
The Impact of School Librarianship on College Success

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Abstract: While numerous studies establish a relationship between the presence of a teacher librarian in K-12 schools with increases in student performance in reading and information literacy (Lance & Kachel, 2018; Lance & Maniotes, 2020; Library Research Service, 2013), the evidence that those skill improvements translate to success in college is still tenuous due to the lack of studies looking at the transition from high school to college. Building on the work of Farmer and Phamle (2021) which found a correlation between the presence of at least a half-time teacher librarian in high school and student GPA in their first year at the university, this study examines credits earned, which are a more important measure of students' progress to successful completion of their college degrees. We limited our data to first-time, first-year students at California State University Northridge (CSUN) under 21. Due to limited data, we excluded students from outside of California, including international students. The independent variable of interest is the staffing level at the student's high school library, including both teacher librarians and other staff, counted in the number of full-time positions. Other control variables include whether the student is eligible for Pell Grants; the student's gender; whether the student's ethnic group has been traditionally underserved in higher education; and whether the student is the first generation in their family to attend college.

There were two significant findings:

1. The more library staffing at the California public high school they attended, the better the GPA of first year college students. The effect of a full-time library staff member is small (about 0.2



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on a 4.0 scale) but highly significant, even when controlling for other aspects of the students' lived experiences.

- 2. The more library staffing at the California public high school they attended, the more credit hours students earned in their first semester at college. The effect of a full-time library staff member is small (about 0.6 credit hours) but highly significant, even when controlling for other aspects of the students' lived experiences.*



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Biographies

Lisa Cheby, the Endowed Education Librarian at California State University, Northridge, has nineteen years experience in K12 education. Her research centers information literacy instruction, school libraries, and AI in education.

Laura Wimberley, Assessment Librarian at California State University Northridge holds a PhD in political science and a Master's of Library & Information Science.