

ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND ACADEMIC EDUCATION STUDENTS

The current study examines the postsecondary educational and employment outcomes for students participating in academic and vocational curriculum during high school. Data were collected from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), which sampled a large, nationally representative group of eighth-grade students in 1988 and followed them until 2000, 8 years after the typical student graduated from high school. The primary predictor variable for the current study was students' high school curriculum type (academic versus vocational), with gender and family socioeconomic status as covariates. Outcome variables included high school drop-out status, postsecondary education enrollment and graduation/certification, employment status, and income. Binary logistic regressions yielded generally mixed results as to the effectiveness of high school curriculum in predicting subsequent outcomes. Vocational enrollers were less likely to graduate from high school and enroll in or graduate from a postsecondary institution. Long-term employment outcomes were not significantly different for academic and vocational students.

Shannon Kyle Church
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