Research supports holistic view to inform decisions that drive student success

A growing body of research shows that students’ noncognitive skills and behaviors are just as important as their academic achievement in determining whether they will succeed in college.\(^1\)\(^2\) Strong noncognitive skills and effective cocurricular strategies can help compensate for certain deficiencies in academic achievement.

The SuccessNavigator® assessment measures the critical factors that influence incoming student success — academic skills, commitment, self-management and social support. A recent ETS research study shows that adding this noncognitive assessment to placement tests can help identify those students who might benefit from course acceleration. By both shortening the path to college-level courses and identifying students who require additional support, institutions can improve students’ academic success. More than 150 colleges and universities now use the SuccessNavigator assessment to help their students succeed.

**Research study snapshot**

The study’s demographically diverse sample consisted of 1,549 students enrolling in mathematics courses at a large, urban community college system for the Spring 2014 semester. Students completed a course placement test and the SuccessNavigator assessment before being placed into one of four math levels (college, pre-college, remedial math 1 or remedial math 2). If students scored just below any of the three cut scores, they were placed in a “decision zone.” Then, if their SuccessNavigator math acceleration indicator — which includes noncognitive factors and high school GPA — was green, they were accelerated into the higher-level course (**n**=306). These students were compared to the group of students that scored above the course placement test cut scores (**n**=336).

**Results show that the SuccessNavigator assessment supports acceleration**

In the recent ETS study, no statistically significant differences were observed between students who were accelerated into higher-level courses based on their SuccessNavigator acceleration indicator and those students who were placed into a course based on placement test scores alone.\(^3\)

**Give at-risk students the support they need**

Students placed in developmental courses often lose motivation, face financial strain and drop out of college. Following the SuccessNavigator acceleration recommendations to mainstream students who have strong noncognitive skills can help increase student persistence. Colleges must intervene early to give at-risk students the guidance they need to stay in school. The SuccessNavigator assessment helps identify those students and provides a specific action plan to ensure they have the tools they need to succeed.
Set your students on the path to graduation

It’s simple to implement the SuccessNavigator assessment at your school to give your students the best chance for success:

1. Have your incoming students take your placement tests and the SuccessNavigator assessment.
2. Create a “decision zone” for students just below placement test cut score bands.
3. For those students in your decision zone, use the SuccessNavigator course acceleration recommendation based on a student’s noncognitive abilities and any academic markers such as ACT® or SAT® scores to help guide your placement decision.

Placement Test Scores + SuccessNavigator Recommendation

Improve retention and completion rates as early as your next incoming class

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