

A Study of Library Behaviors and Perceptions of a Community College's Distance Learners

Cantrell Johnson

Abstract:

Over 1,200 community colleges nationwide enroll over ten million students each year, with more than one in four of these students taking some of their courses at a distance. Many of these post-secondary institutions also struggle to retain and graduate students enrolled as distance learners. In a continuing effort to address college completion gaps, research attempts to identify barriers to success and provide insights on how to decrease college completion gaps. Given post-secondary education's increased focus on students' use of resources beyond the classroom, a logical line of exploration is the link between academic library usage and library aptitudes and attitudes.

This study sought to examine the library behaviors and perceptions of a community college's distance learners. Of interest is the relationship among inexperience, apathy, and anxiety in general as well as differences, if any, among demographic variables of gender, race/ethnicity, and distance from their college.

Ninety-two distance learners completed an abbreviated thirty-item version of the Multidimensional Library Scale (MLAS) developed by D. J. Van Kampen-Breit in 2016. Results were analyzed using chi-square analysis as well as Pearson's correlation using the composite factors of inexperience, apathy, and anxiety.