Online Student Achievement Gaps: Challenges and Solutions

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Achievement Gaps ~ Challenges ~ Solutions
Spring 2015 Success Rates in California Community Colleges
California Community Colleges – Spring 2015

Student Success Rates

Online Courses

African Amer. 46%
Hispanic 57%
White 68%
Multi-Faceted Challenges

- Inadequate student preparation and guidance in self-directed learning skills
- Limited internet access
- Course design weaknesses
- Social distance among online students and instructors
CHALLENGE: Social distance felt by online students with faculty and fellow students
SOLUTION:
Increase faculty presence, respectful encouragement, and validation of students.
SOLUTION: Build an interpersonal connection with your students

Give effective feedback
- Timely
- Detailed
- Encouraging
- Thought-Provoking
SOLUTION: Build rapport and trust with your students

• Respond to students’ emails promptly

• Maintain a respectful and courteous tone in your communications
• Ask your students to develop a set of ground rules for Discussion Board postings to ensure a safe and comfortable class climate for all students

• Nurture interpersonal interactions among your students by using online icebreakers and assigning fun small group tasks
Use Videoconferencing to Connect

Get a free Zoom account at confernow.org
SOLUTION: Encourage faculty to participate in an online class as a student PRIOR to teaching an online or hybrid class.
CHALLENGE: Online course design lacks appropriate strategies

• Scaffolding
• Active learning
• Universal Design
• Authentic assessment
• Clear instructions for tasks
• Contextualized and relevant content
Scaffolding Example 1

Give students an exemplar or model of an assignment that you will ask them to complete.
Scaffolding Example 2

Provide your students with vocabulary lessons BEFORE assigning them to read a difficult text.
Passive
• Lectures
• Readings
• Watching video
• Listening to audio
• Observing demonstrations

Active
• Interaction through discussion
• Student-to-student interactions
• Student presentations
• Group projects
• Simulations
• Problem solving

(image from the Rapid Elearning blog)
CHALLENGE: Lack of student preparation and guidance in self-directed learning skills

- Time management
- Organization
- Help-seeking
- Stress management
- Information literacy
- Communication
SOLUTION: Provide guidance and tools for students to develop self-directed learning skills such as time management.

The Assignment Calculator

The Assignment Calculator is a time management tool that breaks down research assignments into a series of manageable steps, while providing expert tips for success. Enter the assignment start date and due date to get planning!

Assignment Period: Mon Sep 22, 2014 - Fri Dec 5, 2014

According to the dates you have entered, you have 74 days to finish.

Send yourself an email reminder

Step 1
By Wed Sep 24, 2014: Understand your assignment

Suggestions for understanding your assignment
Terms frequently used in writing assignments
Lesson in Self-Directed Learning

• **The Monkey Business Illusion**

• Lessons learned?
  
  – Hard to pay attention to more than one thing at a time
  
  – We are missing a lot of what goes on around us
  
  – We may not realize how much we are missing
Online Student Readiness Tutorials

http://apps.3cmediasolutions.org/oei/students.html

- **Topics**
  - Introduction to Online Learning
  - Getting Tech Ready
  - Organizing for Online Success
  - Online Study Skills and Managing Time
  - Communication Skills
  - Online Reading Strategies
  - Career Planning
  - Educational Planning
  - Instructional Support

- **Interactive Tools**
  - Cost Calculator
  - Computer Readiness Test
  - Daily Schedule Calculator
  - Study Schedule
CHALLENGE:
Limited access to fast and reliable Internet connections
Watching lengthy instructional videos on a slow internet connection is annoying!
SOLUTION

Create and select instructional videos that are no longer than 6 minutes

Give students versions of course site content that can be easily downloaded and used offline
CHALLENGE: Design of online courses and online student services webpages often not optimized for mobile devices
76% of FHDA students own a smartphone
**SOLUTION:** Design online course sites and student services webpages that are suitable for use with mobile devices
Course Management System - Etudes

Not Optimized for Mobile

Optimized for Mobile
How do you plan to apply what you learned?
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