Final Report on SIA Proposal for an On Line Summer Bridge Program
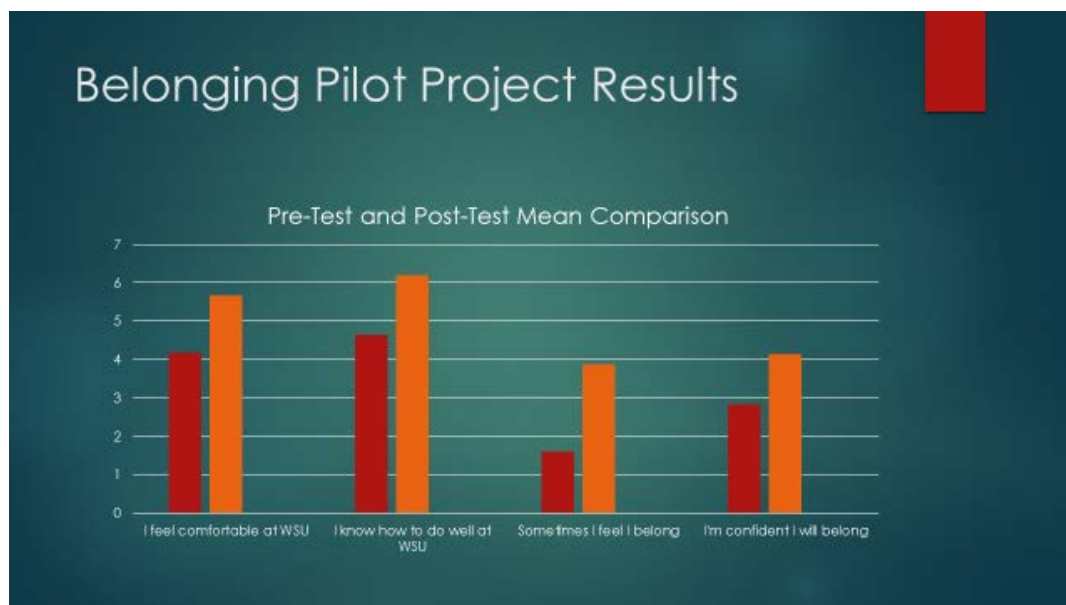
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This is a report on our pilot project in Student Support Services to implement research by Walton and Cohen at Stanford on belonging. Conversations with the authors of this study revealed that it was well suited to an on line bridge program format. Furthermore this work by Walton and Cohen was based on "evidence-based practice" as required by the Department of Education. Our goal was to see if this implementation would work and could be added to our new SSS grant cycle.

20 Participants who were first year students at WSU were recruited to participate in the pilot along with a few upper class students who would be asked to share their experiences of being a first year student through the writing of an Adversity Narrative. The participants were over 50% students of color. They took a pre-test on belonging and then read the Adversity Narratives written by upper class students on how they achieved a sense of belonging at WSU. First year students then wrote their own statements on how they thought they would cope and also recorded their statements on video and took a post-test.
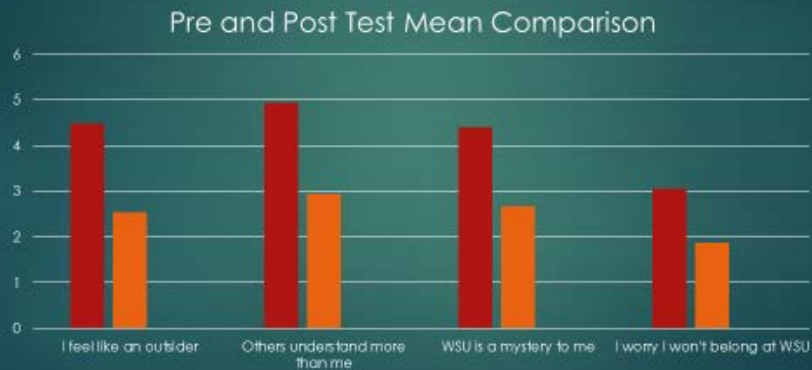
Here is an example of one of the Narratives on Social Adversity: "The thought of coming to college was filled with both excitement and fear. I was excited to start over, but at the same time that terrified me. I wasn't sure if I would make any friends or if people would just like me in general. I was scared that my roommate would hate me and I would be miserable all year. I was worried that college classes would be so much harder than high school. After my first year of college, I realized I had nothing to worry about. Everyone was in the same boat as I was. Everyone is looking for friends and is worried about what to expect. I learned to just keep an open mind. There are just so many ways to find your niche and to fit in, whether it's a club, sport, job, major, or just in your residence hall. As far as classes go, I'm doing great! I learned that if you go to class and do your homework you will be fine. It didn't hurt to make friends in my classes to make it more manageable and fun."

Outcomes

Here are some of the results of the pre and post-tests from participants.

Belonging Pilot Project Results

Pre and Post Test Mean Comparison

(Bar chart showing comparison across four categories: "I feel like an outsider", "Others understand more than me", "WSU is a mystery to me", "I worry I won't belong at WSU")

As you can see the results on every question show improvement in the sense of belonging for each student. Here are some quotes from participants and also attached is on example of a video statement.

Quotes:

▶ "It has helped me to **stay in school** not just to get involved. I was questioning whether or not I was going to continue on my bachelor's path, but when I met this group I signed up for the next semester."

▶ "**I was really scared** entering into school... **It gives me a sense of relief** now that other students struggled with the same thing **and they prevailed.**

Timeline

Fall Semester 2015

- Development of the Narratives on Social Adversity by SSS Upper-Class Students
- Recruitment of SSS First Year Students for the Intervention
- Development of Pre-Test and Post-Test with IPAR

Spring Semester 2016

- Pre-Test administered to First Year Students
- Intervention with First Year Students
- Post-Test with First Year Students

June 7, 2016 - Presentation to ASF Meeting

Assessment Activities and Conclusions

▶ Every question showed improvement from the pre-test to post-test

▶ Student interactions and statements corroborated a greater sense of belonging after the project than before

▶ Stanford results were corroborated: this approach works with students of color. On exit interviews this project improved retention and graduation.

▶ Project roll-out for the incoming first year class at WSU starting at 2016 June Registration later this month.

▶ There is also a D2L format for this project with Flip Grid as a way for students to share their videos with each other. This site is now transitioning to the Summer 2016 On Line Summer Bridget Program. We decided to change the name of it to "Connections."

D2L Course Format for Summer Connections

With the help of Ken Graetz we have created a D2L Course format for Connections including Flip Grid.

Here is a snapshot of what one page of that course looks like. Students will post their videos here.

References:

▶ Walton, G. M. and Cohen, G. L., "A Brief Social-Belonging Intervention Improves Academic and Health Outcomes of Minority Students," Science Vol. 331, pp. 1447-1451, March 18, 2011.

▶ Yeager, D. S. and Walton, G. M. "Social-psychological Interventions in Education: They're not Magic." Review of Educational Research, 81, 267-301. (2011)

▶ Strayhorn, Terrell, "College Students' Sense of Belonging – A Key to Educational Success for all Students," 2012, Routledge

Attachments:

Video of Brett's statement

Raw Data from Pre and Post-Tests