

Academic Writing for Graduate Study: Class #2

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GRIPS

October 15, 2014

Test Prompts

- **Assignment 1.** Write a paragraph summarizing what you have learned about the effects of financial aid on students. Your summary should describe the overall results of previous research rather than list the results of each individual extract. Your summary must be written in your own words except for key terms and short expressions (2-3 words), which you can borrow from the extracts. Length: 50-100 words.

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- **Assignment 2.** Write a response to the argument below. Base your response on the information in the extracts, not on your personal opinion or experience. Provide citations where necessary. If you wish, you may include in your response the summary you wrote in Assignment 1, either in whole or in part. Your response must be written in your own words except for key terms and short expressions (2-3 words), which you can borrow from the extracts. Minimum length: 250 words.

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Model Answers

Previous research on the effects of financial aid on university students appears to be mixed. Several studies have found a positive effect of financial aid on degree completion and academic performance, especially for female students and undergraduates. Others, however, have reported no effect or weak and non-significant correlations between financial aid and various educational outcomes including college attendance, degree completion, and grades. [62 words]

Model Answers

Previous research has looked at the effect of financial aid on at least three distinct outcomes—commitment to studying (or attendance), the probability of degree completion, and academic achievement. Results have been mixed and appear to depend on a number of variables including the student population, gender, and whether the aid is merit-based or need-based. [55 words]

Model Answers

The research on the effects of financial aid on students has had mixed results. Although some research has shown that grants can increase the number of students who complete a course of study, other research has shown no improvement in attendance or degree completion. Research has shown clearer results for performance increases with several studies finding some positive results from financial aid. However, these positive results are often limited to subgroups of students. [75 words]

Model Answers

Previous research into educational policies has investigated the effect of financial aid on college enrollment, college attendance, college degree completion, and academic achievement. Although some authors have argued for the beneficial effects of financial aid on college students' academic outcomes, the empirical evidence seems to either lack strength or to have yielded mixed results. Furthermore, these studies have identified other interacting variables such as gender, the presence of educational support, and the type of aid, suggesting the complexity of factors influencing college academic performance. In contrast, (*Citation*)'s research synthesis and (*Citation*), based on a relatively large sample and feasible research design, have both found weak effects of financial aid on academic outcomes. Overall, the evidence seems insufficient to support the beneficial effects of this educational policy. [126 words]

Model Answers

The eight abstracts provided for consideration offer a range of findings that populate a broad spectrum. Overall, the findings provide mixed results in which some corroboration was found of a positive correlation between the provision of financial aid and academic outcomes in certain limited contexts, yet enough red flags are present to warrant caution – *caveat emptor*, indeed. To wit, several findings showed “strong consistent evidence” that no salient effect ensued after the provision of financial aid (*Citation*). The studies cited also appeared to employ diverse methodologies that careened from very limited in scope in terms of venue or methodology to meta-analyses that looked at very broad swaths of real estate. Ultimately, the abstracts provided offer a mixed range of results and a smorgasbord of areas in need of further research. [130 words]