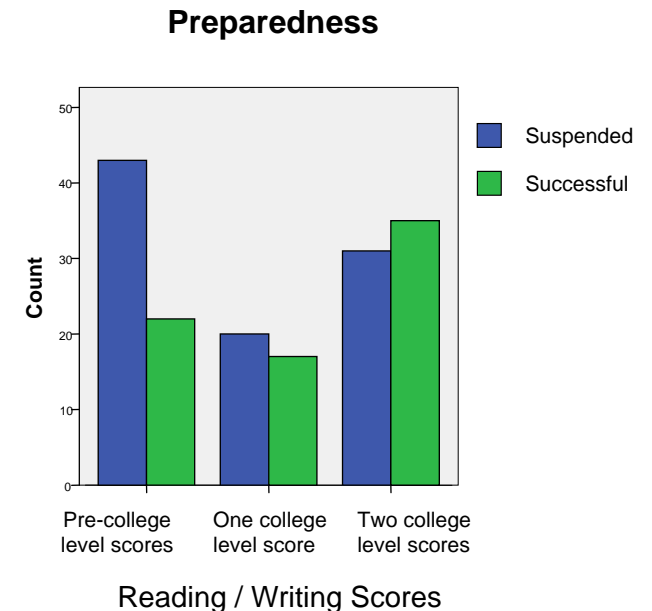
- Students with at least one college level score in Reading or Writing had nearly the same term outcomes as students with two college level scores.

Also, students with scores in both Reading and Writing at the PRE-college-level were identified as a high risk for suspension when it was compared with students who have at least one score at the college level. (Chart 2)

Students needing both Reading and Writing developmental courses were twice as likely to be suspended as successful. While students with at least one college level score (either Reading or Writing, or both) had a near-equal chance of success/failure. PRE-college scores in both Reading and Writing identified students who were likely to be suspended. ($\chi^2 = 5.2$; $p=0.022$; $\Phi=0.205$).



Academic Preparedness. The final analysis of academic preparedness included three groupings of the Reading/Writing scores: 1. students with PRE-college scores in both, 2. students with one score at the college level, and 3. students with college level scores in both. Students with at least one college level score in Reading or Writing had nearly the same term outcomes as students with two college level scores. As noted previously, students with PRE-college-level scores in both Reading and Writing were much more likely to be suspended than be successful. We noted a directionally significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 4.960$; $p<0.05$, one-tail; $\Phi=0.172$) supporting this difference.



Probation Research Study

Findings

At risk for suspension

- Males
- 16-22 years old
- Reason for probation: GPA-only or GPA & Completion problem
- Pre-college scores in Writing.
- Pre-college scores in both Reading and Writing.

More likely to be successful:

- Students with both reading and writing scores at the college level.
- Students with either Reading or Writing scores at the college level.

Summary

To learn more about the relationship between the student characteristics and their predictability of success/failure, a regression analysis was utilized. This provided information about the likelihood that we could correctly identify success/failure based on these characteristics. The first analysis examined two factors: gender and age. The students who were identified as more likely to be suspended were males, 16-22 years old. Together, the age and gender variables were predictors 75% of the time. ($p < 0.01$).

When we analyzed three variables together: age, gender and scholastic problem, we found a higher rate of predictability. In this analysis, these three factors correctly identified the suspended students 85% of the time. ($p < 0.05$). They tended to be male students, 22 years and younger, who have a GPA-only or GPA & Completion problem. Using these three variables to identify students who would likely be successful was more difficult. The predictability rate overall for identifying students likely to be suspended and likely to be successful was 63%.

Since we found significance with pre-college writing scores with the suspension outcome, this was added to the regression with the other three variables. The same variables correctly identified **suspension** 81% of the time. ($p = 0.004$). To predict success/suspension for future populations with these characteristics, we would correctly identify them 69% of the time as compared to 55% of the time without using these factors.

Planning supportive programming for probation students, who have these risk factors, provides our College with a focus for ongoing retention efforts. This information can be shared with the probation students themselves, in an attempt to increase awareness of potential pitfalls. Future discussions about supporting students on academic probation should consider the factors for age, gender, scholastic problem and academic need as high risk for suspension.

Academic Probation Research and Program Review

Data Summary

	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Group Assignment	# of counseling contacts Group 1: at least one contact Group 2: no contacts	1+ 0	Does counseling intervention make a difference on academic success/failure (term outcomes) for students on academic probation?	2X2 Chi-Square (χ^2) on control variables and DV for Group 1 (counseling) and Group 2 (no counseling).
			Does the # of counseling contacts impact term outcome?	Correlate w/ DV
	Referral source	Self=1 Faculty=2 None=0	Do the students who self-refer have the same term outcome as students who are referred by faculty?	Chi-Square (χ^2) / Self vs. Faculty referral for Groups 1 & 2 on the DV
Demographics	Age	<22 = 1 23+ = 2	Is there a difference with participant characteristics between the control and study group?	Crosstab-subset --Chi-Square (χ^2) / All characteristics between a) Groups 1&2. b) Term Outcomes (success/failure) Regression of the control variables (CV) w/ term outcome (DV) and all the CV
	Gender	M=1 F=2		
	Marital Status	Single = 1 Married = 2	Is there a difference with academic success/failure (term outcomes) for students on academic probation based on participant characteristics?	
	# of Children	0-99		
	Single Parent	N=1 Y=2		
	First Generation College Student (Bachelor Degree)	N=1 Y=2		
	Low Income (<i>PELL Grant recipient</i>)	N=1 Y=2		

Academic Probation Research and Program Review

Data Summary

	Variable	Data	Research Question	Analysis
Academic History	# of prior credits earned	00-99	Does previous academic successes (based on the number of earned credits) influence student success or failure for the term?	T-Test / ANOVA
	Scholastic Problem			
	Cumulative GPA (CUM GPA <2.00)	1	Do the students who begin the semester with only a GPA problem OR only a completion ratio (CR) problem have the same term outcome as the students with both GPA & CR problems?	Chi-Square (χ^2) // GPA only and CR only vs. GPA & CR on the DV, for a) Groups 1 & 2. b) Term Outcome Success/Failure
	Cumulative Completion Ratio (CUM C/R < 0.67)	2		
	Both Cumulative GPA & C/R problem (CUM GPA<2.00 & CUM C/R<.67)	3		
# of Credits during probation term (TR CR ATT)	01-99	Does the number of credits attempted during the probation semester impact term outcome?	T-Test / ANOVA	
Academic Need	Accuplacer Scores:			
	Writing (Sentence Skills) <52 = Level I 53-86 =Level II 87+ = College Level	1 2 3	a. Do students with developmental Writing (or Reading) scores have the same term outcome as those with college-level Writing (or Reading)?	Chi-Square (χ^2) / Developmental Need (a, b, or c) vs. College Level on the DV, for term outcomes (success/failure)
	Reading Comprehension <54 = Level I 54-77 = Level II 78+ = College Level	1 2 3	b. Do students with developmental level scores in both Reading and Writing have the same term outcome as students at the college level?	
	Math (Arithmetic) 0-58 = Level I 59+ =mastery	1 2	c. Do students with at least one developmental level score in Reading or Writing have the same term outcome as students at the college level for both Reading and Writing?	

Academic Probation Research and Program Review

Data Summary

	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
Dependent Variables	End of Term data:			
	Cumulative GPA (CUM GPA)	$\geq 2.0 = 1$ $< 2.00 = 2$		
	Cumulative Completion Ratio (CUM C/R)	$\geq 0.67 = 1$ $< 0.67 = 2$		
	Term GPA (TR GPA)	$\geq 2.3 = 1$ $< 2.3 = 2$		
	Term Completion Ratio (TR C/R)	$1.00 = 1$ $< 1.00 = 2$		
	Term Outcome (Success / Failure):			
	Off Probation (Success)	3		
	Continuing on Probation (Success)	2		
	Suspended (Failure)	1		

Annotated Bibliography

Introduction

Academic Probation and Student Retention

Many of the articles that we surveyed pertaining to academic probation and student retention, described an intervention strategy used for probationary students and analyzed its effectiveness based on student performance. The findings showed positive results on the measure of student success for many of the interventions. (Coleman and Freedman, 1996) (Humphrey, 2006) (Hutson, 2006), (Mann, et.al., 2003), (Olson, 1990), (Wlazelek and Coulter, 1999).

Counseling Services and Student Retention

The literature on the effectiveness of counseling services on student retention is favorable (Turner & Berry, 2000) (Rickerson, 1998) (Illovsky, 1997) (Santa Rita, 1995). Academic and personal counseling interventions showed a positive impact on retention in the review study by Sharkin (2004). He advocates for counseling centers to produce retention-related data, but cautions against their use as the sole means of assessing counseling center efficacy.

Although counselors play an instrumental role in retention, their primary function is to support student needs which may not be to keep them in college. Sharkin (2004) argues that “not all retention is desirable.” For example, the student who is doing poorly in classes as a result of major personal and financial problems needs to look at the options by evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of remaining in school. The college counselor supports the student by providing encouragement to solve these problems and, if necessary, to set up a plan to return to college at a later time. In this way, the counselor provides for the needs of the student while helping them to realistically plan for their future education.

The role of counseling, then, is to support and encourage students even if they leave the institution. A longitudinal study of counseling and student retention, such as the one reported by Turner & Berry (2000) may be a more appropriate study, as students who seek counseling for help with their problems may stop-out and return later when their life settles down.

Annotated Bibliography

Effective programs for students on Academic Probation

From the review of the professional literature several studies found strategies that were helpful for students on academic probation at their colleges. These activities form the beginnings of discussions for Student Affairs personnel at PTC, as we seek to enhance our support for students on probation.

- 1) Group format was found to be appropriate and effective. (Coleman and Freedman, 1996)
- 2) Regular meetings with a “specialist” for students on probation. (Cruise, 2002), (Humphrey, 2006)
- 3) Monitored Probation (Mann, Hunt, and Alford, 2003)
- 4) Developmental Education focus. (Spurling and Gabriner 2002).
- 5) Success Course (Hutson, 2006)

Annotated Bibliography

The group format was appropriate and effective with academically at-risk students.

Academic Probation and Student Retention

Prepared by Ron McGriff

Coleman, H.L.K. and Freedman, A.M. (1996). Effects of a structured group intervention on the achievement of academically at-risk undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 6, 631-636.

This study involved 78 male and 71 female probationary students who were enrolled at a large Midwestern university. Intervention actions were “derived from theories of goal attainment, interpersonal problem solving, and social competence.” Students who experienced the intervention experience did significantly better than the control group in two areas: 1) Rate of removal from the probation status and 2) Achievement of higher grade point averages and credit completion ratios.

The authors emphasized that “as previous researchers had found, structured, lengthy, voluntary interventions offered in a group format proved in this study to be appropriate and effective for academically at-risk undergraduates.” Additional research, they recommended, is needed to evaluate three factors or issues.

- The effects or role of each of the intervention factors on psychosocial processes and academic results.
- The success of such a program with a more racially and ethnically diverse student population.
- The long term results of such intervention.

Cruise, C.A. (2002). Advising students on academic probation. *The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal*. Retrieved, June 28, 2006, from <http://www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/021028cc.htm>

The article’s author provides a summary overview of important factors in advising students on academic probation. Unlike at-risk students, probationary students may come from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. For this particular paper, probationary students were defined as those persons with a below 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

Annotated Bibliography

Recommendations included regular contact with probationary students that is positive and encouraging and focuses on a success plan.

“More assistance may need to be given to program students as their studies continue.”

Several important steps or actions are recommended for those advisors working with a probationary student. The advisor should:

- Initiate contact with the student.
- Arrange a first meeting so that the advisor gets to know the student and learns the details of why the probation situation occurred.
- Outline a “plan of action for recovery”. This may require a referral to another campus resource or assistor and such visits should be verified in some manner.
- Focus on major options and career interests/exploration as a way to finding student strengths and what they may enjoy.
- Meet regularly with the student, usually every two weeks.
- Stay positive for motivating and encouraging the student.

Longer than normal advising sessions may be necessary for students on probation or a college might want to establish a “probationary specialist” who would have more time to assist these students.

Humphrey, E. (2006). Project success: Helping probationary students achieve academic success. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 7, 3-4, 147-163.

Abstract: Project Success (PS) is an evolving and increasingly effective program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to return probationary students to good academic standing. This article provides a description of the program, including research that monitors the program’s performance.

Through the use of weekly meetings with faculty, staff, administrators, graduate students and/or peer facilitators, 10 to 14 probationary students learn about campus resources and study skills but also are provided the opportunity to develop skills such as time management and a process of accountability. Weekly meetings and reports focus on:

- Class attendance.
- Acquaintance with faculty.
- Time management and goal setting.
- Students “Reflective Journal”, topics selected by the group about which to write and discuss.

Annotated Bibliography

The study found that Project Success students outperformed others in all categories.

Formal evaluation of the program in 2001-2002 found that Project Success completers were more likely to be retained by Virginia Tech than students in the control group.” In addition, “more PS students regained good academic standing than non-PS students and were therefore able to continue at Virginia Tech.” A longitudinal study from Fall 2001 to Spring 2003, comparing the PS completers to a control group for the factors of:

- % Last term attended
- % Good academic standing
- % Suspended
- Term mean GPA
- Overall mean GPA

The study found the PS completers generally outperforming the control group in all categories. However in Fall 2002, the percentage of those still attending was very similar between the two groups – 60% for the PS group and 58.5% for the control group. This may be due to the following factors.

- PS students discontinue using the success techniques learned earlier.
- Additional challenges or issues come to the front as they work in their program.
- It is more difficult to offset a threatened 2.0 GPA as the number of cumulative credits increase.

In summary more assistance may need to be given to program students as their studies continue. A re-design of the PS program for improved assessment of it included these activities.

- On-going documentation of attendance and completion of weekly reports.
- Monthly training sessions so that co-facilitators and the program’s coordinator can exchange information and address questions.
- Mid semester surveys of all group participants, students and co-facilitators alike to evaluate the program.
- Visits to every current professor with preparation of a visit report.

The author concludes that “overall, Project Success appears to be a win-win program that could be used by other institutions as they, too, strive to increase retention of their students.”

Annotated Bibliography

Successful students in the program had significantly higher cumulative GPAs upon entrance than those who were not successful.

Hutson, B.L. (2006). Monitoring for success: Implementing a proactive probation program for diverse, at-risk college students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 67 (03), 189.

From a Student Strategies for Success Survey at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, involving 279 participants placed in the college's Strategies for Academic Success (SAS 100) program, pre/post data showed improved levels in Social Behavior, Academic Preparedness, Interdependence, Dedication, Self-knowledge, and Confidence. Findings verified the positive effect of the SAS 100 program and established the reliability of the survey in evaluating development of students on probation.

Illovsy, R.A. (1989). Differences between academically successful and unsuccessful students in an intrusive academic advising program. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 51 (02). 417.

For the 1988-89 academic year, a study focused on university students who had been suspended and then placed in the University Academic Assessment Program. Data was collected and evaluated for the following factors.

- Success or retention rate of the students in the program.
- Academic performance level while in the program.
- Any changes in self-esteem, study habits and study attitudes.

A number of findings were determined.

- 48.5% of the program's students achieved a C average or better, allowing enrollment in one of the academic colleges.
- Time spent in the special program did not affect students' self-esteem or study attitudes.
- Study habits test scores did increase at the end of the program.
- Successful students in the program had significantly higher cumulative grade-point averages upon college entrance than those who were not successful.
- Students, successful or not, stated most often that a lack of school readiness, and, second, a lack of good study behaviors as the primary reasons for academic problems.

Annotated Bibliography

The monitored Probation program...improved academic success for at-risk students.

“The basis of student development lies in a student’s mastery of the role of the student.”

Mann, J.R., Hunt, M.D. and Alford, J.G. (2003). Monitored probation: A program that works. *Journal of College Student Retention*, 5, 3, 245-254.

At Lamar University in Texas, the Monitored Probation (MP) program provides broad, early intervention for seeking academic retention for students on probation or suspension. Related goals are to improve students’ GPA’s and to improve their satisfaction with the college experience. For those students in the General Studies program, a GPA less than 2.0 places them in the MP program if they wish to continue at the university. Faculty is consulted and involved in defining the student’s needs early on and, with the use of referral and follow-up procedures, college staff, faculty and administrators are all involved in the overall process.

Study participants were 92 freshman students in the fall of 1998, 62 of them being General Studies majors who were required to enroll in the MP program. Control group participants came from other college programs and also had GPA’s below 2.0.

Study findings determined that the MP program serves as a successful intervention program, both improving academic success for at-risk students and also improving their level of satisfaction with the university experience. MP students had on the average started the study with a “slightly lower mean composite GPA than the control group” but ended the study with a higher mean composite GPA than the control group. In addition, students in the Monitored Probation program, in completing the University Satisfaction Questionnaire, showed “significantly lower scores” which would indicate a greater level of satisfaction with the college experience.

Moxley, D., Najor-Durack, A. & Dumbrigue, C. (2001). *Keeping Students in Higher Education: Successful Practices and Strategies for Retention*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

The authors summarize supportive retention practices with the following five forms: 1) Emotional support and sustenance, 2) Informational support, 3) Instrumental support (practical assistance and to resolve educational challenges and advocacy to persist in their education. Also included help with financial resources, housing, health and mental health care, and transportation. 4) Material support: financial aid, flexible loan arrangements and emergency loans. 5) Identity support. Linking students to others who share similar needs; self-help opportunities; support groups and community-building activities; high value of diversity and cultural affiliation.

Annotated Bibliography

The study found no differences between treatment and control outcomes for their intervention program.

In the chapter ‘Student development and its implications for retention’ the authors assert that supportive services assist students in their development into committed students who persist. “The basis of student development lies in a student’s mastery of the role of the student.” Once students understand what is expected of them and how to have successful educational outcomes they are much more able to manage their own learning experience. They grow beyond the academic foundations to purposeful learning and then to autonomous learning. “As the students evolve their persistence increases and retention risks decrease.” They further stress the importance of the teaching staff as well as counseling staff thinking proactively about student development.

Olson, M.A. (1990). Characteristics of students on academic probation. *Community Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice* 14 (4), 331-336.

The purpose of the study was “to increase awareness of particular academic problems of students on probation” and to evaluate if special staff contacts assisted in changing academic status. From 283 students placed on academic probation, a random sampling selected 100 of these for receiving extra college staff support. 33 of this number actually participated in the staff support program. Another random sampling from the remaining 183 students created a control group of 34 students. Three forms of data were evaluated in the study.

- Survey results identifying general and specific factors that might affect performance.
- Records documenting student contact with advisors.
- Changes in both semester grades and also probation status.

These general factors that might affect studies were surveyed.

- Finances
- Health and Social Life
- Study Skills
- Transportation
- Unclear Goals
- Family Responsibilities
- Work Responsibilities
- Feel Out of Place

Annotated Bibliography

The majority of students who withdrew were single, non-traditional college age, part-time, unemployed female students, not involved in developmental coursework.

The primary result of the study showed that “the differences between treatment and control outcomes lend no support to the intervention program.” The authors note that the study’s result may have been affected by the small number of participants in the treatment group and also by the issue of creating good advising conditions in such a short period of time.

Price, L.A. (1993). *Characteristics of early student dropouts at Allegany Community College and recommendations for early intervention (Research/Technical Report 143)*. Cumberland, MD: Allegheny Community College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED361051)

This study at a Maryland community college focused on the student records of 84 students (total student population was 2,999) who withdrew from the college after only three weeks of attendance in the fall of 1992 and another 88 students (total student population was 2,810) who did the same in the 1993 spring semester. The purpose of the project was two fold: one was to define common characteristics of these early leaving students, and two, to discover what types of early intervention could be utilized to increase academic persistence in students.

After examination of the data, it was found that the majority of these withdrawing students were single, white, non-traditional college age, part-time, unemployed female students, not involved in developmental coursework. A slight majority were in a non-degree or general studies programs.

The early intervention approaches that were recommended by this study included:

- Creation of a Women’s Center.
- Establishment of a freshman seminar.
- Development of a work study program, college funded.
- Establishment of a faculty development program.
- Creation of an orientation program.
- Establishment of additional student organizations, focused on students with the characteristics noted above and who are most likely to withdraw from school very early in the semester.

Annotated Bibliography

Important variable for the successful students returning from suspension:

- Academic skills
- Motivation – “Incentive”

Early identification and support of students on academic probation is the most effective way of helping student them graduate.

75% are First Time probation students.

Santa Rita, E. (1998). Characteristics of successful students readmitted following academic suspension. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 22, 519-529.

The author investigated the usefulness of 50 variables for successful performance of students who were back in the college program after academic suspension. Variables included placement test scores, educational history, biographical items and student opinions about factors involved in their academic failure. These primary conclusions were determined. For those students with average high school success and average placement scores,

- Certain academic skills are important.
- Past academic record appears unimportant.
- The general factor labeled “incentive” appears to be “important in the attainment of passing grades upon readmission.”

Spurling, S. and Gabriner, R. (2002). Students on academic probation at City College of San Francisco. ERIC #ED481773.

This study reported information about the characteristics of probation students at City College in San Francisco (CCSF). They report 9-10% of students are on probation and most are men. The findings were

- Students between the ages 18-25 with two basic skills placements are the most likely group to be on probation.
- 75% are on probation for the first time.
- 2/3 of the students remained on academic probation until leaving college.
- First time probation students on financial aid were more likely to leave college in good standing than those who do not receive aid.
- CCSF programs help students get off probation.
- Early identification and support of students on academic probation is the most effective way of helping these students graduate with a clear record.

Annotated Bibliography

More probation students worked compared to students in good standing.

Trombley, C.T. (2000). Evaluating students on probation and determining intervention strategies: A comparison of probation and good standing students. *Journal of College Student Retention, 2,3, 239-251.*

This study at Los Angeles Southwest College sought to define the differences between students on probation and those in good standing. A questionnaire addressing GPA information, demographic information, and employment and family status data was complete by 208 probationary students and 138 in good standing students. These students were also asked to choose one factor or issue that contributed most to their being on academic probation. The choices were:

- No motivation
- No interest
- Not enough time
- Classes too difficult
- Personal problems
- Other (student could write in a response)

Findings included:

- More probation students worked compared to students in good standing.
- More students on probation worked full-time in comparison to the control group.
- Probationary students had a lower high school GPA than those in good standing.
- Students on probation were more likely to have children in the household than those in good standing.

The author recommended two issues that should be addressed in future research.

- For students on probation and those in good standing, what income level is involved? Level of income may require probationary students to work more hours.
- For either category of student, how many were first generation college students? Study habits and emphasis may be new information and not understood by other family members.

Annotated Bibliography

Unsuccessful female students attributed their failure to external factors.

“Research has demonstrated that students in academic jeopardy often have significant intrapersonal as well as interpersonal difficulties.”

Winn, T.D. (1995). Attributional differences between successful and unsuccessful college students on academic probation. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. 57 (02), 582.

This study involving 73 probationary students at an Oklahoma regional university focused on the differences between those who succeeded at end of the probationary semester and those who did not succeed. Findings included:

- Unsuccessful female students attributed their failure to external factors more than did unsuccessful males, possibly suggesting that, as achievement issues increase in females, differences between males and females decrease.
- For the successful females, “attributions for success were more stable and internal than were attributions for failure.”
- Lack of these differences in the male students may show that female students may exhibit a greater tendency toward self-evaluation and also the ability to accommodate new information.
- It was also shown that students with ACT scores 19 or higher did better during the probationary semester than those with scores below 19 on the ACT.

Wlazelek, B.G. and Coulter, L.P. (1999). The role of counseling services for students in academic jeopardy: A preliminary study. *Journal of College Counseling*, 2, 33-41.

This study examined the impact of an academic counseling approach implemented by counseling center staff for students in academic jeopardy. Participants were 414 undergraduate students placed on academic warning and probation. Students who participated in counseling demonstrated significantly greater increases in GPA than did students who had not received counseling. The study outlined the nature of academic counseling and the role of the counselors to:

- Assess the nature of the problem, develop an initial plan for responding to current academic difficulties and provide information.
- Explore the possible causes for the low grades/difficulties, including issues such as adjustment to the university, study habits, career plans, motivation, financial status, personal problems, and family concerns.
- Recommend next steps, further academic counseling or referral to other services.

Annotated Bibliography

Results suggested the need for support of at-risk students with study skills teaching and remedial programs.

The authors stated that “research has demonstrated that students in academic jeopardy often have significant intrapersonal as well as interpersonal difficulties. Professional counselors might have been especially prepared to identify such difficulties and to help students deal with them by providing appropriate interventions, assistance, and referrals.” (p.38). The conclusion suggested the potential benefits of the counseling center providing academic counseling:

- This type of intervention provides an important service and links the counseling center with a population of students who may be in need of its services but who are unlikely to initiate the contact.
- By providing academic counseling, the counseling center ties its services more directly to the primary mission of colleges and universities...such a linkage may be especially valuable in increasing the visibility and viability of the campus counseling center.

Yaworski, J. (1998). Why do students succeed or fail? A case study comparison. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 29, 1, 57.*

Two at risk students ended up with two very different results after their first year of college. One was placed on academic probation at the end of the year, having a negative self-image and selecting social activities over study time. The other student achieved the Dean’s List at the end of the year with the ability to set goals, manage time and develop effective study methods. This case study comparison suggests that “learning disabilities do not seem to influence success as much as personal discipline and attitude.”

Yaworski, J., Weber, R. and Ibrahim, N. (2000). What makes students succeed or fail? The voices of developmental college students. *Journal of College Reading and Learning, 30, 2, 195.*

This study involved 21 “at risk” students attending a small, private, four year, Liberal Arts college in New England. Through the use of two one hour in-depth interview sessions with each student, the researchers sought to build a grounded theory of success by revealing what the students themselves thought was necessary for success – what factors, what characteristics and/or what behaviors were involved.

Annotated Bibliography

Lack of personal motivation was blamed for low achievement.

Though all students in the study group had similar quantitative achievement measures prior to attending college, as semesters passed, approximately half of the group had achieved above average GPAs and the rest were now on academic probation.

The high achieving students identified these factors for success.

- Class attendance.
- Assignment completion.
- Viewing of instructors as experts.
- Creation of an organized study routine.
- Acquisition and use of a variety of study skill approaches.
- Assumption of responsibility for their own learning.

The low achievers felt too that these factors were important for success but did not generally use them, blaming a lack of personal motivation for the divergence. The authors identify several theories of motivation for possibly explaining this circumstance.

- Lack of interest or a lack of knowledge about strategic approaches. Interest generates several information processing abilities or paths.
- Feeling of powerlessness for motivating themselves for academic activity.
- Lowered expectations due to failure with sometimes the end result that the person just stops trying completely.

Results of this study suggest that support of at-risk students may need to involve additional paths in addition to study skills teaching and remedial programs. Such assistance could:

- Target the lack of motivation toward academic work that some experience.
- Focus on improving students' ability for self-regulation.
- Create a positive academic self-concept in students.
- Develop a sense of self-efficacy in the students
- Work to lessen students' fear of failure, creating an attitude or environment where success becomes associated with strategic effort.

Annotated Bibliography

The number of students who returned to school was much greater for students counseled prior to leaving than those who were not counseled.

Counseling Services and Student Retention

Prepared in part by the Retention Task Force of the Association of Minnesota Community and Technical College Counselors (AMCTCC).

Giddan, N. S. and Weiss, S.J. (1990). Costs and effectiveness of counseling center dropout prevention, *Journal of College Student Development, 31, 100-107.*

The article argued for and demonstrated a foundation of better cost estimates for college counseling. It argued that Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) may not really be possible when dealing with college counseling, but Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) would seem possible with better cost estimates and more persuasive proof of effective college counseling.

The author discussed whether retaining students by counseling is less costly and more effective than recruiting, admitting, and enrolling them. The article looked at whether recruitment or counseling is of greater value in reducing dropouts and the cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) is determined to be the technique of choice. Applying CEA to retention and admissions programs was considered important.

- Key aspects included looking at the effect of college counseling on student attrition through intermediate variables. A distinct process of decision making, as students achieve insights and make appropriate changes, is that the student may decide to stay, leave, or return to college. Using costs of the counseling program in relation to monetary benefit of persistence or years of additional college may obscure the complexity of counseling effectiveness.
- The authors discussed cost analysis on data from a 5-year period of an experimental group of 535 freshmen who were individually counseled and a base-rate group equalized to 535 freshmen who were not counseled in the same center. Among the “experimentals,” 116 left school and 80 returned, for a net loss of 36 students. For the base-rate group, 138 left and 17 returned, for a net loss of 121. The net increase in enrollment for counseled students over those who did not receive counseling then is 85 students.
- The side benefit to the counseling process related to student concerns related to personal, social or career and was independent of effects on students leaving or returning to school.

Annotated Bibliography

Although there was no clear indication that counseling increased grades, there was a suggestion that it did affect retention with freshmen and seniors.

Illovsky, M.E. (1997). Effects of counseling on grades and retention. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 12, 1, 29-44.*

This study focused on the relationship between various aspects of counseling and their effect on student grades and retention, comparing students who received such services (580) and those in the general student population (10,633). Primary findings were:

- While study skills training improved grades, general counseling and career counseling did not do so.
- Study results indicated that counseling did have an effect on retention, “having a differential effect on different groups.” Although there was no clear indication that counseling increased grades, there was a suggestion that it did affect retention with freshmen and seniors.

The authors review of the professional literature about how counseling impacts grades and retention of college students included the following suggestions:

- “Students whose career choices are consistent with their Holland codes persist at higher rates than undecided students” (Wiley & Magoon, 1982).
- “Retention of students is more likely among those who were committed to goals.” (Lenning, Sauer & Beal, 1980).
- “Commitment to career goals leads to higher grades.” (Barak & Rabbi, 1982).

Noel, Levitz, Saluri, et.al. (1986) *Increasing Student Retention.* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

The authors identify and discuss numerous topics relating to student persistence that includes the whole-campus perspective. The selection for Counseling Services in particular, identified essential activities:

- Making a personal connection with students to help them clarify their purposes for attending college;
- Affirming their abilities, self-worth and uniqueness;
- Helping them identify and overcome obstacles to achieve their goals;
- Helping students “resolve personal problems and interpersonal conflicts and gain greater control of themselves, their time, and emotional reactions.”
- Fostering a supportive environment that satisfies the belonging needs of students.

Annotated Bibliography

91% felt their academic performance had improved after counseling.

Counselors play a central role in retention.

Rickinson, B. (1998). The relationship between undergraduate student counseling and successful degree completion. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23, 1, 95-102.

This four-year study explored the relationship between undergraduate counseling and successful degree completion at an institution in the UK looking primarily at first and last year students. First year students (n=15) who responded to a questionnaire and contacted the counseling department for an appointment received the following intervention:

- Initial individual session to determine issues
- Referral to a tutor when appropriate
- Attendance at a workshop series (four ½ day sessions) that focused on study skills, interpersonal skills, stress management & oral and presentation skills
- A review counseling session

Eleven students completed a 3-year program and 4 completed a 4-year program. Of the final year students (n=43) who responded to a questionnaire that looked at the impact of attending counseling:

- 91% felt their academic performance had improved after counseling
- 98% felt that counseling had allowed them to deal more effectively with their problems
- All students completed their programs.

Santa Rita, E. (1995). Focus on retention: Proposed mission of general counseling into the 21st Century. Bronx Community College, N.Y. Dept. of Student Development. ED 390 476, JC 960 055.

- This is a good article with many practical suggestions to help with retention. It is suggested by the author that counselors play a central role in retention and that retention strategies can be categorized into four main goal areas
 - Sorting students into categories or groups. This would divide students into meaningful subsets (students at risk, undecided students, monolingual students, etc.).
 - Connecting students to the institution. This would encourage attachments between the students and the college.
 - Supporting students in meeting their living needs. These strategies attempt to address and resolve personal and environmental issues.
 - Transforming students and/or institution. These strategies would move students toward becoming committed, involved, active and motivated individuals.

Annotated Bibliography

Academic and personal counseling interventions showed a positive impact on retention.

Sharkin, B.S. (2004). College counseling and student retention: Research findings and implications for counseling centers. *Journal of College Counseling, 7, 2, 99-110.*

- The author reviewed findings from studies on the impact of college counseling on retention and addresses implications for counseling centers. The author asserts that counseling centers should produce retention-related data but at the same time argues against their use as the sole means of assessing counselor center efficacy.
- Studies were divided into categories. Those that studied counseling for retention-related concerns (academic oriented session) found that counseling intervention showed a positive impact on retention. Most of the psychological counseling interventions showed a very positive correlation between counseling intervention strategies and retention as well. One study that examined the correlation between the number of psychological counseling sessions and retention seemed to show that there was a positive impact but that students who had more than six counseling sessions did not show additional improvement.
- Studies showed that social and emotional adjustment difficulties were found to predict attrition as well as or better than academic adjustment difficulties. Stress-related coping strategies had a direct effect on intent to reenroll.
- Academic counseling is more likely to be perceived as having a direct impact on retention because it tends to be designed with retention as a goal. In contrast, it can be more challenging to directly link psychological counseling with retention.
- Additionally, it is argued that not all retention is desirable. In some instances, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of remaining in school can be most beneficial for the student. “Given the unique and complex role of college counselors, retention alone is inadequate as a measure of counseling effectiveness.

Annotated Bibliography

Higher annual retention rates for counseled students.

Turner, L. & Berry, T. (2000). Counseling center contributions to student retention and graduation: A longitudinal assessment. *Journal of College Student Development* 4, 6, 627-637.

- After a review of research related to students “leaving school because of personal reasons rather than academic difficulties” and higher retention of counseled students compared to non-counseled students (on wait lists or no-shows), this study further compares the retention and graduation rates of counseled students to the overall student body over a 6-year study period.
- The results indicated that the annual retention rate (fall to fall) for counseled students was 70.9% vs. 58.6% in the general student population and for eventual retention (return enrollment within 6 years) it was 77.2% vs. 67.9% respectively (both at $p < .001$). Although there was not a statistical difference in graduation rates between the two groups, this result is promising since the counseled students had reported that their personal problems were interfering with their academic progress.
- The article concludes by stating the importance of counseling centers to be involved in assessing services and the impact on retention.