How do First Generation College Students Seek Classroom Performance Feedback: A Conceptual Framework

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Agenda

• Introduction
• Motivation & Gap
• Theory
• Research Model
• Implications
• Measurement Scales
• Questions & Comments!
Introduction
First Generation Student (FGS)

- A college or university student from a family where no parent or guardian has earned a baccalaureate degree (Choy, 2001).
FGS: And the Breaking of Traditions  (Tenzini et al. 1994)

• For FGS students, however, “going to college constituted a major disjunction in their life course . . . They were breaking, not continuing a family tradition”  (p. 63, emphasis in the original).
FGS: Trend

Figure 1a. Proportion of First-Generation College Students Among Entering First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen (1971-2005)

Reference: Saenz et al. 2007
FGS vs. Non-FGS: Lower GPA

Figure 13. Average GPA in High School (B+ or higher)

Note: Data are weighted to reflect a national normative population of first-time, full-time freshmen at four-year institutions.

Reference: Saenz et al. 2007
FGS vs. Non-FGS: **Heightened concern for financing the College**

Reference: Saenz et al. 2007
FGS vs. Non-FGS
Low Academic Confidence

Figure 14. Self-ratings on Academic Confidence

Reference: Saenz et al. 2007
FGS vs. Non-FGS: Driven more by the aspirations for financial well-being

Figure 18. Changing Student Values

Reference: Saenz et al. 2007
FGS as opposed to non-FGS are more motivated to get a better job and to make more money!

Figure 7. Very Important Reasons to go to College:
Financial/Career Motivations

Reference: Saenz et al. 2007
FGS: General Characteristics

- Less likely to live on campus
- Less likely to develop relationships with faculty members
- Less likely to perceive faculty as being concerned about their development
- Work more hours off campus (Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Terenzini et al. 1996)
- Less likely to develop strong relationships with other students
- Less likely to become involved in campus clubs and organizations (Billson & Terry, 1982; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Terenzini et al., 1994; Terenzini et al., 1996).
- Less satisfied with the campus environment (Terenzini et al., 1996)
- Lower educational aspirations (Tenzini et al. 1996)
- Have less encouragement from families (Terenzini et al. 1996)
- Hesitate to become involved in campus life (Terenzini et al. 1994).
FGS and The Lack of “Capital”

• Students with more educated parents tend to have an advantage over their First-generation peers in navigating the higher education landscape due to their greater access to financial, informational, and social family relationships and social networks.

• Cultural Capital: “Degree of ease and familiarity that one has with the ‘dominant’ culture of a society” (Bills, 2000, p. 90).

• Social Capital: Social capital is a form of capital that resides in relationships among individuals that facilitate transaction and the transmission of different resources (Pascarella et al. 2004, p. 252).
Motivation & Gap
Motivation

• More and More First Gen Students (FGS):
  • Students today are different from their counterparts of three and four decades ago. Women have outnumbered men for more than 15 years, and the participation rates for members of historically underrepresented groups have made impressive gains. Many of these “new” students are the first in their families to attend college (Carnevale & Fry, 2000; Schroeder, in press; Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996).

• 2 of 3 Jobs Require Higher Education:
  • The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates that two out of three jobs created between 2006 and 2015 will require education or training beyond a high school diploma (http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Learn-About/21st-Century/On-beyond-high-school.html last accessed 9/13/2012) Unfortunately, a disproportionately low number of first-generation students succeed in college.

• Little Is Known About the College Experiences, Cognitive and Psychosocial Development of FGS during College:
  • Although we appear to know much about first-generation college students with respect to their academic preparation, transition to postsecondary education, and progress toward degree attainment, surprisingly little is known about their college experiences or their cognitive and psychosocial development during college (Pascarella et al. 2004, Pike and Kuh 2005)
Research Theory
Cultural Capital Theory
(Pascarella et al. 2004, Bourdieu 1986, Coleman 1988),

• FGS are likely to enter college with a lower stock of cultural/social capital than their peers (Pascarella et al. 2004).

• Their academic and social engagement will act in a compensatory manner providing stronger incremental impacts on cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes.
Cultural Capital Theory

• “First-generation students perhaps benefit more from their academic experiences than other students because these experiences act in a compensatory manner and thus contribute comparatively greater incremental increases in first-generation students’ stock of cultural capital” (Pascarella et al. 2004, p. 280)

• “[F]irst-generation students derived greater outcome benefits from extracurricular involvement and peer interaction than other students” (Pascarella et al. 2004, p. 278)
Academic Aspirations

- FGS who aspire to a bachelor’s degree are twice as likely to persist as their peers with advanced degree aspirations (Somers et al. 2004).
Learning Goal Theories

• Dweck (1986): Individuals with a learning goal orientation seek feedback whether they are performing well or poorly, while performance goal oriented individuals prefer to seek feedback only when performing well.

• Payne et al. (2007) suggested that knowledge of expectations may moderate the performance-prove goal orientation-feedback-seeking relationship.
Research Model
Feedback strategies lead to Improved academic performance Geddes 2009
Nicholls (1975): Learning goal-oriented individuals use self-referents (e.g., examining their current performance with their previous performance)
Nicholls (1975): Performance goal oriented individuals use external referents (e.g., examining their performance in relation to others’ performance).

Enjoy when others in class are aware of how well I am doing.
Avoid a show of low ability
First Gen as opposed to NonFGS

Conceptual Research Model

- Learning Goal Orientation
- Performance Prove Goal Orientation
- Performance Avoid Goal Orientation

- Instructor Inquiry
- Online Grade book Monitoring
- Peer Inquiry
- Person Monitoring

GPA
First Gen as opposed to NonFGS

Conceptual Research Model

Learning Goal Orientation
Performance Prove Goal Orientation
Performance Avoid Goal Orientation

Instructor Inquiry
Online Grade book Monitoring
Peer Inquiry
Person Monitoring

GPA
Aspiration for the Bachelor's Degree

Social Engagement

Academic Engagement

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Conceptual Research Model
Aspiration for the Bachelor's Degree

Social Engagement

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Conceptual Research Model
Implications
Theoretical Implications

• More research is needed to understand better the causal connections related to the academic success of FGS (Pike and Kuh 2005).

• Most studies are based out of large national data sets
  • College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ), Pike and Kuh 2005
  • National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS); \(n = 24,262\), Somers et al. 2004)

• Single-institution studies are better situated to consider “confounding” factors (Pike and Kuh 2005, p. 291).
Practical Implications

• Could highlight the importance of nonacademic skills needed to persist such as interacting with faculty and students and participating in campus events.

• Suggests interventions
  • What FGS could do after they arrive on campus
  • What Colleges can do to support the Success of their FGS
Measurement Scales
FGS Status

• I consider myself as first generation college student?
  (First generation college student is one whose parents /
   guardians have not attained a college degree)
  • Yes
  • No
Academic Aspirations

- Adapted from Rinn 2007
- Aspirations. Educational aspirations to be measured by having participants indicate the highest postsecondary degree they planned to receive.
- Associate’s Degree (1)
- Bachelor’s Degree (2)
- Masters’ Degree (3)
- Doctorate Degree (Ph.D., MD, JD etc.) (4)
Academic Engagement (Pike and Kuh 2005)

- Academic engagement was represented by four scales:
  - library experiences,
  - active and collaborative learning,
  - writing experiences, and
  - Interactions with faculty.
Social Engagement (Pike and Kuh 2005)

• Social engagement was represented by three scales:
  • personal experiences,
  • student acquaintances, and
  • topics of conversations.
Instructor Inquiry

• I talk to the instructor to get additional information about my classroom performance
  • (Never / all the time)

• In order to find out how well I am performing in class, I talk to my instructor
  • (Never / all the time)
Peer Inquiry

• I talk to my fellow students to get additional information about my classroom performance
  • (Never / all the time)

• In order to find out how well I am performing in class, I talk with my class mates
  • (Never / all the time)
Person Monitoring

• I pay attention to how my instructor acts toward me to figure out where I stand in class
  • (Never / all the time)

• I compare what I’m doing with other students in class
  • (Never / all the time)

• When it comes to observing the fellow students who are rewarded or acknowledged by the instructor for doing a good job
  • (I never observe such students / I always observe such students)

• When it comes to knowing how well other students are doing on class assignments
  • (I never pay attention to any such thing / I always observe any such thing)
Performance Prove Goal Orientation

• When it comes to showing that I can perform better than my fellow students
  • (I always stay away from all such things / I am always ready)
• I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others
  (never / all the time)
• I enjoy when others in class are aware of how well I am doing
  (strongly disagree / strongly agree)
• I prefer to work on projects where
  • (others have no way to know my ability / I can prove my ability to others)
Performance Avoid Goal Orientation

• I would avoid volunteering for a particular part of a group assignment if there was a chance I would appear incompetent
  • (I always stay away from such things / I am always ready)

• I value
  • (avoiding a show of low ability / learning a new skill)

• When it comes to taking on assignments that might reveal I had low ability, the level of my concern is
  • (Very low / very high)

• When it comes to situations in class where I might perform poorly, I almost always tend to
  • (embrace them / avoid them)
Learning Goal Orientation

• When it comes to challenging and difficult assignments, I believe that they
  • Do not enhance my learning at all / enhance my learning

• For me, development of my intellectual abilities is
  • Not at all important / important enough to take risks

• I prefer to work in situations that require a
  • Very low level of ability and talent / very high level of ability and talent

• I prefer to do
  • (Easy assignments / challenging assignments)

• When it comes to opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge
  • (I am not keen about them at all / I always look out for them)

• When it comes to challenging and difficult assignments
  • (I do not enjoy them at all / I enjoy them extremely)
References
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Questions and Comments, Please!