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Research Proposal: Effects of Class Attendance on Overall Grades

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Effects of Class Attendance on Overall Grades

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One research inquiry that comes to question is whether school attendance has an effect on overall grades made by each student. This question comes to mind for numerous reasons. If students do not miss school does this mean they get better grades because they are learning more or because of their dedication and motivation and low absence levels. Is it that students who miss numerous days of school do not care about their grades or that their grades are lower because they do poorly on tests and assignments?

Some research has already been done on this particular topic. Mekies and Snell (1995) showed that there was in fact a correlation between grades and attendance. They noted that Professor David Romer of the University of California did a study of this particular topic and found that students who often attended classes also got better grades. A better grade is meant to be an A or B grade.

Other research also shows that class attendance affects grades. Research done by Von Blerkom (1992) showed that when class attendance is required of students, the average attendance per day was 82%. When class attendance was not required as part of the students grade the average class attendance dropped to 76%. His study also found that the beginning of the semester showed higher attendance levels than the end of the semester. One theory on this phenomenon is the disengagement/discouragement theory. This theory consists of missing classes leads to poor test grades, which therefore results in discouragement or a dislike of the class.

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Another study stated school attendance as being the number one problem in grade schools. Alpert, Geromini, Kane, Kayne, Klerman, Rose and Weitzman (1986) showed that a large percentage of students were absent in various schools on a given day. Alpert et al. (1986) showed a study of nine schools in the Boston school district. Their study showed that children who missed school excessively and their families were not challenged with obligations or illnesses compared with regularly attending students. Children who missed school had no greater health problems or family obligations than children who attended regularly.

These studies show that school attendance in grade schools as well as undergraduate courses at the college level is a problem our society faces.

Method

Participants

Subjects will consist of 100 undergraduate students at Lindenwood University. The students will be freshmen students at least 17 years of age taking a freshmen level course. This course will not be optional; it will be mandatory for all freshmen at some point in the year. This course will be History 101. Four classes of History 101 will be monitored. Four different teachers will teach each of these four courses to ensure validity. Two of these teachers will be males and two will be females. Ideally, this experiment would hold 25 students in each class. Ideally, the experiment would have 50 female undergraduate students as well as 50 males. However, sex is not a factor, the number of female participants and male participants do not matter.

Each participant will be given an identification number to ensure his or her confidentiality. Their attendance and grade will be paired with the identification number they receive. Their names will never be revealed.

Materials

Materials used in this experiment will consist of an attendance sheet checked everyday by professors monitoring participants. The sheet will consist of all participants in that particular class. The checked sheet will be given to the professors for each day of class. It will have the date on it as well as a box to be checked by the professor if the participant did attend class in that pacific date.

The experimenter will not provide the grading scale. Rather the professor will grade and conduct class in the usual manner in which he/she usually does.

Procedure

The procedure that will be used in this specific experiment will consist of four professors willing to participate in the experiment. These four professors will teach History 101 or another general education course. Once the experimenter recruits these four professors before the semester begins, then the experiment can begin. On the first day of class, the professor will ask the students in the class if they are willing to participate and have their attendance and grades monitored. The first 100 students to agree will be the participants. If the students dropped the class or decided they did not want to participate in the study any longer than their data would not be included in the results.

The experimenter will receive the grades for each participant at the end of the 15-week semester. Ideally, the grades and check sheets for attendance will be turned in the

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last week of classes. The experimenter will put each identification number into one of

three categories. The first category would be rarely missing class (zero, one or two

absences). The second category would be missing class often (three, four or five

absences). The third category would be missing class excessively (six or

more absences). Then the students' grades will be paired with their identification number

and the category in which they fell.

Implications

The hypothesis for this specific experiment is students who missed class two

times or less will be the students who receive higher grades. For my hypothesis to be

supported I will expect that at least 75% of the students who received high grades such as

A's and B's will have missed class less than two times in that specific class. Snell and

Mekies (1995) showed an experiment where students who attended class 95% of the time

were more likely to receive good grades such as A's and B's.

If the hypothesis came to be true, this would mean that by missing numerous days

of class one sacrifices his/her grade. By missing one day of class, each student misses out

on the opportunity to learn new pieces of information. When it is time for the student to

be tested in this information, he/she will not know it therefore doing poorly on the test.

This result would be valuable to our society in that it would make it known to parents to

stress to children at a young age the importance of

education and learning.

If my hypothesis was not supported, meaning that only a small percent of the

participants who missed class rarely received higher grades than my only conclusion

would be that perhaps many participants were ill. This study does not account for why

participants missed class, just that they were not there. Perhaps a better experiment would go into detail about the reasons of the absences. For instance being ill or having a family obligation. Another reason students may miss a lot of class and still receive a high grade could be that a large number of the participants were in sports and their extracurricular activities required them to miss class frequently.

References

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