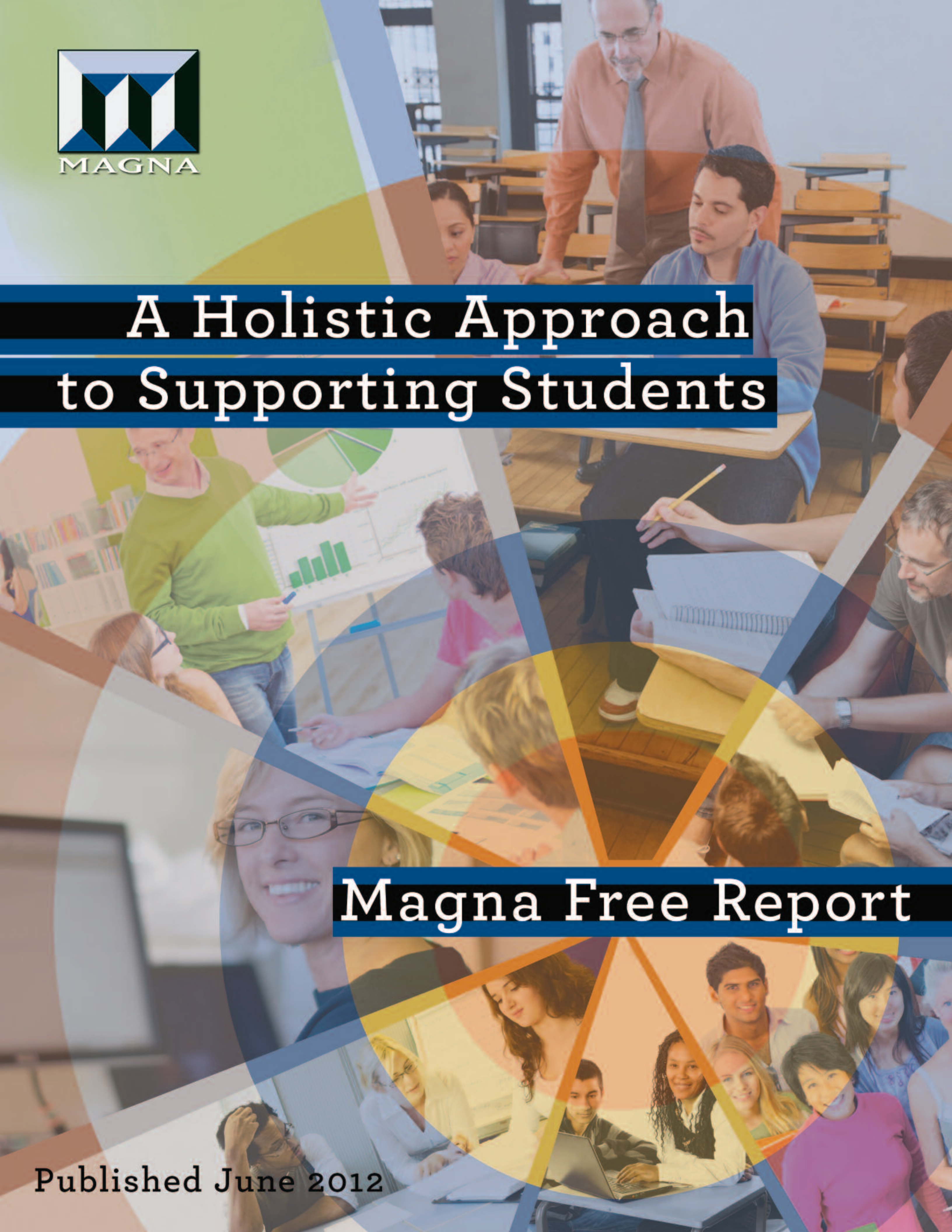
A Holistic Approach to Supporting Students



Magna Free Report

Published June 2012

We welcome your feedback regarding this free report.
Please take an eight-question survey.

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Introduction

The first two things that I learned when I taught "Introduction to College Writing" are: many students have no qualms about sharing personal information in their essays, and, at any given time, many students are struggling. Their academic struggles are easy to see; their personal challenges are less obvious, and in many cases, much more complex. Their ships come close to sinking more often than many people realize.

In hundreds of essays, my students concluded that, "If it wasn't for the help that my instructor/coach/financial aid officer/tutor/counselor/TA/RA/advisor gave me that day, I would not be here today."

A Holistic Approach to Supporting Students *was created to give higher educational professionals — from faculty to administrators — ideas on how to support their institution's students from every angle.*

I've come to see that it really does take a village. "Supporting student success" is not just a slogan — it's a critical part of what we do and who we are.

The free report, ***A Holistic Approach to Supporting Students*** was created to give higher educational professionals — from faculty to administrators — ideas on how to support their institution's students from every angle.

On behalf of all of the editors here at Magna Publications, I am pleased to offer this collection of articles from all of our publications. They provide a rich range of ideas and suggestions for supporting students.

May they serve you well!

Sincerely,

Catherine Stover
Managing Editor – Magna Publications
Catherine.Stover@magnapubs.com

Chapter One

Supporting Students in the Classroom

Chapter one discusses student motivation and engagement.
All articles were selected from *The Teaching Professor* newsletter.


THE Teaching PROFESSOR

Learning from Our Mistakes

In This Issue

What subscribers say about *The Teaching Professor:*

"Offers practical solutions to common pedagogical problems faced by teaching faculty."

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Caring for Students: How Important Is It?

Written by: Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D.

Most teachers know that caring for students is important, but do they realize just how important? A recent article by Steven A. Meyers offers a succinct, well-referenced, and persuasive review of research that addresses the topic. It begins with what most teachers already know: Caring is regularly identified as one of the ingredients or components of effective instruction. What many teachers do not know is that students value the dimensions of caring more highly than teachers do. Teachers tend to focus on the instructional aspects of their role—they want their courses to have standards, to be well organized; they want their instruction to be clear and effective at stimulating student interest. Students agree that these aspects of instruction are important, but they consider the personal aspects of teaching just as important. They want teachers who welcome their questions, who acknowledge their input, and who are available—in short, teachers who establish rapport with individual students and the class as a whole. Said succinctly, caring is more important to students than it is to professors, according to a variety of research findings reviewed in this article.

But should faculty be concerned about what students consider important? Research findings say yes. One study cited reported that when instructor-student rapport increases, those increases are associated with greater student enjoyment of the class, improved attendance and attention, more study time devoted to the class, and more courses taken in that discipline. Another study documented that a professor's positive attitude toward students accounted for 58 percent of the variability in the students' motivation, 42 percent of the variability in course appreciation, and 60 percent of students' attitude about the instructor. (p. 206)

Meyers addresses three faculty criticisms and cautions about caring, starting with **"My students don't appreciate how much I care."** The problem here, according to Meyers, is that faculty don't always express their care in ways that students understand. Faculty express caring through their devotion to the instructional aspects of their role. They always come to class prepared. They devote time and energy to keeping current in their field. They spend countless hours reading and reviewing potential texts. Those commitments bespeak their care, but according to the research, those are not the behaviors students associate with caring. Research on something called "verbal immediacy" has identified a number of behaviors that do convey caring to students—things like using personal examples, asking questions and encouraging students to talk, using humor in class, addressing students by name, and many others listed on a table in the article—and Meyers recommends that faculty consider using more of these behaviors.

Some faculty are reluctant to express care for students because **they don't want to get too close to students.** And Meyers agrees: "Faculty must maintain an awareness of interpersonal boundaries when creating supportive relationships with students." (p. 207) It's a question of finding an appropriate balance between caring for students and maintaining professional boundaries. Meyers offers this advice: "Effective, caring faculty members balance their connection with students by setting limits as needed, by enforcing classroom policies in consistent and equitable ways, and by maintaining democratic and respectful authority in the college classroom." (p. 207)

And finally, there are faculty who believe **"My job is to teach, not to care."** These faculty worry that caring compromises academic rigor and lowers standards. They think that caring means always being nice, never pushing students, and always avoiding criticism. But it's not a case of either-or—caring or doing those things associated with the instructional role. Teachers should do both because students benefit enormously when they do. And caring benefits teachers as well. Research has documented that when faculty don't care or fail to communicate their concern for students, students respond in kind. When students don't care about the teacher, they are much more willing to disrupt the class and make learning more difficult for everyone.

This is a first-rate article that convincingly establishes the importance of caring in the college classroom. It ends with an interesting set of questions on the topic that would make for excellent discussion with colleagues.

Reference: Meyers, S.A. (2009). Do Your Students Care Whether You Care About Them? *College Teaching*, 57 (4), 205-210.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter The Teaching Professor *25.5 (2011): 5-6.* The Teaching Professor *is a lively, informative newsletter with a singular purpose: to provide ideas and insight to educators who are passionate about teaching.*

Related Resources — Student Motivation

- Magna Online Seminars
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  - Motivating Millenials and Digital Natives

- Magna 20 Minute Mentors
  - How Do I Get Students to Read Their Assignments Before Class?
  - How Do I Create a Climate for Learning in My Classroom?

Ways to Achieve Student Engagement

Written by: Maryellen Weimer, Ph.D.

Student engagement is another of those buzz phrases popular in higher education. As with many regularly used terms, everyone assumes we are talking about the same thing; but when asked for definitions, either we are hard pressed to come up one or what's offered is a decidedly different collection of definitions. Here's an article that includes clear definitions and, based on a creative synthesis of research, offers 10 ways to promote student engagement.

The authors propose definitions broad enough to include more specific descriptions. For example: engagement is "students' cognitive investment in, active participation in, and emotional commitment to their learning." (p. 168) Or, engagement is "students' involvement with activities and conditions likely to generate high-quality learning." (p. 168)

Based on this synthesis of research, student engagement can be promoted by teachers and institutions in the following ways:

Enhance students' self-belief—There is no agreement in the research literature as to what motivates learners to engage, but the dominant view is that students engage when they act as their own learning agents working to achieve goals meaningful to them. This means that what students believe about themselves as learners is very important. They must believe they can learn, including that they can overcome and learn from failure experiences. Giving students some control over learning processes helps develop this confidence and commitment to learning.

What students believe about themselves as learners is very important.

Enable students to work autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others, and feel they are competent to achieve their own objectives—"When institutions provide opportunities for students to learn both autonomously and with others, and to develop their sense of competence, students are more likely to be motivated, to engage and succeed." (p. 170) Not unrelated to the first recommendation, the focus here is on cultivating intrinsic motivation, which fosters the self-determination that leads to engagement.

Recognize that teaching and teachers are central to engagement—Much research places teachers at the heart of engagement. For example, one study found that "if the teacher is perceived to be approachable, well prepared, and sensitive to student needs, students are committed to work harder, get more out of the session, and are more willing to express their opinion." (p. 170)

Create learning that is active, collaborative, and fosters learning relationships—"Findings acknowledge that active learning in groups, peer relationships, and social skills are important in engaging learners." (p. 171)

Create educational experiences for students that are challenging and enriching and that extend their academic abilities—Easy learning activities and assignments are not as effective at engaging students as activities and assignments that challenge them. When students are reflecting, questioning, conjecturing, evaluating, and making connections between ideas, they are engaged. "Teachers need to create rich educational experiences that challenge students' ideas and stretch them as far as they can go." (p. 171)

Ensure that institutional cultures are welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds—To become engaged, students must feel they are accepted and affirmed. They must feel they belong at an institution.

Invest in a variety of support services—Sometimes it seems as though students don't take advantage of support services like learning and advising centers, but a wide variety of research findings confirms the importance of these support services. They are perceived as part of the institutional culture, and students engage when that culture values and supports their efforts to learn.

Adapt to changing student expectations—An institution should never be satisfied with how it is promoting student engagement. As students change and new research evidence emerges, institutional practices should be adjusted. Engagement cannot just be promoted, it must also be maintained.

Enable students to become active citizens—"What is needed is a democratic-critical conception of engagement that goes beyond strategies, techniques, behaviours, a conception in which engagement is participatory, dialogic and leads not only to academic achievement but to success as an active citizen." (p. 173)

Enable students to develop their social and cultural capital—This kind of capital derives from a sense of belonging, from active relationships with others, and from knowing how things work around the institution. It is especially essential for minority students who need to be successful not only in the classroom but beyond it as well.

Reference: Zepke, N., and Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. Active Learning in Higher Education, 11 (3), 167-177.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter The Teaching Professor *25.6 (2011): 8.* The Teaching Professor *is a lively, informative newsletter with a singular purpose: to provide ideas and insight to educators who are passionate about teaching.*

Related Resources – Student Engagement

- Magna Online Seminars
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  - Teaching & Learning Rhythms: Tools to Enhance Student Engagement

- Magna 20 Minute Mentors
  - How Do I Get More Students to Participate in Class?
  - How Do I Create a Climate for Learning in My Classroom?

Chapter Two

Supporting Online Students

Chapter two covers online student motivation and course design.
All articles were selected from the *Online Classroom* newsletter.


ONLINE CL@SSROOM

Instructor Strategies to Improve Online Student Retention

Save Time by Modifying Assignments

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"It gives me helpful hints, tips, and general information that I can use to make my class a better experience for the student and for myself."

"I use it immediately to implement new concepts, ideas, etc. I love it!"

Five Factors that Affect Online Learning Motivation

Written by: Rob Kelly

Understanding what motivates online learners is important because motivated students are more likely to engage in activities that help them learn and achieve, says Brett Jones, associate professor of educational psychology at Virginia Tech. Based on an extensive review of the literature on student motivation, Jones has developed the MUSIC model of student motivation, which identifies five main factors that contribute to student motivation: empowerment, usefulness, success, interest, and caring. "The primary purpose of the model is to provide instructors with a guide that they can use to make intentional decisions about the design of their courses," Jones says. In an interview with Online Classroom, Jones explained his model and its implications for online course design.

Empowerment

Students feel empowered when they feel that they have some control over some aspects of their learning. This can involve giving students choices. "Is there some way that we can give students at least a little bit of control by giving them choices? Is there a way to give students some option to bring in something from their own lives or make some decision about a topic within that narrow assignment that lets them feel like they have some control over it?" Jones says.

Jones cites an example from an online personal health course: The instructor has students either take an online assessment or attend one or two workshops on campus related to the course's learning objectives. This allows students the opportunity to choose their activities while still staying within the framework and goals of the course.

Usefulness

Students need to see that the course is useful and relevant to them within the course and beyond. In some cases it will be obvious that the skills that students will acquire in a course will directly contribute to their success in a chosen career field. In other cases, that connection will not be as clear. Jones recommends being explicit about how the skills and knowledge students acquire in the course can be applied beyond school. One way to do this is to have students interview professionals in their chosen careers about what skills and knowledge contributed to their success.

Success

Students need to feel that they can succeed in the course if they make a reasonable effort. The instructor can help students succeed by setting expectations, providing feedback, and facilitating the course so that students have access to additional resources if needed. "What resources do you have available for them to succeed? If you thought ahead you can know what problems students typically run into. A lot of times you can create additional documents or videos that explain the more difficult concepts," Jones says.

Interest

There are two types of interest that contribute to student motivation: situational interest and individual interest. Situational interest refers to an aspect of a course that is enjoyable or fun. For example, Jones incorporates articles from Psychology Today related to the learning objectives to vary the tone and provide a different perspective from the textbook. "These are just little side readings that don't take a lot of time and that might help students see how the [concept] might apply to the real world."

There are two types of interest that contribute to student motivation: situational interest and individual interest.

Situational interest can be enhanced by novelty and emotions. "We as humans are attracted to things that are novel. If you have something that can engender emotion so you get people fired up about a topic or issue relates to your learning objectives that can really draw people in. We want to trigger their interest so that they pay attention enough and are interested enough while they are engaged in it," Jones says.

Situational interest is often short lived, but it can lead to longer-term individual interest, which refers to how the content relates to the individual. For example, a student taking a course within his or her major might have a strong individual interest in the content based on how the content related to who they are and what they aspire to. A mechanical engineering major may have a strong individual interest in a mechanical engineering course because she sees herself as a mechanical engineer and thinks, "I'm interested in it because it's who I am."

It is possible for a student to have an individual interest in a course but not a situational interest. A student might think, for example, "I want to be a mechanical engineer, but this is boring."

Remember that interest isn't universal. "We assume that students think a particular subject is fascinating or that everybody's curious about it, but that's not the case," Jones says.

Caring

Students need to feel that the instructor (and other students) care that they learn. Jones assumed that although caring is a big motivator for children, it would not play a large role in online higher education courses. He was wrong. In fact, in a study of 609 online learners, caring was the number one predictor of online instructor ratings. "It turns out that caring is very important even for adult learners," Jones says.

Jones recommends providing regular feedback and asking students whether the feel that they're getting the support they need.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Online Classroom *(September 2011): 1,5.* Online Classroom *newsletter helps you stay current with the latest trends in online learning by offering ideas and advice for the new trailblazers in higher education.*

Related Resources — Online Student Motivation

- Magna Online Seminars
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  - Five Ways to Improve Interaction in Your Online Courses

- Magna 20 Minute Mentors
  - How Do I Create Engaging Threaded Discussion Questions?
  - How Can I Use Voice Feedback to Improve Student Learning?

Simple, Consistent Course Design Facilitates Student Self Regulation

Written by: Rob Kelly

Instructors play a limited role in facilitating learning, says Richard Smith, clinical associate professor and coordinator of the instructional technology program at the University of Houston–Clear Lake. “If the instructor has not designed that course, the instructor is not the real teacher of the course. Whoever designed that course is the teacher of course. The instructor, in essence, is like the homework checker. You can be a really good homework checker, or you can be a lackadaisical homework checker. You can put a lot of effort into it or not so much effort into it. You can participate, going on discussions, putting a whole lot of information in the discussions or not a lot. But the general design of the course is what’s doing the teaching,” Smith says.

Smith’s colleague Caroline Crawford, associate professor of instructional technology at the University of Houston–Clear Lake, disagrees: “Yes, you have the knowledge base in there and all that type of information, but instruction is an artistic endeavor. Whether it’s face-to-face or online, you’re still engaging the learners and pushing them forward.

“There are people who teach courses that I have designed and I tell them, ‘Do whatever you need to do. We have the learning objectives stated. There are readings and different types of multimedia components, overviews and such to support the learner, but if you want to add more, if you want to revise some of the information, feel free.’”

Smith agrees that, in theory, instructors do have the option to make changes, but it’s not always practical. “It depends how much time the instructor has and wants to devote to the course because the payment is the same.”

Design

Smith’s perspective places a lot of emphasis on instructional design. He prefers a simple, consistent course design that enables students to self-regulate and reduces the amount of time the instructor has to spend responding to questions that could be clearly addressed within the course without the aid of an instructor.

"I like the KISS format—keep it simple, stupid. One thing I think an online course has to show is consistent organization, which makes it simple for the student to follow and makes it easy for the instructor," Smith says.

Smith is careful to make his instructions clear. "I assume nothing. I assume students do not know all the steps of what I'm asking them to do. I will spell out those steps in detail. I try to avoid having my students make inferential leap in assignments, particularly in the online courses, because there's not an immediate way for them to get an answer for a question that might occur. I try to make certain there are as few questions on the part of the students as possible," Smith says.

Smith designs his courses based on a 16-week semester. This enables him to more easily adapt his online courses to the face-to-face classroom. Each lesson has a title, objectives, readings, and an explanation of any procedures for that lesson. Once a week or once every two weeks Smith has students participate in a discussion based on a magazine or journal article. Like other elements of his courses, these discussions are highly structured: each student is required to respond to a controversial prompt and respond to one or two other students (depending on class size).

Depending on the assignment he may provide students with examples of students' projects from previous semesters "so they can see that students are capable of completing the assignments and that they have a model of what the completed assignment should look like. I think frequently people who are designing their own courses forget about that element because in the course designer's mind there is a model of what he or she expects, but in the students' minds it's something completely different. The expectations are different on the part of the students and the teacher, and it's not the students' fault. The problem is with the course design. The teacher hasn't made explicit what the objectives are."

Things that would take just a few seconds to take care of in a face-to-face class can take 15, 20 minutes or more in an online class

Crawford has a slightly different take on providing sample assignments. She sees the merit of providing these samples for students in core courses or courses that introduce new subjects to the students, but she prefers to be less prescriptive in elective courses. "I want them to be able to take their products and use them in the real-world environment. I don't necessarily want to show them a product and say, 'This is what I want to see' because I want them to pull it together and be more creative and evaluative of what's necessary for themselves," Crawford says.

Time

Despite the best efforts of a course designer, some things simply take more time online than face-to-face. "I think frequently instructors find that teaching online is not all that pleasant an experience, especially for their first courses. They can be very time-consuming affairs. Things that would take just a few seconds to take care of in a face-to-face class can take 15, 20 minutes or more in an online class because you have to write the response, you have to figure out what the student is trying to say. You can't get immediate clarification of what students are trying to say," Smith says.

Even a small assignment can take an inordinate amount of time on the part the instructor, Smith says. "If you had 25 students in an online class and give an assignment, now you have to check it because if you don't check the assignment students won't do it. If you're trying to respond to those students, you have to download the assignment, evaluate it, comment on it, and upload it. That takes a minimum of 10 minutes per student. Multiply that by 25 students and that's 250 minutes—more than three hours for one measly assignment. And that doesn't count anything else going on in the class. That means that you've got to sit in front of your computer doing nothing but typing for three to four hours. You can see where it can get a little bit tedious, and that's one of the problems with online courses for instructors."

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Online Classroom *(May 2011): 1,5.* Online Classroom *newsletter helps you stay current with the latest trends in online learning by offering ideas and advice for the new trailblazers in higher education.*

Related Resources — Online Course Design

- Magna Online Seminars
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  - Beyond Course Design: Planning for Successful Facilitation

- Magna 20 Minute Mentors
  - Should I Use ADDIE as a Design Map for My Blended Course?
  - How Should I Manage My Online Course?

Chapter Three

Supporting Students as an Academic Leader

Chapter three covers enrollment management and student learning. All articles were selected from the *Academic Leader* newsletter.


ACADEMIC Leader

JULY 2012

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ACADEMIC DEANS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

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A Comprehensive Approach to Student Success

Written by: Rob Kelly

Florida International University (FIU) is in the process of developing a comprehensive student retention effort with the central theme that if you get students into their majors early and provide them a clear path, they will be more likely to graduate in four years.

The problem

FIU is an urban, public, research university with an enrollment of 44,000 students, 61 percent of whom are Hispanic. FIU is a leader in on-time graduation of Hispanic students, but at 46 percent its overall on-time graduation rate is significantly lower than the 54 percent national average for similar institutions.

Early retention rates are good, and once students are in their majors, their on-time graduate rates are good as well. But some students are getting off course somewhere in between. Why?

“We’re not getting them into appropriate majors,” says Doug Robertson, FIU’s dean of undergraduate education and a professor of higher education. He places much of the blame on the “two-plus-two" model in which students explore their academic options during their first two years of college and only after that exploration choose a discipline and take courses in that major.

“The myth that it’s good for students to explore for two years—that they take general education courses and somehow experience different disciplinary perspectives and from that experience arrive at a major—is obviously just a failed vision. It doesn’t match reality. Students experience the general education curriculum as disorganized. They don’t understand it. It’s a hoop to get through. They are self-advising by and large. They are allowed to persist, exploring but not learning from their explorations. And the idea that they come out of the first two years with the vision of the major just isn’t happening here,” Robertson says.

Until recently, 20 percent of FIU undergraduates had earned more than 60 credits but were not enrolled in a major. “We had nearly 6,000 students out there basically lost. That’s the nature of the problem we had to solve,” Robertson says.

Getting students on track

“There is a variety of data that strongly suggests that if you can help students identify an appropriate major—one that matches their interests, goals, and strengths—early, they tend to succeed and graduate on time at a much higher rate.”

To help make that happen, FIU will require students to select a major before enrolling, whether they are first-year or transfer students. To make this an informed choice, the university will provide academic advising and career development before admission. “We’re building some fairly sophisticated technologies that allow the students to do career interest inventories that link their interests to specific FIU majors,” Robertson says.

FIU has also created a Web page where students can click on a major and view a brief program description, admission requirements, job opportunities, and contact information. There's also a tool called a major map, a semester-by-semester path to success in that particular major.

"There is a variety of data that strongly suggests that if you can help students identify an appropriate major early, they tend to succeed and graduate on time at a much higher rate."

For those who are unsure of which major to choose, there is an "exploratory" major that guides students through a specific curriculum with the goal of having them select a major within their first 45 credits.

Another benefit of this technology is the ability to know more precisely the demand for each course, which will help departments allocate resources to meet demand. "We're going to a system of prefunding the deans based on empirical projections of how many students are going to be taking which classes if they stay on their major maps. It should eliminate the problem of students having to wait a whole year for a course to come around because it was full, and we couldn't afford to add another section. We're basically moving to a system where we enter into a compact with the students that says, basically, 'If you stay on track, we'll make sure that the classes on that track are offered," Robertson says.

Tracking tool

Another piece of technology will provide tracking information for each of FIU's 65 undergraduate majors. If a student does not meet a particular milestone, the system will alert the student's advisor who will meet with that student to address the issue. These alerts can come about as a result of not taking a course at the correct time or underperforming in certain key areas. For example, if an engineering major does not take a particular calculus course or does poorly, an alert is sent to the student's advisor, who follows up with the student.

The system will also provide the student with the same information that the advisor gets (except for certain sensitive information related to security), "so that they are doing self advising, which helps them mature and make decisions," Robertson says.

Another important aspect of this tracking feature is the ability to provide "universal advising." If a student meets with an advisor, the advisor can take notes about the conversation and enter it into a field within the system. The student and the advisor can see it, which will eliminate the problem of selective memory and provide consistency over time if the student works with a different advisor in the future.

Institutional research

FIU's office of institutional research is conducting multivariate factor analyses to determine which factors correlate with on-time graduation. This research will provide advisors indicators that can help them provide timely and effective interventions. For example, one study has found that if a journalism major earns a grade lower than an A in a first-year composition course, his or her chances of graduating on time is 18 percent. Based on this information, an advisor may encourage the student to take other writing courses to improve his or her chances for on-time graduation.

Advisors

In addition to technology and better data to help guide students and advisors, FIU has committed to moving to a professional advising model and to hiring enough advisors to achieve a 300-to-1 student-advisor ratio. "We're attacking the idea that academic advising is something that anybody can do," Robertson says.

Dean and chair evaluation

Under FIU's new system, deans and chairs will be evaluated on their success in retention and graduation goals. "We're taking the retention and graduation goals and infusing them into all the units and having those units held accountable," Robertson says.

Deans will be evaluated on two measures:

1. the retention and graduation rates of the students who enrolled in their colleges and stayed
2. the success of students who were admitted into their colleges but later switched to other colleges within the university.

"We want to make sure that students not doing well in a particular college can transition to an appropriate choice. If a student says, 'I don't want to be in business anymore,' rather than replying, 'OK, see you later,' we'd like the deans to say, 'OK, let's talk. Let's figure out where you should be and get you situated so you can succeed,'" Robertson says.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Academic Leader *27.9 (2011): 2, 3.* Academic Leader *newsletter is read by academic decision makers and thought leaders on campuses nationwide and offers innovative strategies and fresh ideas to advance teaching, scholarship, and service.*

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  - Latino Student Success: Fresh Thinking, New Strategies

- White Papers
  - How to Build a Low Cost Out-of-State Enrollment Strategy
  - Developing a Sustainable Retention and Student Success Program

Implementing High-Impact Learning

Written by: Rob Kelly

High-impact learning practices—first-year seminars, learning communities, service-learning, undergraduate research, and capstone experiences—can provide intensive learning for students and improve retention, persistence to degree, and postgraduate attainment. However, to be effective, institutions need high-level support and cross-divisional collaboration, says Lynn E. Swaner, a higher education consultant and coauthor (with Jayne E. Brownell) of *Five High-Impact Practices: Research on Learning Outcomes, Completion, and Quality* (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010). In a recent interview, Swaner talked about her research and offered suggestions on successfully implementing these practices.

"The term 'high impact' [in regard to practices] comes from George Kuh's work with NSSE [National Survey of Student Engagement]. They are particularly beneficial for students in terms of academic and personal growth, career development, and a wide range of desired learning outcomes. There's something unique about these practices. They seem to have a greater impact than what we're used to," Swaner says. "They tend to be very intense, not simply students walking into a lecture hall and hearing a lecture but students [being required] to learn on multiple levels. They're creating new knowledge, implementing it in real-life settings, and reflecting on the implications for themselves and the community."

Of these practices, service-learning and learning communities are the most common and have the largest empirical base of knowledge about them.

Of these practices, service-learning and learning communities are the most common and have the largest empirical base of knowledge about them. All these practices cross-disciplinary boundaries, and participation is usually voluntary. Students who participate in these learning opportunities do so only once or twice in their college careers. "I believe [these practices] are beginning to move from the periphery a little closer to the heart of the academic mission. Still, I would characterize them as innovative practices and not the norm," Swaner says.

Identifying high-impact practices that fit the institution's mission

Based on her research of several institutions across the United States that have successfully implemented these high-impact learning practices, Swaner recommends that departments and institutions conduct research, join networks that have expertise in these practices, and conduct a needs assessment. "Get a sense of the benefits of these practices, what it actually means to engage students in their learning, the kind of outcomes you're looking for, and then do a needs assessment of your own institution. What would be realistic?"

Another critical component is involving a broad array of stakeholders. A cross-constituency group should include people from academic affairs, student affairs, and community members (in the case of service-learning). "If you have as many stakeholders as you can at the table, I think it will enrich the planning

process. It will also generate buy-in for this concept," Swaner says.
This collaboration typically involves several representatives from academic affairs, several from student affairs, and a few key faculty members. In the case of service-learning, there would be two or three organization representatives who would be really engaged in this. The committee discusses questions such as "What is our mission? What are the learning outcomes we want to see from our students? What types of activities do we have going on? How can we build in more of these high-impact practices?"

"Once you start asking those questions, you start identifying resources and opportunities and challenges, and it's that collaborative process that leads to a lot of answers. The committee or a working group will start to write grant proposals or start to look for resources and then that body of people also starts to attend conferences and network with other colleges and universities. It's really critical to assemble that cross-constituency team or else you end up with faculty doing these things in isolation. You have student affairs people doing things in isolation, which is tremendous and impactful on students but not as successful as it could be for the entire institution."

Support: Top down, bottom up, inside, and out

Support from key players on and off campus is also essential. "Institutions are under a lot of financial stress. At the same time, they're trying to do a lot of innovative things, so I think it's critical, particularly for an academic leader to really look beyond his or her own resources. Look to the institution. Is there a teaching and learning initiative? Are there institutional grants available? Are there outside grants to take a look at? If you want to do something that's innovative and less costly, then you're really going to have to look beyond your own means and pull in different people and different resources to make it happen," Swaner says, adding that successful high-impact initiatives have support from the academic vice president or president.

Although support from top administrators is essential to making high-impact practices succeed, the practices cannot be imposed on a department or individual faculty members. "On the campuses I visited, initiation of these practices tended to be a hybrid of bottom up and top down. So you find interest at the academic administrative level and you find interest at the individual faculty member level, and then there's sort of a meeting in the middle, asking, 'What will it take to accomplish this?' What I found is that institutions where it's more of a grassroots effort and it's just the faculty, it sometimes is not as successful," Swaner says.

Because of the additional work involved in preparing and executing these learning experiences, faculty would benefit from release time from courses or other responsibilities and special consideration in the tenure and promotion process. "[High-impact practices] may be valued in some fields and on some campuses and not in others. On campuses where you have that administrative support and the administrators say, 'We want to see our students engage in these types of experiences, then you will see them allocating the resources and allocating the priorities that enable faculty to better participate in them."

The student experience

For the general student population, there are many positive effects, such as improvement in retention, persistence to degree, and postgraduation attainment. The effects of high-impact practices on underserved students is generally positive as well; however, there has not been much research on how these practices affect this population, Swaner says, adding that there are often barriers that can inhibit underserved students' participation. For example, socioeconomically disadvantaged students often need to work and might not have the time to participate in a service-learning opportunity that requires a commitment of 20 hours a week.

Swaner found that service-learning in particular poses other challenges as well. Some students from underserved populations might find themselves working on a project that serves members of their own communities, which means that educators need to provide an orientation and philosophy of the program that is sensitive to the needs and experiences of these students. (For example, is the program philanthropic, communitarian, or empowering?)

Students respond positively to high-impact practices, Swaner says, but they do pose additional challenges. "Students find them to be worthwhile and connected to their lives. These experiences help give them direction and skills for career choice. Obviously this is not the only goal, but it is a goal of students. One negative piece about it, and this speaks to the intensity of these experiences, is that students report that [high-impact practices] are a tremendous amount of work, that it's eating up a lot of their time and energy and effort," Swaner says.

In addition, the intensity of these high-impact practices can make other learning experiences disappointing. "It almost makes the rest of their college experience difficult for them because it sets the bar so high in terms of what their engagement should be, and then if they don't have another high-impact experience, they express disappointment that they weren't able to continue that type of intense learning experience. That's one of the main reasons [to think] about ways to integrate it across curriculum, across departments."

Assessment

Assessment is an important part of understanding the effects of high-impact practices. "Once you get all those folks around the table, you kind of have to develop a common language for your institution. Student affairs folks may talk about learning in one way, and faculty members may talk about it in another way. But they start to craft a common language and begin to understand what each other is saying. For example, what does it mean for a student to develop critical thinking? That might mean different things to different people. In terms of assessment and evaluation, colleges and universities that are at the beginning of this process are in a good place because they have that opportunity to build in assessment and evaluation as they start these programs," Swaner says.

Swaner suggests tapping into the following resources to assess these practices: the institutional research office and faculty members with educational research experience. "Departments should really be looking to partner with institutional research offices because that is sort of the clearinghouse of data. Those folks are very knowledgeable about how to do research related to their students in the programs that exist. There are some schools that are already participating in NSSE, and there are other surveys as well. There may be data there, so partnering with the IR office is key," Swaner says.

If your campus has a school of education, there are likely a substantial number of faculty who have experience with educational research and are looking to do meaningful projects. "Pulling those folks into a cross-constituency team can really make a difference in terms of what you're able to evaluate and whether you're able to tell if you're effective or not. They can also help you tie your findings to the larger picture."

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Academic Leader *27.11 (2011): 7, 8.* Academic Leader *newsletter is read by academic decision makers and thought leaders on campuses nationwide and offers innovative strategies and fresh ideas to advance teaching, scholarship, and service.*

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- White Papers
  - How to Evaluate the Impact of Faculty Development Programs
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Chapter Four

Supporting Students in Distance Education Programs

Chapter four covers program development and mobile learning.
All articles were selected from *Distance Education Report* newsletter.


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Context: The Difference Between Success or Failure in Distance Learning Programs

By Chris Hill

What determines the success or failure of a distance learning program? Writing in the *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration,* Don Chaney and Elizabeth Chaney, both of the University of Florida, and James Eddy, of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, contend that an understanding of context is crucial. In their article, "The Context of Distance Learning Programs in Higher Education: Five Enabling Assumptions," the authors argue that "the marginal success and/or failure occurs due to program planner(s) not viewing the design, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of distance learning courses and programs in the context within which the distance learning will occur." They support their argument with five assumptions:

1. *"The success of distance learning programs, on the individual level, is often a function of personal learning styles."*

The authors cite a number of studies that show that online learning is at least as effective as face-to-face instruction, and conclude that an amalgam of the two is probably best for student learning outcomes. However, one's belief in the superiority of one over another may depend on one's place in the Diffusion of Innovation framework.

Innovators, the first to adopt a new idea or approach, cite the advantages of distance education. These include the ability to reach out to students regardless of time and location, the opportunity for students to connect with scholars to whom they would not otherwise be able to connect, the ability to link students in various locations together for heightened discourse, and the ability to personalize the educational experience. On the other hand, late adopters and laggards, the last to embrace a new approach, laud the advantages of face-to-face instruction. These include an enhanced opportunity for group interaction, the ability to recognize and capitalize on teachable moments, the ability for instructors to respond immediately to students, and the ability for teachers to gain information through observing body language.

However, there is truth in both of these perspectives. Students will tend to gravitate to the delivery method that best accommodates their learning style. Therefore, the authors conclude that "the success of distance learning programs, on the individual level, is often a function of personal learning styles."

2. *"Successful distance learning programs are driven by teaching and learning rather than technology."*

Often, in distance learning, the technology drives the pedagogy, rather than the other way around. Because distance learning takes such great advantage of a number of information technologies, program developers often allow these to drive the design of the courses. Often, the authors contend, "distance learning developers will charge the University's Information Technology Services unit to select the course management system and other technology applications that will be used in courses, when in actuality, the choice of a course management system should be a function of Academic Affairs, after a thoughtful assessment of the needs of all constituents."

For example, it is tempting to use conferencing technologies to require synchronous class meetings, but many students using distance learning have highly variable schedules that would prohibit attending a regular or a single synchronous meeting. Requiring multiple meetings would place a great deal of strain on the instructor. The authors contend that program designers should take a systems approach that takes into account the learners, the instructors, and the course.

The authors explain: "The program designer, after a careful needs assessment, should have the ability to pick and choose the technology that best meets the needs and capabilities of their population of interest. All too often, universities aim to select the one best way (or technology) to deliver distance learning and course programs. Often, when we strive to meet the needs of all with one application, we meet the needs of few."

3. *How you market your program is critical.*

The authors contend that the marketing of distance learning programs, like that of goods and services, has evolved through a product mindset, a sales mindset, and a customer mindset.

"The product mindset," the authors write, "purports that success will come to distance learning programs that provide students with the program and delivery method that the institution believes are needed by the students. Faculty and departments (1) build courses and programs based on their own expertise, (2) using instructional technology that is available and convenient for faculty, and (3) schedules and delivers these courses and programs based on the needs of the faculty and department." The resulting product may not meet the needs of the students.

"The sales mindset," the authors write, "holds that success will come to distance learning programs that persuade students to enroll in their programs." The authors explain that many perceive these efforts, whether through traditional or emerging technology means, to be synonymous with marketing.

"The customer mindset in distance learning," the authors write, "holds that success will come to those distance learning programs that best determine and satisfy the needs, beliefs, goals, and technological capabilities of the population of interest." This perspective takes into account the needs of all constituencies when planning the program.

4. *"Successful online/distance learning courses and programs meet the needs of multiple constituents (students, faculty, departments, professions, administrators, etc.)."*

There is no "one best way to design and deliver distance learning," the authors argue. Instead, the quality of a program is related on the context, and programs will need to change as the context changes. "Before the planning process begins, developers should take substantial time to assess the needs/wants of all the stakeholders, in terms of the distance learning program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Representatives from each of these groups should be at the table when planning the distance learning courses/programs," the authors write.

5. *"A culture of support at all levels of the institution enables success."*

"The 'culture' of an institution is influenced by formal and informal policies and procedures or 'norms' that have been developed over time. And because many academic institutions have an extensive history of providing face-to-face instructional programs to a traditional on-campus cohort of students, the culture and norms clearly support traditional instruction," the authors write. They further explain that even if upper administration is fully supportive of distance learning, well-meaning middle managers can make decisions that are counter-productive for the success of the distance program.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Distance Education Report *15.6 (2011): 5, 8.* Distance Education Report *newsletter is dedicated to helping you improve your online learning programs, from the "big picture" to the nuts and bolts.*

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  - Successful Support Services for Online and Distance Learners

- White Paper
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Mobile Education: The Pros, the Cons, and the Unanswered Questions

Written by: Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti

"If you look at the students on campus, a third to a half of them leaving class immediately pull out their cell phone. We think, 'if we could harness that, it would be a good thing.'" This scenario, identified by Albert Ingram, associate professor of Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences at Kent State University, repeats itself on campuses across the nation, and it is often the reason that distance education administrators contemplate adding mobile learning to their distance education offerings.

However, like all distance education technologies, the move to mobile devices has pros and cons, and incorporating these devices should be a decision made to support pedagogy, not simply to use a technology because of the coolness factor or the ubiquity of the device.

As an example, in the late 1990s, the author of this piece interviewed an educational device manufacturer who was enthused about the device's ability to take computing power out of the classroom into the field. One of the key attributes of the devices was a probe that could be used to measure the pH level of pond water and other naturally-occurring substances, record it, and bring it back into the classroom for analysis. This all seemed wonderful, until the author remembered doing the same exercise as an elementary school student with a highly portable device — litmus paper.

Mobile devices for distance education may be in a similar position. If universities can make the case that they allow for an advance in pedagogy, then they are worth the trouble to integrate into a program. If not, then they may well be the functional equivalent of an electronic substitute for litmus paper.

Con: Small screens mean small bites

Ingram has some serious misgivings about using mobile devices in electronic education, and one of the primary drawbacks is screen size typical of mobile phones and smart phone devices. "They have all of the disadvantages of a CMS and then some. You're chopping things up into little tiny pieces to fit on phone screens," he says. He further explains that universities should be in the business of teaching students to look at larger, more complex issues, and the need to divide content down into bite-size chunks may work against that.

And just because the mobile devices deliver small bites doesn't mean that the total impact is not overwhelming. Consider the students streaming from class, checking their text messages, tweets, and Facebook updates. Evidence suggests that this continual connection can be stressful. In a 2010 article in the *Journal of Distance Education* ("Mobile Learning in Distance Education: Utility or Futility?"), Marguerite Koole, Janice L. McQuilkin, and Mohamed Ally, all of Athabasca University, contend that "cellular telephones, in particular, can enhance social and emotional presence and lead to a sense of ambient co-presence, the sense of continuous availability. Indeed, learners can even suffer from too much contact and loss of privacy." Continuous connection can mean continuous anxiety.

Pro: Screens are getting bigger

"I love the iPad because of the screen," Ingram says. In fact, the iPad may be the device that negates the objection of small screen size endemic to mobile phones, although it loses something in easy portability as a result. (Think of a soldier stationed overseas; is it his iPad that is going into the trenches with him, or his phone?)

However, the functionality and ease of use of the iPad has inspired Ingram to consider what educational uses the device could be used for. "I've spent a lot of time thinking of what new apps we can develop," he says. "There is some very interesting collaborative software; we can connect with one another and create a concept map," he says of one app. He also sees the iPad as potentially improving upon educational approaches even if it is not being used for totally new functions. "We can do incremental things – better, in more places," he says. The collaborative software is an example of this; while collaboration among academics has always occurred, this software may make it feasible in more locations.

Con: Screen size is not the only limitation

If screen size were the only limitation, it would be easy enough to require students to buy an iPad on admission and continue with their studies. However, research identifies other challenges to using mobile devices, such as limited means of inputting and outputting data (think of those minute keyboards), a lack of processing power and resolution, and small memories. These limitations are currently being confronted by the healthcare industry, which is finding that, while it is easy to find an app that — for example — allows radiologists to view images on an iPhone or iPad, it is much more difficult to ensure the resolution and image clarity necessary to make a diagnosis.

Platform is also currently a consideration. Much as early electronic education struggled with making documents available in formats accessible to users of both PC and Mac, mobile device educators must think about whether apps are available for iPhone, Blackberry, and Android. Only time will tell whether there will be a coming together of platforms as happened with PC and Mac.

Pro: Constraints can be educational

Consider the tweet. This 140-character message sent out over Twitter can be seen as the ultimate in constraint of self-expression. However, at least one thinker has hypothesized that the limited character constraint of the tweet is ideal for teaching how to write pithy headlines and marketing messages that clearly convey the main points. Likewise, Koole, McQuilkin, and Ally suggest that "although one might expect that the limitations of typing speed and data transfer limitations would cause short, superficial interactions, researchers Batpurev and Uyanga in 2006 suggested that it may instead 'force the learner to prioritize his messages … possibly promoting higher-order thinking.'"

Con: Faculty need to lead

To be truly successful, the use of mobile devices needs to be spearheaded by the faculty members who will use them in their online classes. "How are you going to get faculty to use this and think about this in new ways?" asks Ingram, adding, "I foresee a lot of top-down kinds of initiatives." Using any new technology can't be mandated from above; rather, it must come from the faculty using it.

Pro: Information at learners' fingertips

The history of distance learning has been one of "anytime, anyplace" learning. Almost all types of distance learning have marketed the delivery method as important in freeing students from the constraints of geography and time. Mobile learning is no different.

According to Koole, McQuilkin, and Ally, "mobile devices allow learners to more easily carry reference and communication tools with them into real-world environments. This flexibility permits frequent dialogue with experts and peers, just-in-time retrieval of information, documentation of personal experiences, and integration of course-based knowledge into aspects of the learners' daily lives — all permitting learners to receive feedback and assess their progress."

Pro: Doing things differently

Ingram is in favor of using mobile technology not to recreate functionality that already exists but to give students experiences they could not otherwise have. For example, he suggests using the GPS function on mobile phones to allow students to explore nearby historical sites or to do exercises like impromptu needs assessments while in a restaurant. These exercises may not be as do-able with traditional technology. Adding to this set of scenarios, the article by Koole, McQuilkin, and Ally suggests that "mobile learning is particularly promising for health care professionals who are completing their practice in remote communities. Using mobile devices, supervisors can monitor, interact with, and assess a learner's progress when direct observation is not possible?

Instructional designers and faculty members, however, must avoid the temptation to adopt a technology just because it does things differently and ask themselves if it advances learning in the course.

Instructional designers and faculty members, however, must avoid the temptation to adopt a technology just because it does things differently and ask themselves if it advances learning in the course. "We always want people to start with the education; which technologies are going to help you do that?" Ingram asks.

In fact, it is the potential to do more and do it more effectively that inspires some educators in thinking about mobile devices. In an article in a 2010 issue of *Educational Technology and Society* ("Defining Mobile Learning in the Higher Education Landscape"), Mohamed Osman M. El-Hussein and Johannes C. Cronje, both of Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town, South Africa, contend: "Mobile learning opens our minds to the possibility of a radically new paradigm and encourages us to abandon the constraints of our habitual ways of thinking, learning, communicating, designing, and reacting." For these authors, mobile learning "can be viewed as any form of learning that happens when mediated through mobile devices and [is] a form of learning that established the legitimacy of 'nomadic' learners."

Will mobile devices ultimately be the next big improvement to distance learning? If the history of distance learning is an indication, it is likely that these devices will become integrated as delivery technologies even as the devices themselves improve and become more suited for the jobs they are asked to do. It falls to educators to be sure that they adopt the devices because they offer the potential to do something new to advance the pedagogy. Otherwise, they run the risk of becoming a high-tech substitute for litmus paper.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Distance Education Report *15.9 (2011): 1,2,7.* Distance Education Report *newsletter is dedicated to helping you improve your online learning programs, from the "big picture" to the nuts and bolts.*

Related Resources – Mobile Education

- Magna Online Seminars
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Chapter Five
Supporting Students through Retention Strategies

Chapter five includes articles on retention strategies and advising.
All articles were selected from the *Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education* newsletter.

Got Major? Program Aims to Aid Undeclared Students' Persistence

Written by: Jennifer Patterson Lorenzetti

Retaining students and seeing them persist until graduation are goals for every college and university. But students have many different reasons for dropping or stopping out, and understanding some of the potential risk factors is key to addressing this universal problem.

For Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pa., the strategic plan was the starting point for an increased focus on the retention of undeclared students. The college's retention rate falls between 83 and 85 percent, and its goal is to increase this rate to 88 percent by 2013. One of the primary focuses of this initiative is the undeclared student, who the college feels is at a greater risk for dropping or stopping out.

The concern is based on research. The college looked at retention to the sophomore year and persistence to graduation and then looked at the number of times students changed majors. This led to the determination that the undeclared population may be particularly at risk.

To address these challenges, the college has developed the Got Major? program, a specialized English class that focuses on self-exploration as a path to finding the right major.

Shannon Brandt, assistant dean for student success and advising, works with the undeclared student population. She finds that there are two different types of undeclared student, each with different reasons for not declaring a major.

The first group comprises the truly undecided, who may have narrowed their choices down to two or three possible majors but have not yet reached a decision. The second group includes those who initially declared a major but were not accepted by that major, or students who took a few classes in the major and then decided that it was not for them.

Either one of these situations can be challenging for students, especially those just starting college, Brandt says.

"Their front-burner priority is making friends and trying to do well in class. Then, they look at deciding on a major as such a huge task," says Brandt. This sense of being overwhelmed can be enough to make a young student reconsider the decision to go to college.

Most students "are great multitaskers but not multithinkers," Brandt says. "If they don't have a place they are headed, they lose motivation." Discomfort with the ambiguity of being undeclared can cause students to lose focus on finishing a degree at all.

To address this sense of confusion and the daunting task of major selection, Lebanon Valley has instituted the Got Major? program, an English 101 section focused on the topics of major and career selection, much like the college's existing first-year seminars.

Because the course fulfills the requirements of an English course, it has to include the same level of research and writing as any other English class. However, this one focuses on self-exploration and investigation of what sorts of careers different majors prepare a student for.

The class makes use of Project Close Up, a program offered through the career services office that offers job shadowing with alumni and research into a target company. The students also complete career assessment questionnaires such the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment.

The Got Major? program also has a component designed to help major-changers who run into trouble mid-semester, such as students who select a major and then drop a course after finding it too difficult or uninteresting.

These students are often confronted with not just the anxiety of choosing a new major but also the reality that dropping a course can take them below full-time status, which is a potential disaster for financial aid and progress toward a degree. Therefore, the college will soon offer a one-credit version of the Got Major? course that begins mid-semester, thereby helping students who change their minds about a major once a semester has started.

To date, Brandt has been providing academic advising services for undeclared students, but she notes that "there are usually about 50 to 60 students, a little much for one person to advise." She hopes to form a team of faculty members who will advise undeclared students just as department faculty advise students with declared majors. These faculty members would teach general education courses, so the undeclared students would be sure of seeing their advisor in at least one course.

The Got Major? program can't address every reason that an undeclared student will drop out of school. Brandt has identified other factors that might lead to a student's decision to discontinue study at the college. These reasons include emotional or psychological issues that began before college, financial challenges, or the discovery that one's preferred major is not offered by the college. All these issues would need to be addressed by other measures, and some student attrition is always expected.

The Got Major? program will debut this fall, and the college will track its impact on retention as it pursues its goal of increasing student retention and persistence.

College officials are curious to learn not only about student retention resulting from participation in the program, but also about whether these students were able to choose a major with which they are satisfied.

Brandt is hopeful that there will be a positive impact. "We give them the skills to get started," she says.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education *25.6 (2011): 5, 6.* Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education *discusses the fundamental challenge facing higher education institutions today — recruiting and retaining the students most likely to thrive and contribute to your campus community.*

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  - 10 Ways to Improve Retention Rates of First-Generation Students

Ensuring Retention from a Faculty Advisor's Perspective

Written by: Joan Marques

"The changes we go through enlarge our ability, strengthen our stability, and expand our flexibility."

As we continue through the 21st century, the implications of this statement are becoming more important. As the Millennials enter graduate school and blend with the more seasoned workforce members who return to obtain advanced degrees after many years of working, a fascinating challenge is being presented to faculty.

Today, we face more diversity than ever before, not only because of the increased migration of people in their quests to become global citizens and establish greater quality of lives for themselves and their loved ones, but also because of the entirely different perspectives on learning held by the generations we now find together in our classrooms.

In addition, we are dealing with people who harbor different reasons for obtaining their educations, and therefore, different levels of interest in the material we present.

Amidst this demographic mélange, we face additional challenges, both external and internal.

The external challenge is represented by the fact that higher education has shifted from an advancement necessity to a highly competitive good. Today's younger and older adults can choose from education formats that range from distance education to seminars, on-the-job training, mentoring, and self-teaching. The variety amplifies the need to convince students continuously that the choice they made when they selected our institution is still the right one.

The internal challenge pertains to the “what” and the “how”: the material we present and the way we bring it into the classroom.

It has been established that about 90 percent of what a person learns in his or her first year of college is obsolete by the time he or she graduates. As a result, we need to ask ourselves how we can minimize this obsolescence and ensure that students obtain lasting benefits from their educations.

I have concluded that the fast pace of our times is guiding us into an entire revamping of our teachings: theories and formulas are rapidly growing stale. They can be Googled at anytime from anywhere and don’t need to be hammered into anyone’s brain anymore. Today, we need to teach people how to think critically and become lifelong learners so they may benefit from the ever-changing environment, understand its challenges, and be aware of their role in reducing those challenges and creating better opportunities, thus becoming more flexible and open-minded than they were before they decided to enroll in our institution.

This is very similar to the old adage of giving a man a fish versus teaching him how to fish. The college education that we current educators received was much like “earning” a fish, which used to take us a long way. However, the hyper-evolving 21st-century environment is causing each individual fish to go bad very quickly; today, the challenge is to learn how to fish: to be adaptable to changing circumstances, environments, and challenges and to be able to use creative and critical abilities to take advantage of these.

In addition, the format in which we bring our message matters a lot in how students will perceive their education, and therefore, how eager they will be to finish their college journeys at our institution. Given our highly diverse classrooms, we have to include ways of educating that capture students’ attention and help them see an immediate link between what we teach and how it will benefit them in the world “out there.”

We need to use creativity in presenting our material to pique students’ interest. A blend of carefully selected YouTube clips, papers, presentations, guest lectures, educational videos, experience exchanges, and creative projects is pretty much customary in today’s classroom.

It is understandable that not everything can be made equally interesting. One of the things I struggle with in my MBA courses in organizational behavior is student writing. Due to the fact that we have such a diverse group of students in our classes today, the writing ability varies tremendously, and the assurance of a certain minimum standard becomes crucial. Collaborating with writing specialists and allocating ample time for them to assist in elevating students’ skills in this regard is just a small part of the challenge.

There is a much greater hurdle to overcome as well: helping students understand why writing is important to them.

There is a much greater hurdle to overcome as well: helping students understand why writing is important to them. Business students have a tendency to underestimate the importance of writing, and I have found that the best way to help them understand the value is to explain to them how this skill will be beneficial to them in their professional lives and in their futures.

As a final note, most faculty in higher education also engage in student advising. We should not underestimate its role in retention.

Different students need different levels of guidance. Some are very determined and familiar with the process; they know exactly how they will proceed through their programs.

Others, however, need more handholding. International students often come from cultures where there are cohort formats and therefore no freedom in choosing course sequences or prerequisites. These students are at a loss when confronted with options and need to be educated about the most responsible and rewarding course combinations to make their education most gratifying.

However, what constitutes the right balance is not the same for everyone. Some people are simply better able to handle pressure, overloads, or unpopular course combinations than others. As faculty-advisors, we have to find the proper balance for each of our advisees. Some will be comfortable with numbers, and have no problem taking multiple math-based courses together. Others are mathematically challenged and need a well-considered sequence to make sure their GPAs will not suffer from too much emphasis in either direction.

Being a faculty advisor can be a very rewarding career in these dynamic times, especially if we understand the purpose of what we are doing. Understanding the importance of our task and the impact we make in the lives of upcoming leaders is crucial in retaining these leaders in our institutions and making them better able to pay it forward when their time to lead comes.

Joan Marques is the director of the Bachelor of Business Administration program at Woodbury University and a member of Recruitment and Retention*'s advisory board.*

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education *25.5 (2011): 6, 8.*
Recruitment & Retention in Higher Education *discusses the fundamental challenge facing higher education institutions today — recruiting and retaining the students most likely to thrive and contribute to your campus community.*

Related Resources – Advising

- Magna Course
  - Art of Advising: Reframing the Issues, Promoting Faculty Success

- Magna Online Seminar
  - A Comprehensive System for Promoting Retention & Graduation

Chapter Six
Faculty Focused Student Support

Chapter six features articles on teaching and learning.
All articles were selected from Magna Publications' free enewsletter, *Faculty Focus*.

What Students Want: Characteristics of Effective Teachers from the Students' Perspective

Written by: Ellen Smyth

As an undergrad, I put myself through school waiting tables — a truly humbling experience that made me a better instructor. With a mission of 100% customer satisfaction and my livelihood on the line, the patron's experience became my highest priority.

Taking that mindset into the classroom, I strove for 100% student satisfaction — within the confines of academic integrity, of course — and achieved great results. It turns out, oddly enough, that students love feeling important, valued, respected, and honored. And through the resulting faculty-student connection, students willingly transform into vessels of learning.

My teaching career has not always been rosy, however. After spending months with mini-demons from a special place in Hell, though they claimed to be from behavioral remediation, I grew jaded, losing my respect for students and not coincidentally my effectiveness as a teacher.

Years passed before a colleague helped me rediscover that our attitude toward students makes all the difference. Back on the path to student satisfaction and effective teaching, I constantly ask myself what students really want from me.

Conveniently, I was able to watch faculty from the Memorial University of Newfoundland present a study on Students' Perceptions of Effective Teaching in Higher Education at Wisconsin's 26th Annual Distance Teaching and Learning Conference. Researchers had asked their students this question: What characteristics are essential for effective teaching from the student perspective? Analyzing and combining reasonably synonymous characteristics, researchers isolated the top nine for online and for face-to-face students.

ONLINE	FACE-TO-FACE
1. Respectful	1. Respectful
2. Responsive	2. Knowledgeable
3. Knowledgeable	3. Approachable
4. Approachable	4. Engaging
5. Communicative	5. Communicative
6. Organized	6. Organized
7. Engaging	7. Responsive
8. Professional	8. Professional
9. Humorous	9. Humorous

Respect is numero uno. How about that? More important than knowledge (than knowledge!!!) and the ability to communicate and engage, respect dominates all other characteristics in effective teaching, according to students. Faculty spend, on average, 22 years acquiring enough knowledge to teach at the university level. How much time do we spend on respect?

Students should be shown all the respect we can muster. We need to regularly analyze and question our attitudes. We need to empathize with students by imagining role reversals and by believing in them whenever possible. We need to humble ourselves so that even the least are worthy of our attention and admiration.

The same top nine characteristics are common between online and face-to-face students, with only the order for the two bolded characteristics changing.

The same top nine characteristics are common between online and face-to-face students, with only the order for the two bolded characteristics changing. Responsiveness is more highly valued online, moving five positions. This jump explains why classroom faculty new to e-learning don't always realize the urgency in responding to email and discussion posts. These faculty have been operating under a paradigm in which responsiveness is not so critical — a paradigm that needs to shift for online learning.

The remaining characteristics warrant a more thorough examination than this article provides. I challenge you to explore ways of fostering all nine characteristics.

Ellen Smyth is an instructor in the Mathematics Department at Austin Peay State University at Fort Campbell.

Reference:

Delaney, J.G., Johnson, A.N., Johnson, T.D., & Treslan, D.L. (2010). Students' Perceptions of Effective Teaching in Higher Education. St. John's, NL: *Distance Education and Learning Technologies.*

This article originally appeared in the enewsletter Faculty Focus on April 18, 2011. Faculty Focus publishes articles on effective teaching strategies for the college classroom — both face-to-face and online. Start your free subscription at http://www.facultyfocus.com.

Related Resources – Teaching and Learning

- Magna Online Seminars
  - Teaching Integrity: Effective Responses to Cheating
  - Extra Credit: An Undeserved Gift or a Second Chance to Learn?

- 20 Minute Mentors
  - How Do I Discuss Academic Integrity During the First Class?
  - What Are the Three Worst Mistakes to Make in the Classroom?

Tips for Teaching Adult Students

Written by: Brooks Doherty

With the number of non-traditional students growing, many educators have discovered that adult learners are fundamentally different than their younger counterparts in many ways. Yet, most instructors have been left to their own devices to figure out how best to reach these students who come to class with an entirely different set of challenges, demands and expectations, and generally at a much different level of maturity.

How can instructors better accommodate and encourage adult student success in a classroom setting? Here are a number of ways to create a better environment for adult learners, no matter what the subject material.

- **Treat them like the adults they are.** Adult learners are generally more sophisticated and experienced than their younger counterparts and they benefit from realistic examples of skills they can use in "real life." "Adult learners will be empowered as they discover they have a great deal to teach their younger classmates, and the dynamic is mutually beneficial," said Thomas Lisack, an instructor at Rasmussen College in Wausau, WI. Lisack recommends incorporating intergenerational discussions on issues that otherwise have a generational divide as appropriate for the subject matter to engage learners of all ages.

Adult learners are generally more sophisticated and experienced than their younger counterparts and they benefit from realistic examples of skills they can use in "real life."

- **Be aware that their classroom skills may be "rusty."** Some adult learners have not been in a classroom for 30 years, so you may need to remind them of basic rules and etiquette, such as raising a hand if you have a question. At the same time, reassure them that, as the instructor, you will not be judgmental of their life experiences or their perspectives, and that they will be evaluated only on their mastery of the content. Be generous when it comes to formatting issues such as APA writing guidelines. Instead, focus on content. "I have found adult learners to be self-conscious, even apologetic, when it comes to being in the classroom," Lisack noted. "They might even exhibit some shame because they feel decades behind their classmates. The more you can break down these walls of insecurity, the better."

- **Consider and acknowledge the technology gap.** Students in their 50s and 60s are generally not nearly as tech savvy—or tech dependent, as some would argue—as 18 or even 30 year olds. Assess each student's level of proficiency as it relates to class requirements and compensate. Lisack said he once spent three hours after class teaching a group of displaced workers—many of whom had never used a computer—the finer points of Microsoft Word. "The students were very grateful. I felt I'd accomplished something important to help them on their educational journey and it was very satisfying," he said. Even if they are skilled with technology, adult learners tend to have dramatically different habits. "While younger students may be tethered to technology, adults have longer attention spans and traditional classroom approaches appeal to them," Lisack said. "This does not mean you can lecture to them for three hours, but you can expect the older learner to concentrate on complex material without feeling 'withdrawal' of from a technology device."

- **Be efficient with lessons and activities.** "Move fast and don't waste anyone's time," advises Andrea Leppert, adjunct instructor at Rasmussen College in Aurora/Naperville, IL. "Adult students have jobs, sometimes children and tons of responsibilities, so pack every class with information and useful activities." Consider balancing instructional time with "lab" time, giving students an opportunity to do modeling work or homework in class to give them a better chance of accomplishing all the requirements on time. Leppert also suggests being "strictly flexible" — diligent in your expectations, yet understanding about busy lives, illness and working late. "Like any job, it's not to be abused, but as grown-ups, we have priorities that sometimes take precedent over finishing assignments," she said. "Build in safety nets that allow a limited number of late assignments to maintain flexibility, accountability and expectations of excellent work."

- **Be creative:** Use the unique vibe or personality of each class to teach the lesson and choose activities that engage, and even entertain to some degree. Pair highly motivated students with those less skilled on projects to create peer encouragement and mentoring. Leppert says this strategy keeps students interested, attendance high and motivation strong.

Finally, beyond specific tactics, both Lisack and Leppert emphasize personal growth when working with adult students. While younger students are encouraged to do well on standardized tests and accustomed to being compared to their peers in this way, adult learners are challenging themselves. Consider making personal growth in ability and skills part of the actual grade. Leppert said, "I compare the first speech to the last one given when I grade to determine how they are personally improving. It helps build confidence and give tangible areas for improvement. School is hard enough...we should point out the positives."

Brooks Doherty is the dean of faculty at Rasmussen College in Minnesota, where he oversees students seeking degrees in business, education, health care, and technology. Brooks has worked in higher education for a number of years as an academic dean and general education coordinator.

This article originally appeared in the enewsletter Faculty Focus on April 18, 2011. Faculty Focus publishes articles on effective teaching strategies for the college classroom—both face-to-face and online. Start your free subscription at http://www.facultyfocus.com.

Related Resources – Teaching and Learning

- Magna Online Seminars
  - 7 Learner-Centered Principles to Improve Your Teaching
  - How to Deepen Learning through Critical Reflection

- 20 Minute Mentors
  - How Flexible Should I Be With Non-Traditional Students?
  - What Can I Learn From Student Ratings?

Chapter Seven

Supporting Students in Student Affairs

Chapter seven covers student mental health and alcohol abuse.
All articles were selected from the *Student Affairs Leader* newsletter.

Recommended Programs for those in Student Affairs

• NCSL (National Center for Student Leadership) Commons

Whether you are looking to find leadership training for your students or professional development opportunities for yourself, NCSL Commons offers you the tools you and your students need.

With more than 65 hours of training on student leadership and student affairs topics to choose from, you are sure to find the development program you need, when you need it.

What's Included?

- More than 65 seminars available on demand—ready when you are
- Plus bonus white paper resources!
- New online seminars are added often so you always keep up to date
- Handouts and supplemental materials custom-designed to enhance the learning experience of each seminar

• NCSL Conferences

The National Center for Student Leadership (NCSL) holds two annual, national leadership conferences each spring and fall for more than 1,200 students from over 200 colleges and universities. Each conference offers in-depth workshops on leadership topics chosen for their relevance to the skills young leaders need to succeed on campus and beyond.

Responding to Student Suicide Attempts

Written by: Carolyn Reinach Wolf, Esq. , and Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D.

When working with students who have mental health difficulties and suicidal thoughts and behaviors, we must take into account certain legal and administrative issues. Any successful attempt to assist students who have made suicide attempts includes the following components:

- Handling the initial crisis
- Ensuring proper communication between all involved parties
- Balancing legal considerations
- Preparing for the student's return to campus

Below, we offer advice on managing each of these components:

Handling the initial crisis

First, medical staff should make the decision regarding whether a student should be hospitalized. Having a student enter a psychiatric unit, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, is a serious step and should be done in consultation with the counselor, psychologist, hospital staff, and parents.

It is also important to know what latitude confidentiality laws provide for responding to students in crisis. Often the school, parents, or students misunderstand the various federal, state, education, and health care laws that govern confidentiality and, in turn, a school's or health care provider's ability to notify parents or guardians of a student's emergency. However, federal confidentiality laws (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA), as well as state confidentiality laws, make exceptions for such emergencies. It is often more important to understand these exceptions, as they are often needed in times of crisis or urgency, than to understand the specifics of the full laws themselves.

Familiarity with voluntary and involuntary psychiatric commitment laws in the school's jurisdiction is also important when making referrals to health care institutions. That way, accurate information, which can smooth the way for such admissions, can be conveyed more effectively and efficiently.

In addition, involving parents or guardians in the process of working with a suicidal student more often than not offers advantages, including presenting a united front to the student, bringing in people familiar with the student's medical and psychiatric history, and bringing to the table people who have a loving, supportive relationship with the student.

Ensuring proper communication

Key players' ability to communicate with each other in the hospitalization process helps to ensure quality care for the student in crisis. This communication, however, can be hampered by the various legal and administrative interpretations of FERPA, HIPAA, and state medical record laws.

As a result, schools should prepare now to map out how parties will communicate with one another when a student crisis does arise. It is folly to think that multiple professionals will communicate well in the middle of the night during a crisis without some preparation or understanding of policy and of what they are expected to do. A memorandum of understanding between the university and the local hospital can be helpful in establishing communication guidelines.

Another way to plan ahead is to take what might be called a "class trip," in which school officials leave campus, visit the hospitals and outpatient facilities to which students are sent or referred, and exchange information about confidentiality, releases of information, notification, and related policies and procedures. School and health care facility officials should also exchange information about point people within the organizations who are available or on call at various times of the day and week.

In return, health care organization officials should be invited to campus to tour the counseling center, residence halls, health center, or other pertinent areas so that officials can become familiar with what these areas look like. The officials should also learn what policies and procedures govern specific instances or emergencies, and meet the institution's on-call or point people.

Schools should also consider drafting memorandums of understanding specific to their school and state laws, so that in a crisis, everyone knows what is expected.

Face-to-face communication and interaction go a long way toward fostering communication, information sharing, and trust.

Schools should also consider drafting memorandums of understanding specific to their school and state laws, so that in a crisis, everyone knows what is expected. It is always better to operate in proactive, routine mode than in a reactive crisis mode.

Balancing legal considerations

School officials, students, and families do not need to become attorneys expert in the laws governing campus safety and health issues. However, it is vitally important for the campus community to be well educated and trained in using these laws to address student mental health, safety, and intervention issues.

Although the number of lawsuits regarding these issues is currently small, it is not zero. Liability control is always an issue of concern to higher education campuses. However, more important than the threat of liability should be the defensibility of individuals and the institutions themselves.

With good threat assessment, education, and training, as well as an eye toward effective and efficient communication and documentation, liability concerns can be held in check. More important, the students' best interests will prevail.

If everyone is knowledgeable about and follows the institution's policies and procedures (there is little that is less defensible than violating one's own policies and procedures), and is trained in what is "reasonable under the circumstances" in any given situation, then there is already good risk management on campus.

The law cannot anticipate all circumstances that may occur in a given instance, so life experience, professionalism, and gut instinct go a long way toward formulating an appropriate response. Focus first and foremost on the student's best interests, which is really what institutions of higher learning are designed to do.

Preparing for a student's return

Stephen Covey writes in his book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People about the importance of communicating with "the end in mind." Any effort to assist students must begin with an understanding that a hospital stay is only a temporary measure to address an acute problem. Every actively suicidal student who goes into the hospital comes out as a moderately suicidal student needing care and support.

This may involve requiring the student to meet with a counselor on campus to build a supportive treatment relationship. It should often involve a meeting with the student and the student's parents (or other support people) to discuss how the school can help in maintaining the student's safety on campus. It may involve administration working with the student to take a time away from school or assisting the student with applying for an incomplete in classes or completing work he or she missed while away.

Carolyn Reinach Wolf is a partner in the law firm of Abrams, Fensterman, Fensterman, Eisman, Greenberg, Formato & Einiger and is director of the firm's mental health law practice. Dr. Brian Van Brunt is director of counseling and testing at Western Kentucky University and president of the American Counseling Association.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Student Affairs Leader *39.4 (2011): 1, 2.*

Related Resources - Student Mental Health

- Magna Online Seminars
  - When a Student Attempts Suicide: The Seven Next Steps
  - Helping Faculty Help Students Who Need Mental Health Care

- White Papers
  - Student Leaders Struggling: When the Best and Brightest Need Help
  - Tabletop Exercises for Threat Assessment Teams

Lessons from Harvard's College Alcohol Study

Written by: Dennis Black

To what extent does the college environment contribute to students' heavy drinking? What are the roles of campus culture; alcohol control policies and those policies' enforcement; and alcohol access, availability, pricing, and marketing?

As colleges and universities struggle with student drinking and its implications, the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPS) has examined these and other questions in a series of studies known collectively as the College Alcohol Study (CAS).

The CAS

Beginning in 1992, the HSPH conducted four major studies and issued more than 80 papers as part of the CAS, with the goals of developing a national picture of college student alcohol consumption and describing the drinking behaviors of high-risk drinkers. The work, which surveyed 50,000 students on 120 different campuses, was funded by grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The CAS asked students about their alcohol consumption to identify rates of "binge drinking," which the HSPH defined as consumption of five or more drinks in a row for men and four or more drinks for women on one or more occasions during the two-week period before students took the survey.

The CAS also asked students about:

- Alcohol consumption in the past year
- The occurrence of "frequent binge drinking," or bingeing on three or more occasions in the past two weeks
- The number of days they were drunk in the past month
- The number of days during which they drank alcohol in the past 30 days

Results

The initial administration of the survey in 1992 found that binge drinking was prevalent among American college students, with two in five students (44 percent) attending four-year colleges drinking at binge levels.

Follow-up studies in 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2002 corroborated the 1992 results, with researchers finding few changes in drinking patterns over the years of data collection and analysis.

Based on these findings, the HSPH has noted that that drinking style of many college students "is one of excess and intoxication." Among student drinkers surveyed over the years, almost half reported that they often drink to get drunk. One in four students reported drinking 10 or more times a month, and among students who drink, 20 percent reported being intoxicated three or more times a month.

The CAS also found that these drinking habits affect student academic performance, social relationships, risk-taking behaviors, and health. The studies found that binge drinking is associated with missing classes, falling behind in classwork, and lower grade point averages. Binge drinking, according to the CAS, is also associated with risky sexual behaviors and antisocial behaviors.

Other studies noted that at least 1,700 college students die each year from alcohol-related injuries, the majority sustained in automobile accidents. The CAS revealed that 13 percent of drinking students drove intoxicated and that 23 percent of students said they had been a passenger in a car operated by an intoxicated student.

The CAS also examined the secondhand effects of high-risk alcohol consumption. The studies found the following:

- Students who attended schools with high rates of binge drinking experienced a greater number of secondhand effects—such as sleep or study disruption, property damage, and violence—than students attending schools with low binge drinking rates.
- Twenty percent of students reported that they were insulted or humiliated by another student who had been drinking. Ten percent said they had been in a serious argument or quarrel with an intoxicated student.
- Nine percent reported having been pushed, hit, or assaulted by a student who had been drinking. An estimated 600,000 college students per year were hit or assaulted by another student who had been drinking.
- Five percent of female students reported that they were victims of sexual assault, and 75 percent of these students were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the assault.
- Residents of neighborhoods near schools with high binge drinking rates were more likely to experience noise disruptions, property damage, and police visits than those who lived in neighborhoods near schools with lower binge drinking rates.

Environment

The CAS noted that half of all college binge drinkers engage in binge drinking before their arrival on campus, meaning that the other half begin binge drinking as college students.

According to survey findings, the following factors encourage first-year students take up binge drinking:

- Greek life membership
- The belief that most peers drink heavily
- Easy access to alcohol through social affiliations
- Attending a school with a high rate of bingeing

The HSPH also found that the following factors appear to influence students' drinking habits:

Students' place of residence

Student drinking was linked to the level of supervision in the living environment and the presence of other heavy-drinking students. Students living at home with parents had the lowest reported levels of consumption.

The demographic makeup of a campus' student population

A CAS report notes the following:

> A greater racial and ethnic diversity on campus is associated with lower binge drinking rates among the white majority students. Similarly, lower binge drinking rates were observed among male and underage students at colleges that had more female and older students. Students who did not binge drink during high school were more likely to take up binge drinking in college if they attended schools with fewer minority and older students.

Student engagement

Student involvement on campus and in the surrounding community also seems to relate to students' drinking habits. In general, students who were more involved in "productive college activities" and volunteer service were less likely to binge drink. That finding led researchers to recommend an increase in involvement, because:

> These findings suggest that increasing student involvement in their campus and community through volunteer service may help to limit overall campus alcohol consumption and the harms associated with it.

Alcohol cost and availability

Not surprisingly, campuses where students have easy access low-cost alcohol tend to see higher binge drinking rates. Low-price promotions at off-campus alcohol outlets appear to have the same effect.

Campus alcohol policy

Researchers found that campuses that banned alcohol on campus had lower binge drinking rates; however, students who drank at these colleges drank just as heavily as students at schools that allow alcohol on campus. The finding suggests that perhaps the greatest benefit of banning alcohol is that fewer students experience secondhand effects from others' drinking than do students at schools where alcohol is not banned.

State and local alcohol policies

Students attending school in areas with more alcohol controls are less likely to engage in risky binge drinking, the HSPH found.

Common legal controls include:

- Keg registration
- Restricted driving based on blood alcohol content (BAC)
- Happy hour restrictions
- Open container laws
- Restriction on sales of pitchers of beer
- Limits on alcohol advertising
- Prohibitions against the use of false identification
- Restrictions on alcohol sales to and purchase by minors
- Clear warnings about consequences of breaking the laws

Campus prevention programs

The CAS researchers looked at particular prevention programs, such as social norming, which aims to demonstrate to students that their peers drink less heavily and less often than they might think. The CAS researchers' observations?

> Administrators at approximately half (49%) of the colleges reported using social norms marketing as a prevention strategy to address student alcohol use. A CAS evaluation of colleges in which administrators reported that they used social norms marketing found that students attending these were more likely to report being exposed to social norms program messages and materials than were students at other campuses. However, no significant decreases in any measure of drinking were observed at colleges that employed a social norms approach compared with schools that did not, regardless of the length or intensity of the program. Conversely, a significant increase in any alcohol use was observed at these colleges.

CAS concluded "overall, the evidence on the efficacy of social norms marketing programs is mixed, and further study of this approach and the specific features that may enhance its effectiveness is needed."

Lessons

Where does this leave campuses in their understandings of how to proceed? A few thoughts from the Harvard research team:

- The study raised awareness about the extent of college binge drinking and the associated harms.
- A broad approach is needed to impact drinking, targeting the campus community and the surrounding community.
- It might be more feasible to "incrementally shift the behavior of the majority" rather than dramatically impact heavy drinkers' behavior.
- Future prevention efforts might best be directed to limiting aggressive alcohol marketing and reducing the easy access to low-cost alcohol.

For more information, see "What We Have Learned from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study: Focusing Attention on College Student Alcohol Consumption and the Environmental Conditions That Promote It," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, July 2008. It is available at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cas/What-We-Learned-08.pdf.

This article originally appeared in the newsletter Student Affairs Leader *39.11 (2011): 5, 6, 8.*

Related Resources — Alcohol Abuse

- Magna Online Seminars
  - Alcohol Education Programs: Purchase, Customize or Create?
  - Strategies to Decrease Binge Drinking: Templates, Advice and Lists
  - Campus Saferide Programs: Practical Advice & Rules of the Road

- 20 Minute Mentor
  - My Student Has a Mental Health or Substance Issue. Now What?