Time Spent by Textile Clothing Undergraduate Students: A Pilot Study

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Abstract
Undergraduate curricula in Colleges of Family and Consumer Sciences are placing increased emphasis on critical thinking, interpersonal communication skills, and other life long learning techniques that can be measured with appropriate assessment. Students' lack of preparation in and apathy regarding classroom attendance causes concern among faculty members.

Keywords
time, undergraduates, preparation

Disciplines
Educational Sociology | Higher Education | School Psychology

Comments
Time Spent by Textiles and Clothing Undergraduate Students: A Pilot Study

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Undergraduate curricula in Colleges of Family and Consumer Sciences are placing increased emphasis on critical thinking, interpersonal communication skills, and other life long learning techniques that can be measured with appropriate assessment. While students may be learning how to think creatively, are they developing other life-long success habits such as how to think about and manage their time? Students' lack of preparation in and apathy regarding classroom attendance causes concern among faculty members (Gerdes, 2001). How exactly are our students spending their time?

In this pilot study, 41 Textiles and Clothing (TC) undergraduate students from a Midwestern university agreed to record how they spent their time during a two week period in February 2004. Students were provided with time sheets and were asked to indicate time spent in class, studying, working, exercising, socializing, alone for personal time, watching television, completing extracurricular tasks and hobbies, and sleeping. A category marked "other" provided for all other activities.

Results indicated all except one student attended the university on a full-time basis, 43% were juniors, 57% were seniors, and nearly 87% were employed during the time of the study. Most of the students (87%) were between the ages of 18 and 22, and unmarried (94%). All were female. Based upon aggregate data collected during the study's two-week period, the TC undergraduate students spent approximately the same amount of time sleeping (8-9 hours per night), working (2 hours a day), engaged in extracurricular activities (one-half an hour a day), watching television (2 hours a day), studying (2.5 hours a day), exercising (one-half an hour a day), and for personal time (3 hours a day) during the weekdays and the weekends. While over half of the students (61%) spent more than 10 hours a week working, only 37% reported working in jobs that they considered related to their major. Many (63%) indicated working throughout their college life.

Pearson correlations indicated a significant (p less than 0.05) inverse relationship between the variable time spent working and the variables time spent in class and watching television. Also,
as time spent working increased, the hours spent attending classes decreased. No significant relationship was found between time spent working and time spent studying.

The findings of this pilot study seem to indicate that students who work maybe sacrificing time spent in class rather than other aspects of their lives. This has interesting implications for institutions of higher learning. As the necessity of earning a college degree increases, so too does undergraduate tuition charges (Horn and Malizio, 1996). Students who work at the expense of classroom time may benefit from the flexibility offered by distance education and Web-based instruction. Other results from this study such as the students’ time spent per day socializing and watching television, suggest that TC students have sufficient time to study and prepare for their class work. Students may benefit from guidance on how best to manage their time. Future research directions could include comparing the time spent by these TC students to time spent by undergraduates enrolled in other universities and other majors.

References