

ABSTRACT

Ridenour, M. How Do College Students Define College Preparedness (2015)

This case study utilized grounded theory data collection and analysis methods within the qualitative paradigm to research how college students define college preparedness. The study centered on a large population of students (468 total individuals, representing attendance at 165 different four-year postsecondary institutions), each of whom graduated from the same private high school in Minneapolis, Minnesota between the years 2011 and 2014. A focus group, surveys and intensive interviews were employed to collect data.

The substantive theory that emerged from the data showed that academic skills account for only a fraction of the properties necessary for college preparedness. The majority of what students defined as qualities necessary for postsecondary work transcend the academic realm and are of a psychological nature. Specifically, analysis of the data revealed the following categories of college preparedness: Academic Skills, Self-Management, Self-Discovery and State of Mind.