

Spring 2018

Community Engaged Scholarship: Impact on Student Retention and Success

Stacey Henson-Drake
University of Southern Maine

Courtney Caouette
University of Southern Maine

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters

Recommended Citation

Henson-Drake, Stacey and Caouette, Courtney, "Community Engaged Scholarship: Impact on Student Retention and Success" (2018). *Thinking Matters Symposium Archive*. 145.
https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters/145

This Poster Session is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Thinking Matters Symposium Archive by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.

Community Engaged Scholarship: Impact on Student Retention and Success

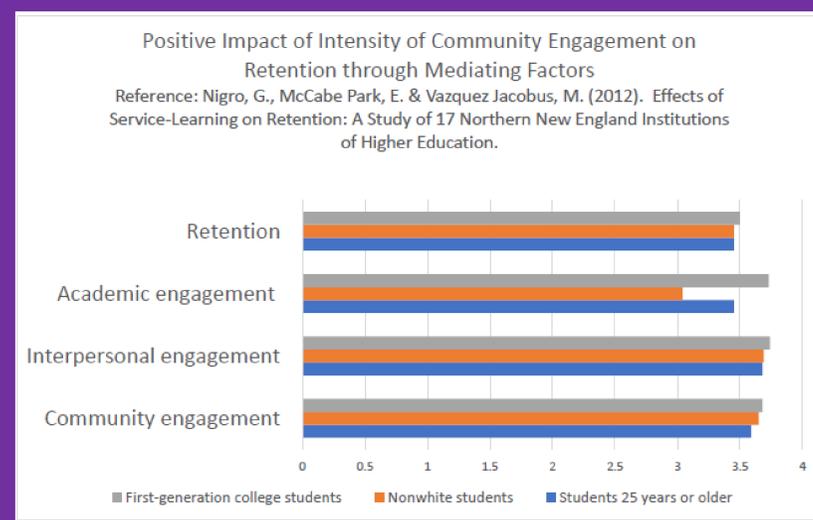
Stacey Henson-Drake, Student Community Engagement Coordinator
 Courtney Caouette, Student Community Engagement Associate
 Michelle Vazquez Jacobus, MSW, J.D. Community Engagement Scholar
 Druker Office of Community Engagement

Introduction

Through experiential learning, community engagement activities contribute to student success. This research investigates the relationship between community engagement and student learning, development, retention and success. Participants are students enrolled in Social and Behavioral Sciences courses with the University of Southern Maine’s Lewiston-Auburn College, and were surveyed at the end of the Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 semesters.

Background

The USM LAC Druker Office of Community Engagement (DOCE) undertakes this research based on anecdotal evidence that supports the hypothesis that community engagement has a positive impact on non-traditional students. Specifically, community-engaged scholarship provides the potential for a number of beneficial experiences: construction of strong relationships; provisions for mentoring; enhancement of student esteem, competency and sense of purpose; and the facilitation of intellectual capacity and growth. This developing research seeks to evidence whether such a relationship exists and to better inform community engagement best practices to enhance the positive relationships between faculty, students and community partners and minimize challenges.

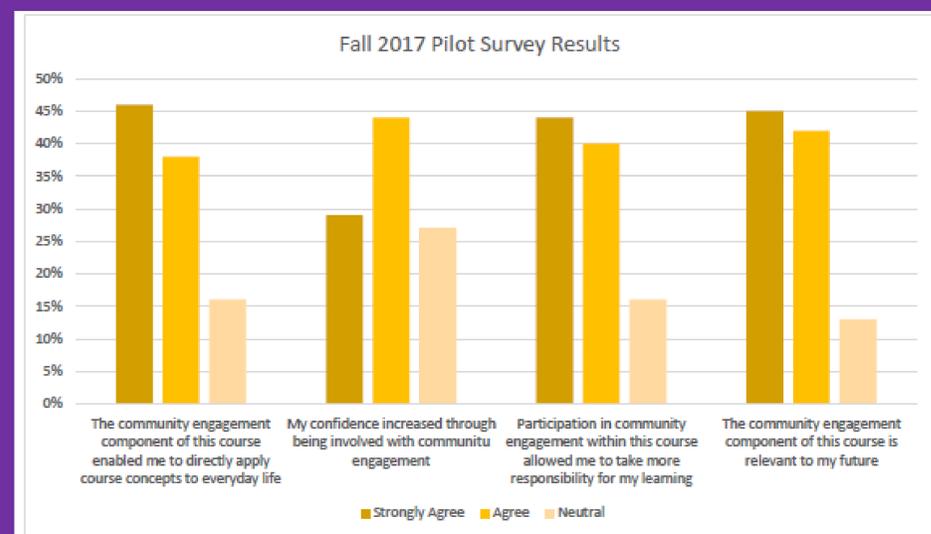


Theoretical Framework

One could quote Confucius; “I hear and I forget -- I see and I remember -- I do and I understand” to eloquently describe the theory of experiential learning. Coker and Porter (2015) describe experiential learning as an evidence based practice that supports student learning, competence, persistence, appreciation of diversity, and professional networks (p. 66). Courses that incorporate community engagement activities as part of course work, are engaged in experiential learning. Community engagement work, at all levels, exposes the student to real-world experiences where they are able to apply course concepts in a meaningful way.

Objectives:

- Determine the relationship between student demographic variables (age, work experience, income, first generation college status, native language, family care responsibilities, etc.) and community engagement experience as they relate to positive outcomes, such as: planned perseverance in college, feelings of belonging, and understanding of course material.
- Better understand the mechanisms and mediating factors by which community engagement activities increase students’ confidence, learning, perseverance and success.
- Determine whether and how community engagement activities contribute to student success, perseverance and well-being at USM.



References

- Coker, J. S., & Porter, D. J. (2015). Maximizing Experiential Learning for Student Success, *Change*, 66-72.
- Nigro, G., McCabe Park, E. & Vazquez Jacobus, M. (2012). Effects of Service-Learning on Retention: A Study of 17 Northern New England Institutions of Higher Education.

Next Steps:

- Conduct the updated survey in the following community engagement courses at the end of the spring 2018 semester:
 - SBS/LOS 430 Applied Social Policy
 - SBS 347 Youth Community & Higher Education
 - SBS 310 Childhood & Society
 - SBS 375 Infant Mental Health
 - LAC 370 Toward Global Ethics
 - SBS 304 Food, Culture & Eating
 - SBS 308 Medical Anthropology
 - SBS 411 Counseling & Psychotherapy
- Present the results of these findings to help support and inform community engagement activities at USM

Special thanks to Susan King in USM’s Office of Academic Assessment for going above and beyond to provide support for this project.