Online learning and student success

5/2/2011

Distance Education Committee
Digital Literacy

- Often described as information literacy
- Students should have ability to read and understand dynamic non-sequential information
  - reading and understanding digital and non-digital formats
  - creating and communicating digital information
  - evaluation of information
  - knowledge assembly
  - information literacy
  - media literacy
Information Literacy

- Integration of library resources
- Link resources from course-related instruction sessions on Blackboard [example]
- Links to subject databases
- Students spend less time searching for websites and more time doing the actual research and critical thinking
- Designate a librarian liaison for online students?
- Provide online reference services via real-time chat?
Cyberized Education: The 6 levels of change

Where Cyberization Is Happening: Six Levels of Change

1. Life resource
   (Internet used to communicate, socialize, entertain, network, inform)

2. Learning Resource
   (web-based resources used for informal learning experiences)

3. Education Resource
   (Internet as knowledge source for formal HW assignments, school projects, etc.)

4. Information, Communication, Management
   (web sites, email, et al.)

5. Instruction
   (online, blended delivery)

6. Improved Teaching & Learning
Communication issues

Issues of *communication* between students and instructors are of greatest concern

- Instructor’s *responsiveness*
- *clarity* of assignments
- *comprehensibility* of instructional materials
- the *interactive* nature of the course
- the *timeliness* and *quality* of instructors’ feedback on individual student effort
Best practices (according to students)

- course expectations communicated in a well-organized and accessible manner
- learning objectives clearly defined
- effective, useful, and comprehensible course materials, handouts, and assignments
- instructor responsive to students’ questions
- instructor engaged with the students directly on a regular basis
  - Regular announcements and participation in discussion board
- personalized written and detailed feedback on individual student efforts
The bad news

- for a 50/50 chance of earning a C or better in any online course, basic academic skills should be at college English level.
- young males don’t do as well; older guys do
- lack of instructor feedback; lack of feeling part of an online community; or poor instructional design
- lack of advising; unrealistic expectation of time commitment
- those who registered 70 or more days from the beginning of the class posted the highest mean grade average
Strategies for keeping students

• Better instructional design
  • Course provides ample opportunities for feedback, easy to navigate, and instructions clear

• learning style assessments and technical assessment

• a student attempting to register for a course after the start date may be asked to see both an advisor and the course instructor for counseling about suitability for the course

• make sure they know about support services; library, bookstore, financial aid, online textbooks, etc.
Interaction

- Text and images
- Audio
- Audio visual
- Video
- Real-time