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Do pre-entry interventions such as "aimhigher" impact on student retention and success? : a review of the literature

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Abstract

This paper reviews the potential impact of pre-entry widening access interventions on student retention and success in higher education. It thus addresses two contemporary policy concerns: What is the impact of pre-entry widening access interventions; and how can we improve student retention and success? A review of academic and practitioner literature finds limited research about the impact of pre-entry interventions in general and very little on the impact of pre-entry interventions on students' retention and success in higher education. A review of the research, however, identifies the importance of factors which pre-entry interventions address: pre-entry decision making, expectations about higher education and academic preparation. To date, however, the impact of pre-entry interventions on retention in higher education has been largely ignored. Thus pre-entry activities, such as Aimhigher, should be evaluated for their impact on student retention. The paper offers an outline evaluation framework, including evaluation topics and suggested key performance indicators to

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