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Retention of Online Students

One benefit of the modern world is online learning opportunities. Students can complete coursework from anywhere in the world with a device and internet access. Remote education has existed for over 100 years, facilitating learning for students who could not reach a physical school (Sadeghi, 2019). Distance education has progressed over the years as technology has improved, with coursework delivery evolving from mail correspondence to audio and video and finally becoming the fully online content that exists today (Sadeghi, 2019). Recent events have grown the reach of eLearning exponentially. In 2020, more people were exposed to online learning than ever before due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when the world was locked down and everyone was forced to stay at home. Many college and university students who had never taken an online course were forced to do so since they could not physically attend their institutions.

First, one major issue that leaders in online learning face is how to retain online students. While an online class may have high initial enrollment at the beginning of a term, it is common for numbers to fall considerably by the end, with students dropping the course or no longer logging in. Many institutions of higher education deal with this issue and struggle with student retention in online courses. The focus of this paper will be to examine the causes of low student retention in online courses and investigate possible solutions to the issue.

Next, several research questions will be explored to address the issue of low student success rates at two- and four-year colleges and universities.

1. What are the leading causes of low student retention rates in online classes at higher education institutions?
2. Why do online students withdraw from their classes or fail to complete the semester?
3. What are methods for early detection of students who are at risk of dropping out or who have not accessed their online courses?
4. What approach can institutions take to reduce drop rates for online classes?
5. What are some techniques for student success in online classes?

Finally, research will be conducted to answer these questions, utilizing scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals retrieved from the online database of the Laredo College Library. The data points that will be researched are as follows:

- Retention Online Students
- Success Rates Online
- Digital Higher Education
- Leadership online education
- Online educational leadership
- Educational leadership AND online learning

References

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