

Retention in Online Classes

Strategies and Solutions

Previous Research

- Research started with traditional classroom.
- Attrition has been a problem across the industry.
- Theories and Methods.

Benefits of On-line Courses

What is in it for Instructor?

- Easy distribution of course materials.
- Flexibility.
- Exploring new teaching methods.
- Learning new technology.
- Can be prepared ahead of time and easily changed.
- You will have time to do other things

Benefits of On-line Courses

What is in it for Students?

- Flexibility of time and place.
- Self Paced.
- Presents multiple chances for review.
- Gives instant feed back (in some cases).
- Interaction with peers (especially for those who are very shy).
- They can have a life too!!!

Benefits of On-line Courses

What is in it for College?

- **Attract a wider array of students.**
- **Cost effective.**
- **Convenience.**
- **Keep up with current innovation to stay in the race.**
- **Additional revenue.**

What is Needed to Succeed?

Faculty

- Understand the difference.
- Ability to transition from classroom to online teaching.
- Teacher-Student sensitivity.
- Well developed courses– Instructional soundness.

What is Needed to Succeed?

Students

- Independent.
- Prerequisites.
- Self motivation.
- Social integration.
- Computer literacy.

AWC statistics.

MODE OF LEARNING	HC*	Completion Rate**	Success Rate***	Average GPA
Interactive Telecommunications Network (ITN)	771	79%	57%	2.24
Mixed Media	1,362	80%	59%	2.46
Regular	18,292	84%	71%	2.89
Telecourses	19	100%	68%	NA
Web	2,624	74%	51%	2.30
GRAND TOTAL	23,068	83%	67%	2.75

Attrition

What is it?

- A gradual, natural reduction in membership.
- We want our attrition rates to go from good to great.
- Concerns: Accreditation, financial, and negative impact on college reputation.

Attrition

Reasons

- 1. Institution- centered reasons:
 - Programs not focused on meeting student needs.
 - Inadequate support.
 - Focus on quantity and not quality.

Attrition

Reasons

- 2. Student- centered reasons:
 - Technology problems.
 - Personal/situational problems.
 - Lack of support.

Attrition

Reasons

- **3. Teacher- centered reasons**
 - Poorly designed courses
 - Inexperienced professors
 - Passive teaching
 - Unclear expectations
 - Ineffective communication

College Goals

What needs to be done and how

- **Effective counseling.**
- **Providing consistent class structure across courses.**
- **Prepare students for online environment.**
- **Teacher support.**
- **Student support.**
- **Provide access to latest technology / innovations.**

Faculty Goals

Ask Yourself

- Is the course structure instructionally sound?
- Am I making an effort to engage each student personally.
- Am I sensitive to students needs.
- Am I available?
- Am I taking advantage of the resources available?
- Should I ask for help?? 😊

Faculty Goals

What needs to be done and how

- **Communication.**
- **Pre Class Introductions – ice breakers.**
- **Course Design.**
- **Set expectations.**
- **Classroom management.**

Faculty Goals

What not to do

- **The key to failure in an online class is to get a good text book, put lectures online, create a few test and post them, and then stand back and wait for test results to come back.**

Faculty Goals

Suggestions

- **Leaner Centered approach.**
 - **Focus on what is best for students, not what is easiest to do.**
 - Don't just copy previous lessons, adjust and update.
 - Be creative, Less is NOT always more.
 - The main idea is for them to learn, and you are responsible.
 - Be sensitive to their needs. Be available as often as possible.
 - Positive reinforcement ALL the time.
 - **Keep in mind the student-body dynamics.**
 - Cultural aspects that may influence over all attitude of students.
- **Open lines of communication as early as possible BEFORE beginning of class.**
 - **Email everyone to insure they are aware of course.**
 - This will insure they have access to their college email account.
 - They will see professor as supportive and outreaching.
 - **Set up pre-class activity for student to get to know each other.**
 - Send pictures and a brief profile.
 - Discussion board topic about students' background where they can share ideas.

Faculty Goals

Suggestions cont.

- **Assess students' comfort level with technology, and pre-existing knowledge of course topic.**
 - Have they ever taken an online course before?
 - Are they familiar with course topic?
 - Have they completed course prerequisites?
 - Survey?
 - Are they familiar with Black Board?
 - Knowledge of what it takes to succeed in the course.
- **Course Design**
 - Familiar to traditional face-to-face course.
 - Engaging course materials.
 - Opportunities for group work.
 - Personal attention, and lots of it.
 - Very detailed directions. Clear class policy.
 - Outlines, learning objectives and study guides.

Faculty Goals

Suggestions cont.

- **Course should include:**
 - **Lecture/assignment resources**
 - Videos.
 - Podcasts.
 - Simple games .
 - External resources/websites related to class topic.
 - Make use of black board features like chat/virtual classroom.
 - Wikis?
 - **List of resources available to them through AWC (library website, tutorials, tutors..etc).**
 - **FAQ based on emails/questions received by students about course.**
 - **FAQ regarding blackboard usage.**
 - **Awareness and incorporation of learning styles (visual, auditory, and tactile).**
 - **Designate one area for each task.**
 - **Simple review of previous week's work, and what is coming up next week.**

Faculty Goals

Suggestions cont.

- **Interaction with students/Classroom Management:**
 - Frequent correspondence with each student at least twice a week.
 - Positive reinforcement.
 - Customized solutions to student's problems and personal issues.
 - Answer questions as soon as possible
 - Virtual office hours are very important
 - Respond to questions/problems in each discussion topic.

Other Suggestions

Talking to faculty

- **Mandatory blackboard orientation for students**
- **More training on how to use black board for professors/associate faculty.**
- **Resolving technology challenges that face students BEFORE class**
- **Advice students on what it takes to have an online class**
- **Self-registration lacks important information**
- **Look for free books/resources to help students finish classes.**
- **Specialized training sessions**
- **Uniform classes. Same look and feel.**
- **More utilities to improve classes.**
- **Best practice sharing between professors**

THANK YOU!!

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