



Graduate Student Response Following Work in an Interdisciplinary Organization

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Research Questions: Assessing Benefits

The **Decision Center for a Desert City (DCDC)** works to bring research to those whose concern is for moving toward a sustainable Greater Phoenix by making connections across the interface separating scientists and decision makers.

This study is designed to survey past DCDC participants and evaluate their experience as a DCDC graduate student. Survey results will help DCDC directors and personnel to realize how their programs affect student participants, which will then open up future avenues for program evaluations and involvement. The study evaluates 2 exposure metrics and how they reflect the participants' post-participation **attitude, skills, and successes**.

Interdisciplinary Exposure Metrics

Two types of exposures receive rankings to identify the amount of interdisciplinary exposure

1. Work Exposure is the measure for the amount of time a student is a research assistant (RA) or hourly worker (HW) at DCDC. Higher interdisciplinary rankings are associated with longer participation and favors work as an RA over an HW.

2. Degree Program Exposure is the measure for the type of degree program and field the student held while at DCDC. Higher interdisciplinary rankings are associated with PhD over masters programs and interdisciplinary fields.

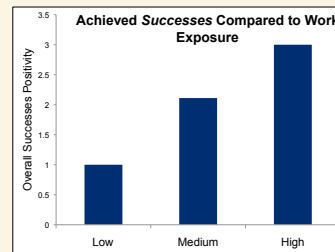
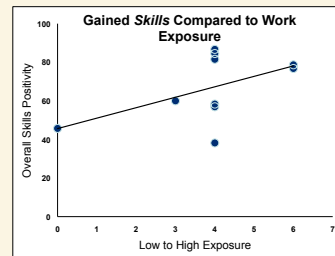
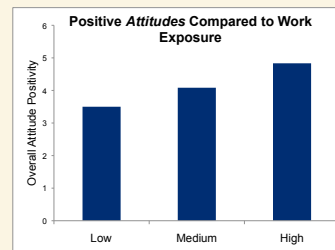


Students have access to the Decision Theater, an interactive, 3D-visualization facility.

Degree of Work Exposure is Proportional to Positive Responses

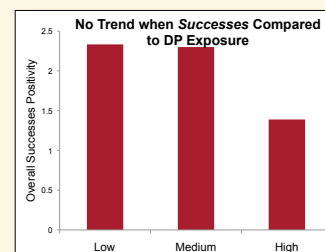
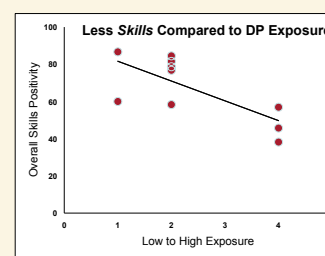
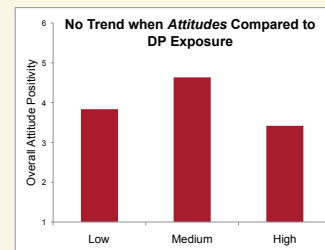
Work Exposure

In all three survey categories, more positive responses were associated with increased **Work Exposure** in DCDC.



Degree Program Exposure

The average degrees of positive responses did not exhibit the same trends across all three survey categories when responses were organized by increasing **Degree Program Exposure**.



Lasting Outcomes of Experience

Greater **Work Exposure** to DCDC was related to:

- More positive attitudes toward DCDC and its impact on participants' research
- More skills gained to help one's own work
- Greater recognition of the impact of DCDC experience on reported professional success, as measured by publications / presentations and received funding.

On the other hand, greater **Degree Program Exposure** did not appear to contribute to more positive attitudes toward DCDC, greater opportunities, or greater successes.

DCDC Exposure Relates to Positive Outcomes for Participants

These first analyses suggest that greater exposure to DCDC may produce positive outcomes for participants. However, the correlational nature of the data requires caution in assuming causation. For instance, it may be that those who benefit from DCDC are more inclined to stay with the program for a longer period. Nonetheless, the data are compatible with the conclusion that DCDC is a beneficial experience for participants.



DCDC provides student researchers the opportunity to present their research to the community.

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