Student Success Strategies for Distance Learners

Presented by Vince Rodriguez, Jorge Sanchez, and Bob Nash
1998-99 DL Enrollments = 12,513
- Television: 77%
- CD-ROM: 8%
- Internet: 8%
- Cable: 7%

2002-03 DL Enrollments = 20,405
- Television: 48%
- Internet: 40%
- CD-Rom: 9%
- Cable: 3%

2006-07 DL Enrollments = 31,975
- Television: 55%
- Internet: 44%
- Other: 1%

2009-10 DL Enrollments = 50,000+
- Television: 21%
- Internet: 78%
- Other: 1%
Coastline College: Fall 2008
Gender of DL Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>52.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
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Coastline College: Fall 2008
Age of DL Enrollments by Mode of DL

- Online
- TV

Age categories: < 18, 18 & 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 34, 35 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 +
Current Student Characteristics

- Summer 2010 survey
- Population of 3,200 online students
- 25% response rate
1999 DL Student Success Survey

- Random sample: 3,261 DL students from spring, summer & fall (32% of total population)
- All modalities: Telecourse, Online & Independent study
- 5% of population responded
Expectations/Reasons for Enrolling

Key Results
• 66% said they enrolled in DL “because of time or physical constraints”
• 48% said “I like learning at my own pace”
• 10% admitted they thought “the coursework would be a little easier”

Conclusions
• Time and flexibility is extremely valuable to these students
• They may benefit from pre-course orientations that manage expectations and describe workload
Reasons for Drop/Failure

Key Results
• 40% said “I tried to accomplish too much that semester” -- especially those who dropped
• 25% indicated, “I had difficulty managing my time” -- especially those who failed

Conclusions
• They may benefit from pre-course orientations about course schedule and workload
• They may benefit by student success courses or seminars on time mgt. & planning
Tinto’s Model of Student Retention-Attrition

- Student Characteristics
- Family Background

Goal Commitment

- Social Interaction
- Academic Performance

Persist or Withdraw
Some Factors Related to DL Success & Failure

**Out of our control**
- Lack of time
- Job Requirements
- Illness
- Life/Family Problems
- Previous GPA
- Learning Style

**Within our control**
- Expectations
- Services
- Success skills
- Course performance
- Instructor support
- Peer interaction
- Satisfaction
Some DL Student Success Strategies

• Anticipate
• Motivate
• Communicate
• Cultivate
Anticipate Needs & Questions

- Student Services
  - Online, self-directed

- Course Design
  - Quality rubric
  - Everything explained, FAQs
Motivate Participation & Involvement

- Encourage more time on task
  - Make learning relevant
  - Realistic, authentic tasks/skills
  - Problems, cases, stories

- Use media and technology that is both effective and cool
Communicate That You Care

- Make connections & build relationships
  - Maintain “presence”
  - Encourage interaction
- Reminding correspondence
- Prompt feedback on assignments
Cultivate Good Learners

- Manage expectations
- Look for opportunities to connect students to services, support
- Build self-directed, self-regulating students through JIT learning moments
Other DL Success Strategies

- Intake DL “readiness” assessment
- Early alert system
- Online learning communities & linked courses
- Interdisciplinary programs
- Online Tutoring (for course assignments)
- Peer Tutors/Mentors
- Mandatory DL student success course
- Integrated FYE program
References

- Conrad & Donaldson, *Engaging the Online Learner* (Jossey-Bass)
- Palloff & Pratt, *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace* (Jossey-Bass)
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