College Student Disengagement based on Motivation and Values Toward their Education

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Introduction

- Engagement leads to academic achievement (Kuh, 2003; Johnson, Wardlow, & Graham, 2009)
- Disengagement is related to motivation (Skinner & Belmont, 1993, AL-Bataineh, David, Hamann, & Wiegel, 2000)
- Engagement is often measured with a global perspective (NSSE) (Kuh, 2003, Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005)
- Identifying motivation of students toward earning their college education could help educators understand student disengagement from classroom activities.
Purpose and Objectives

Describe classroom disengagement through students’ motivation for acquiring a degree and values toward their college education.

1) Describe personal motivation toward schooling.
2) Describe personal values toward education.
Framework (Schunk, 2012)

- **Pre-task**
  - Goals (3, 4)
  - Expectations (3, 4)
  - Self-efficacy & Outcome
  - Values (2)
  - Philosophy toward schooling
  - Affects
  - Needs (1)
  - Social Support

- **Beginning of Class**
  - Observable student motivational and engagement behaviors

- **During Task**
  - **Instructional Variables**
    - Teacher, feedback, materials, equipment
  - **Contextual Variables (4)**
    - Peers, Environment

- **Change in Student Environment**
  - Interference from technology items
  - Change in motivations
  - Style of instruction (teacher behavior)

- **Personal Variables (4)**
  - Knowledge construction
  - Skill acquisition
  - Self-Regulation
  - Choice of activities
  - Effort (5)
  - Persistence (5)

- **Post-task**
  - Attributions (6)
  - Goals (3, 4)
  - Expectations (3, 4)
  - Affects
  - Values (2)
  - Needs (1)
  - Social Support

- **Student Decision to Engage or Disengage**

- **Impact Future Classroom Interaction (+ or -)**
Framework

Pre-task
- Goals (3, 4)
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Beginning of Class
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**Methods**

- Descriptive study
- Inductively created instrument  
  (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005; Kuh, 2003)
- Six Point Likert-type scale
- Pilot test (.86 and .77)
- N = 129

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freshmen</th>
<th>Sophomores</th>
<th>Juniors</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 17</td>
<td>n = 38</td>
<td>n = 44</td>
<td>n = 30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Study Orientation

- **Motivation**
  - Importance of educational activities and engagement in college courses

- **Value**
  - Attendance, participation, attentiveness, and personal assessment
Sample of Items

- **Motivation**
  - I am in college to only obtain a degree.
  - I am engaged in the courses directly related to my major. (vs. general education courses)

- **Value**
  - Attending class is important.
  - I attempt to apply course material to enhance my learning.

*Note.* Six point Likert-type Agree/Disagree Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree.
Findings

Student motivation and value toward schooling ($N = 129$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Total ($N = 129$)</th>
<th>Class Mean Scores</th>
<th>Freshmen $M$ (SD)</th>
<th>Sophomore $M$ (SD)</th>
<th>Junior $M$ (SD)</th>
<th>Senior $M$ (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Toward Schooling</td>
<td>4.59 (.59)</td>
<td>4.85 (.53)</td>
<td>4.59 (.57)</td>
<td>4.61 (.53)</td>
<td>4.40 (.60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Value Toward Their Education</td>
<td>4.58 (.67)</td>
<td>4.93 (.46)</td>
<td>4.54 (.63)</td>
<td>4.63 (.61)</td>
<td>4.36 (.78)</td>
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</table>

- Motivation and value toward schooling was highest with Freshmen; Lowest with Seniors.
Findings, cont.

- Seniors reported less importance to become well educated and more toward just obtaining a degree.
- Freshmen more motivated toward success in GECs.
- Freshmen perceived attendance as participation.
- Seniors found class attendance less important.
Conclusions & Recommendations

- Decreased motivation toward lower level courses
  - Potentially not as engaged throughout course activities

- Changing classroom composition: Students entering courses at various points in their degrees
  - Make learning real for the audience
Conclusions & Recommendations

- Advising Considerations
  - Encourage earlier scheduling
  - Foundational knowledge important

- Paint a Picture:
  - Further description of student’s motivational and value orientation
  - Incorporate Behavioral Observational Instrument

- One course, Refined instrumentation, End of Spring Semester
Framework (Schunk, 2012)

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- **Observation and Decision to Engage or Disengage**

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Impact Future Classroom Interaction (+ or -)
Questions?

AEL
Department of Agricultural Education & Leadership