The "Sophomore Slump:" The Invisible Year
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This study examines best practices in preventing the “sophomore slump,” a 60 year-old phenomenon wherein a significant number of students either drop out of college or transfer during their second year of school. Sanchez-Leguelinel sums up the problem this way: “The sophomore year is a particularly challenging time for students who struggle with increased expectations, intensified curriculum, and higher academic standards, which often lead to a disengagement from academic life” (2008). Vuong, et al. add that sophomores differ significantly from all other classes (2010) However, studies found that academic supports decrease for sophomores. Most institutions provide an array of resources to first-year students, leaving sophomore students to feel they are abandoned and ignored (Vuong, Brown-Welty, & Tracz, 2010; Tobolowsky, 2008). Consequently, sophomore students are left to make critical decisions on their own. As sophomore attrition rates increase, more researchers are taking an interest in exploring the needs of these students (Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008). A systematic review of the literature will yield a greater understanding of the needs of students, assess factors that contribute to the “sophomore slump,” and identify best practices for colleges and universities in providing academic supports.