

Seeking Solutions: An Examination of Online Student Retention

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Abstract

Poor retention of online students is a serious concern affecting many institutions. This analysis collects data on online student retention to explore factors for high drop rates, identify recommended solutions, and determine the most effective leadership style to deal with the issue. Methods utilized for data retrieval consist of interviewing a leader in online education and reviewing academic journal articles. The findings are that the issue is critical and must be resolved. Additionally, there are numerous reasons why students drop their online classes, including feelings of isolation, lack of basic technical ability, poor time-management skills, and family responsibilities. Other factors contributing to low retention rates include insufficient support, poor instructor engagement, and failure to interest students in course content. Among the recommendations for resolving the issue of poor online retention are establishing rapport and maintaining relationships with students, providing opportunities for self-evaluation of eligibility for online education and training in time management and organization, and continual evaluation of online courses and faculty along with course redesign based on student feedback. Finally, due to the ever-changing nature of online education, the situational leadership style is best suited to handling this issue.

An Examination of Online Student Retention

Introduction of the Case

Since COVID-19, online education has become more popular at higher education institutions. During the lockdown, students who had never taken online classes were exposed to this mode of delivery and have chosen to continue pursuing their education virtually, as they are now comfortable with the online environment. Students can attend class from the comfort of their homes, saving time and money. Also, online instruction provides the advantage of flexibility for many people who cannot attend when in-person classes are offered. While some students successfully complete their online courses, regrettably, many do not; students register for online courses but drop them.

Some possible causes of high student drop rates are ill-prepared students with poor time management skills, struggles with technology, and a lack of support (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2017). Other possible reasons for low retention may be poorly designed course content, lack of instructor participation, and low student engagement (Simplicio, 2019; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). There may also be personal issues such as stress, family responsibilities, or feelings of isolation (Simplicio, 2019; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2017).

This issue is of great concern because it can impact the student and the institution in myriad ways. Often, students who drop their courses lose the tuition paid, and they are set back yet another semester in their academic progress, which delays graduation and can be detrimental to their confidence (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). Similarly, institutions rely on online students for increasingly higher enrollment numbers (Glazier & Harris, 2020). Competition is high among

institutions, and each student that drops is a costly loss (Yang et al., 2017). This paper will explore why students drop their online courses, provide recommendations on improving retention rates, and determine which leadership style is most effective in the field of online education and in handling this concern.

Methods

The information for this analysis consists of an interview with a leader in online education and articles from academic journals. First, an interview was conducted with Mrs. Alicia Reed, Director of the eLearning & Instructional Innovation Center of Laredo College. Mrs. Reed was identified for her experience and expertise in the field of online education. Ten questions were asked, touching on various topics, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the Quality Matters program, and tips for online students and instructors. Next, extensive research was conducted, and six scholarly articles were found to provide insight into online student retention. Four of the journals focus solely on distance education; the fifth concentrates on the field of education as a whole, and the last covers information technology topics.

Interview and Research Summaries

In the interview, Mrs. Reed provided insight into the state of online education at Laredo College, commenting on how quickly teaching and learning are evolving and mentioning the intense acceleration resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. She described the approach the institution took in handling the lockdown and the challenges the eLearning Instructional Team experienced in moving hands-on courses online and figuring out how the material could be taught virtually. Mrs. Reed mentioned that the eLearning Center had already trained the faculty on the College's Learning Management System; because of this, instructors were acquainted

with the tools available while all instructional activity was held in the online environment. When asked which mode of course delivery (face-to-face, online, or hybrid) would be most popular as time progresses, she stated that it is vital to offer all three. Online courses offer flexibility but also require more attention and work from students.

Then, Mrs. Reed spoke about the Quality Matters Program at Laredo College, describing its purpose and how it helps online students succeed by applying instructional design and accessibility standards to online courses. She then described some of the other initiatives the eLearning Center has that focus on student success, sharing that the eLearning Team is constantly looking for new technology and equipment to assist students with their coursework. She offered some tips for online learners, suggesting they prioritize and keep track of their due dates and spend time working on their assignments daily. Finally, Mrs. Reed gave some advice for online instructors, encouraging them to continue learning, be open to suggestions, and incorporate popular apps such as TikTok to boost student engagement.

Next, research was conducted to examine online student retention and to determine why online students drop their classes, ways to reduce drop rates, the behavior of successful online students, and methods of improving online student success. Additionally, leadership in distance education was explored. Laredo College Library's online database was utilized to search for relevant academic journal articles. Specific search terms used were retention online students, success rates online, digital higher education, leadership online education, online educational leadership, educational leadership AND online learning, online leadership, course design student success, and online student success.

Consequently, six articles were selected for analysis as they provide insight into online student retention. The first article, from Sorensen and Donovan (2017), describes a study

conducted to investigate why online students drop their courses. Students were interviewed, observed, and surveyed; according to their feedback, findings were that there are a plethora of reasons for students to drop their online classes, including poor academic performance, lack of support, and lack of organizational and time-management skills (2017). Secondly, the journal article by Glazier and Harris (2020) covers their study that explores ways to reduce drop rates in online classes. The authors found that when faculty connect with their students and establish a sense of community within the online course, it increases student success and lowers the number of students likely to drop the class (2020). In the third paper, Wang et al. (2019) share a study that provides additional guidance on how to lower the drop rate of online students. They found that increased student interaction and shorter-duration courses have positive effects (2019). The next piece, from Yang et al. (2017), is about a study they conducted to determine the factors contributing to student success in online classes. Results indicate that student perspective is crucial – the likelihood of success is greater for those who are satisfied with their chosen program and the courses they are taking and feel their choice of major provides value in their lives and career (2017). In the fifth article, Simplicio (2019) suggests methods for improving online student success rates, including student self-evaluation for compatibility with online learning and faculty assessment to determine their commitment and eligibility for online teaching. The sixth and final article, by Beaudoin (2015), discusses the obstacles facing leaders in online education and the most effective leadership style.

Analysis

Throughout the collected journal articles, four themes stood out for consideration: poor retention of online students is a challenge across the field of online education, numerous factors contribute to a student's decision to drop an online course, interaction is crucial to student

success, and support is equally important. First, researchers agree that a critical issue for online education is high drop rates (Glazier & Harris, 2020; Simplicio, 2019; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019). While demand for online programs continues to increase, institutions face the challenge of retaining their online students (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Yang et al., 2017). Institutions must recognize and work to mediate this issue to best serve online students and protect their well-being.

Next, there are multiple reasons why a student may drop their online class (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2017). The first reported cause is insufficient time management skills (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). While online education offers the benefit of flexible scheduling, “some students may misjudge their ability to balance multiple priorities or are unaware of the time commitment that is still needed for their studies” (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). Lack of training in organization and prioritization can negatively impact an online student’s ability to complete their online course.

Another factor for poor student retention is that online students frequently experience feelings of isolation (Simplicio, 2019; Wang et al., 2019). This can be caused by disconnected instructors who fail to connect with their students and insufficient opportunities for student interaction and collaboration (Wang et al., 2019). Simplicio (2019) states that “students who work alone experience higher course failure rates.” Seeing classmates’ input and working alongside them boosts feelings of fellowship and creates warmth and community in the online environment. “Social presence, i.e. the ability to perceive others in an online environment, has been shown to impact students’ motivation and participation” (Wang et al., 2019).

The last reason for high student drop rates identified by researchers is technology troubles (Wang et al., 2019). One facet is the lack of technical ability (Yang et al., 2017).

Students need to have basic technical skills to succeed in their online courses. Secondly, students may not have the necessary resources at home, including access to the internet (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). Online students must log into their classes daily and may have to find the time as it is available, which can occur late at night when computer labs are closed. Hence, at home internet is an absolute necessity for online students. (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2017).

The third idea expressed across the research is that regular interaction with others is beneficial for online students (Simplicio, 2019; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019). Working with classmates encourages a community within the online environment, which increases engagement and participation, ultimately boosting commitment and follow-through (Simplicio, 2019; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017; Wang et al., 2019).

The final point mentioned throughout the articles is that instructors and institutions can improve success rates by providing ample support to their online students. A survey of students who dropped their online courses indicated that they needed better support from their instructors and the institution (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). According to Glazier & Harris (2020), feedback shows online students need faculty assistance through scheduled meeting times and timely responses to questions and concerns. Further, institutional support significantly impacts online student retention (Yang et al., 2017). When online resources and support are available for online students, it can positively influence student success rates.

Accordingly, to improve online student retention rates, the research puts forth recommendations at the instructor and institutional levels. To begin, certain faculty characteristics have been identified to have a positive impact on online student retention. Instructors must be caring, approachable, flexible, and understanding toward their students'

needs (Glazier & Harris, 2020; Simplicio, 2019; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). Many students have family and work responsibilities, so they choose online classes because of the flexibility it provides (Glazier & Harris, 2020; Simplicio, 2019). “Very often students select specific online programs because of their life situations...instructors must be a little more responsive to students who are already apprehensive about taking online classes” (Simplicio, 2019). Online faculty must have these traits to make students feel welcomed and supported.

Moreover, faculty can work to improve results in their online classes through specific action steps. The first is establishing good relationships with their students from the outset of the term (Glazier & Harris, 2020; Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). “[B]uilding rapport can be a powerful tool to help retain online students and reverse the current retention crisis” (Glazier & Harris, 2020). Suggested methods are for the instructor to share personal information within the course, including a picture and short biography, as well as contact information and availability (Glazier & Harris, 2020; Simplicio, 2019). Additionally, instructors can influence their students’ feelings of inclusion and reduce isolation by promoting interaction in the course (Simplicio, 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Creating group assignments and discussions and advocating a class chat forum produces a community atmosphere within the course, encouraging students to work together and helping them get familiar with each other (Simplicio, 2019; Wang et al., 2019). “The use of group work for initial assignments allows students to develop a teamwork mentality that provides them with peer support, emotional backup, and a better opportunity for academic success” (Simplicio, 2019). Establishing these connections from the beginning of the semester will provide a much-needed social network and boost students’ sense of connection and engagement within the course. Finally, instructors should gather student feedback and be open to learning new technologies according to their suggestions (Higgins, 2022). Incorporating a new

application, like TikTok, for educational purposes will reach students at their level and increase engagement with course content (Higgins, 2022). Stimulating student interest and interaction within the course can improve student success (Wang et al., 2019). By applying these suggestions, faculty can positively impact retention in their online courses.

In addition, researchers provide recommendations for improving online success rates to be implemented at the institutional level. The first approach is to have students complete a self-evaluation before registration to determine whether they are cut out for online education (Simplicio, 2019). Through the questionnaire, students will learn the elements necessary for online success, including basic technical skills, a computer at home, and internet access. They can evaluate their circumstances to confirm whether online learning is a good fit for them. Implementing self-evaluation will reduce the number of students who enter online courses under-prepared and thus help increase success rates.

The second suggestion is to foster relationships between admissions personnel and online students and keep them going strong by regularly reconnecting (Yang et al., 2017). “If initial rapport between admission staff and the students has been established, and periodic check-ins are maintained during a student’s stay, online students would reconsider leaving the program even if they have to” (Yang et al., 2017). This approach will help students feel supported and connected to the institution, boosting their commitment and engagement in the online environment. They will also be more likely to reach out if they need assistance, reducing the likelihood of dropping. The following recommendation is to prepare students for online learning by giving them training in time management and organizational skills development (Sorensen & Donovan, 2017). They will learn to manage a busy schedule, handle multiple deadlines, and prioritize responsibilities. Preparing students for online learning before their classes start will increase completion rates.

The final proposal provided by researchers for institutions to improve online retention rates is to maintain an ongoing focus on online course improvement. The first suggested approach is conducting regular evaluations of faculty and courses (Yang et al., 2017). “This kind of ongoing evaluation and assessment is part of an institutional support and practice that impacts both the quality of online courses and the quality of online instructors” (Yang et al., 2017). Secondly, institutions should invest in skilled instructional designers to assist with online course improvement (Simplicio, 2019). Design staff can help faculty redesign their online courses as needed to keep up with emerging technologies and instructional design trends and in response to student feedback (Simplicio, 2019; Yang et al., 2017). Regular revision of online courses by refreshing the course design and incorporating new technology can stimulate student engagement and improve student retention rates.

Lastly, online student success is influenced by the overall leadership demonstrated in online education. The situational leadership style is most effective for leaders in online education to meet the needs of their students, faculty, and the other moving parts of the online environment (Beaudoin, 2015). Since “online learning changes constantly due to the advances of educational technologies and research” (Yang et al., 2017), leaders in online education must be adept at handling the constant and rapid progress of technology (Beaudoin, 2015). They must adapt their leadership style based on the situation's needs and continue evolving as the situation changes (Beaudoin, 2015). This also applies to handling their students’ needs; they are also subject to and benefit from the influence of technology and current educational trends. Leaders must consider everyone involved when planning future innovations to ensure smooth transitions for all (Beaudoin, 2015). They must be forward-thinking and proactive in handling the ever-changing landscape of online learning (Beaudoin, 2015). Ongoing flexibility and willingness to engage in

frequent evaluation and improvement can benefit online students and improve online retention. Therefore, situational leadership is an effective style for the field of online education.

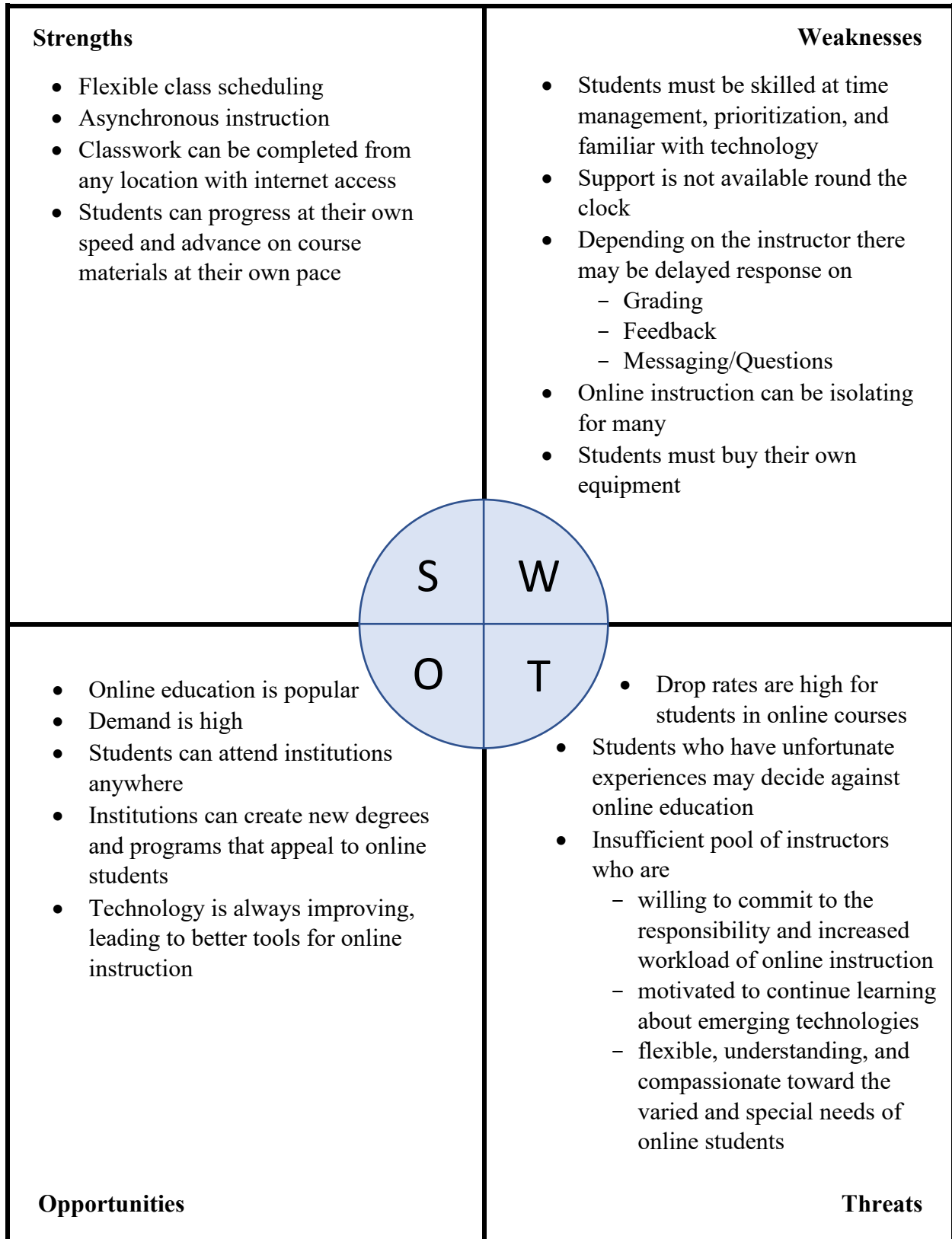
Conclusion

In summary, the serious issue of high online drop rates is widespread across many educational institutions. Research indicates that contributing student factors include stress, feelings of isolation, and poor time-management skills. Other reasons are a lack of interaction between students and instructors, failure to engage students, and insufficient support. Recommended solutions include creating a sense of community through group assignments, establishing relationships between instructor and students, regularly evaluating online faculty and courses, and improving course design to incorporate new technologies and address student feedback. Finally, the leadership style best suited to address the issue of online student retention and governance in online education is situational leadership since the online environment is in a constant state of flux.

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SWOT Analysis for Online Student Retention



Annotated Bibliography

Key Terms for Research

1. Retention online students
2. Success rates online
3. Digital higher education
4. Leadership online education
5. Online educational leadership
6. Educational leadership AND online learning
7. Online leadership
8. Course design student success
9. Online student success

Beaudoin, M. F. (2015). Distance Education Leadership in the Context of Digital Change.

Quarterly Review of Distance Education, 16(2), 33–44.

In this paper, author Michael Beaudoin discusses the challenges faced by leadership in online learning. Among the obstacles mentioned is “technological transience,” which is when the technology changes as soon as users have gained some proficiency, and they continually have to learn the technology before they can learn the course material.

Additional challenges mentioned are lack of instructor engagement in the online environment and the constantly changing landscape of online education that can be a

deterrent to adopting new online programs. Beaudoin goes on to list some of the characteristics necessary for leaders to keep progressing in the online arena, such as a transformative or situational leadership style, resilience, and commitment to assist the new leaders coming into the field. This article applies to the topic of online student retention because it highlights the type of leadership that is most effective and issues facing the field of online learning, providing a transition into why students drop and the article from Sorensen & Donovan below.

Glazier, R. A., & Harris, H. S. (2020). How teaching with rapport can improve online student success and retention: Data from two empirical studies. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 21(4), 1–17.

In this piece, authors R. Glazier and H. Skurat Harris write about a study they conducted. The resulting data indicated that when instructors connect with their students and facilitate a sense of community within their online courses, it positively affects student retention and student success rates. In other words, students who connect with their instructor and peers in the course are more likely to do better. This article aligns with the topic of online student retention because it provides suggestions for improving student retention and success. It provides a solution that faculty can apply and correlates with why students drop, as mentioned in Sorensen and Donovan's article below.

Simplicio, J. S. C. (2019). Strategies to improve online student academic success and increase university persistence rates. *Education*, 139(3), 173.

In this paper, author Joseph Simplicio offers strategies that institutions can use to combat the high drop rates of online students. The first idea suggested is to help students evaluate

whether they are ready for online learning. By assisting them in assessing their learning style and academic history, their level of access to the necessary technology for online study, and the amount of time they can dedicate to their coursework, they will be more likely to succeed. The next suggestion is ensuring that the faculty selected to teach online are committed to dedicating the time and effort needed. Faculty must be available to their students through the set means of communication and respond within a reasonable timeframe. The third technique is to assign a group project as one of the first assignments of the course to establish a community within the course and promote student engagement. Other strategies provided are for the instructors to be available during set times, to provide individual meetings as requested for their students, and to make sure students are aware of the resources available to them as online students. This article will be instrumental as a source of additional methods for reducing the drop rates for online classes and aligns with the article by Yang et al. below.

Sorensen, C. & Donovan, J. (2017). An examination of factors that impact the retention of online students at a for-profit university. *Online Learning*, 21(3), 206-221.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24059/olj.v21i3.935>

This article is about a study that was conducted to find out why students drop from their online courses. The means for data collection were observing online classes where the students dropped, interviews, and surveys. There were many reasons for dropping that were common among the students in the study, such as lack of support, lack of time-management or organizational skills, and poor academic performance. This paper applies to the research topic of online student retention because it provides an opportunity to

understand the students' perspectives on why they drop. It is a continuation of the conversation started in the article by Michael Beaudoin that was presented earlier.

Wang, W., He, L., Guo, L., & Wu, Y. J. (2019). Effects of social-interactive engagement on the dropout ratio in online learning: Insights from MOOC. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 38(6), 621–636. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2018.1549595>

The paper by Wang et al. shares a study they conducted to evaluate student retention in online classes. Their findings indicated that the drop rate is lower for students in courses with shorter duration, that social interaction within the course also lowered the drop rate, and that it is less likely that students in more challenging courses will drop. This paper will be crucial in finding solutions for online student retention, and it echoes the message presented by Glazier and Harris above.

Yang, D., Baldwin, S., & Snelson, C. (2017). Persistence factors revealed: Students' reflections on completing a fully online program. *Distance Education*, 38(1), 23–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2017.1299561>

This article discusses a study the authors conducted to learn more about what circumstances are necessary for students to succeed in online classes. Their findings were that there are factors on the individual level and at the program level that assist students in completing and passing their online classes. For the program level, students are more successful if they study a major that meets their needs. Further, students will be more likely to succeed if they are content with their courses, learning outcomes, and the program. Then, the study indicated that on the personal level, students need to feel like they are achieving something of value and that their program and courses are assisting

them in accomplishing their career goals. They also need to recognize the benefits of learning something new. Another interesting factor that contributes to student success in online classes is whether the student is interested in technology or works in the technology field in some capacity. Finally, the study indicated that students were more likely to stay in their classes if they felt supported by the program's staff. This article ties into the topic of online student retention because it provides additional insight into how institutions can set students up for success from the beginning and works together with the papers from Wang et al. and Glazier and Harris.

Transcription from Podcast

Hannah Higgins [00:00:03] Thanks for joining us on Behind the Keyboard: Adventures in Online Learning. I'm your host, Hannah Higgins. Today's guest is Mrs. Alicia Reed, director of the eLearning and Instructional Innovation Center at Laredo College. Mrs. Reed has served as the director for over one year and has worked in the eLearning field since 2017. Over the years, she has seen the benefits of online learning in higher education, has weathered the drastic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on her institution, and has seen the eLearning Department grow and evolve. Today, we will tap into her expertise to learn more about online learning at Laredo College, discuss the current state of eLearning post-COVID, and hear some success tips for online students. Hi, Mrs. Reed! Thanks so much for being here with us today.

Alicia Reed [00:01:01] Thank you. Thank you for inviting me.

Hannah Higgins [00:01:04] So you've been at the eLearning Center at Laredo College for a while. What changes have you seen in eLearning throughout your time with the department?

Alicia Reed [00:01:12] Well, what we've seen in five years is the learning trends with students are very different. Also, the teaching trends with the faculty are different. So doing a little bit of a combination of both, I think there's been a lot of adapting happening on both sides, especially given what just happened in the last couple of years. But this is, I think, personally that these two, the learning and the teaching, are changing quite rapidly. So I predict that we're going to continue seeing those changes coming.

Hannah Higgins [00:01:48] So you mentioned, you know, what we've seen in the past two years; you're referring to the pandemic, right? COVID-19 was a chaotic time for higher education institutions worldwide. How were circumstances of everyone being at home handled at Laredo College and by the eLearning department specifically?

Alicia Reed [00:02:10] Well, we were kind of ready for this, not that we knew this was going to happen. But something that really helped us is the fact that faculty had to use Canvas, the LMS, for the grading and the assignments and all of that. So pretty much all our faculty have gone through Canvas training, which was really something that really helped because they were not learning it as we were going through the pandemic. But also one of the things that we found or one of the challenges that we had was especially for those classes that were hands-on, how we, the instructional team, had to learn new applications or new ways of doing things and at the same time teach the instructors how to do this or how to change their content to now. So those were some of the challenges that we faced. But overall, I think we were kind of very well prepared, like I said, for the situation, even though we didn't ever think it would happen.

Hannah Higgins [00:03:10] And were there any new or modified processes that were implemented during the pandemic and that are still used today at the college?

Alicia Reed [00:03:19] Yes. So, believe it or not, I mean, I think when I found out, it was kind of a surprise, but many of our processes were still done on paper. You know, filling out a form, signing, and so on and so forth. So, one of the things that the institution did was electronic signature for most of the processes, and we still continue with that. Granted, some forms are still paper, but most of them are now electronically, and there are more processes that the students can do electronically or on the website that, honestly, we were not doing before.

Hannah Higgins [00:03:54] So, Laredo College offers face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes. Which do you think will be the most popular moving forward and why?

Alicia Reed [00:04:03] Well, I think we, as students and faculty, I think we all have different needs. So, I think - I don't believe there's going to be one that will be more popular. Now, there's one, the online one, kind of gives you more flexibility for the students, especially for those who work full-time or, you know, have young kids, and you don't have a babysitter or where they can be. So, I think that's the one that gives you a little bit more flexibility. But at the same time, that gives you more responsibility or more work as a student because now you've got to be on top of your due dates and assignments and pretty much learning on your own time, but you don't have your instructor there to provide feedback right away. So I think that's becoming more popular. But at the same time, I think we should be equally offering the equal options to students because they all have different needs.

Hannah Higgins [00:05:00] A wide variety for all the different kinds of students that we have.

Alicia Reed [00:05:03] Correct. Correct.

Hannah Higgins [00:05:07] On the website, I read that Laredo College is a Quality Matters subscribing institution. Would you share a brief description of the Quality Matters program?

Alicia Reed [00:05:16] Sure. Quality Matters is a rubric. It's a rubric to design an online course, making sure that those courses are accessible and well designed for students in the sense that, even if you have never taken an online course, it's easy for you to navigate, it's easy for you to find and understand the information that is in there. Also, make sure that all the objectives, like everything that the instructor said at the beginning you were going to learn, it actually covers in the content of the course. So, for example, it's like if we say you're going to be learning the ABCs, but all your assignments and all the content is numbers, that's not aligned, right? So that's a program, a rubric that makes sure that all the content aligns with the learning objectives, but at the same time, in an easy way to navigate for students and it is accessible for all students of the different situations.

Hannah Higgins [00:06:10] So that kind of answers my next question, which was what parts of the QM program are designed to benefit student success?

Alicia Reed [00:06:17] So there is what we call an essential standard that is accessibility. So that one is really beneficial. Overall, everything is beneficial, but that one is really beneficial for the students, like I said, because that one makes sure that regardless of any situation or your preferred learning of, you know, some of us are visual, some of us are hearing and so on and so forth. So, it covers all modes, so make sure that you have access to the information and the content.

Hannah Higgins [00:06:48] Like an even playing field for all the students.

Alicia Reed [00:06:50] Correct.

Hannah Higgins [00:06:53] And what other initiatives besides QM does the College have to boost student engagement?

Alicia Reed [00:06:59] Well, I cannot speak for the entire college, but I can tell you for the eLearning, we're trying to bring more technology and more equipment into the department. So, for example, we have a recording booth that things like this can happen, and students can do it in that recording booth with, you know, the equipment and everything that they need. We also are trying to get something that we call collaboration tables. So that way, a group of students can come and be working on their collaboration table, share the screen at the same time, they will have access to the same visual at the same time. So we're trying to boost and bring more things, more technology to students so they can keep learning and more hands-on and more - I think students, they really like to do things, you know, play with new things. So that's what we're trying to do here.

Hannah Higgins [00:07:51] That's awesome. Well, speaking of students, what are some tips for success for our listeners who are taking online classes?

Alicia Reed [00:08:00] Well, something that I can tell you, being an online student myself, is you need to have, take a lot of notes in the sense that prioritizes your things, your assignments, either by due date or maybe whichever it is that would take you longer or the hardest or whatever. Also, try to read a little bit, go into your class, and read a little bit of the content every day, so you don't try to absorb everything at once in that way, especially when you have tests or quizzes, you're more prepared than not prepared. So those are, I guess, the two main ones that I can give you right now.

Hannah Higgins [00:08:38] Okay. And finally, any words of encouragement for online instructors?

Alicia Reed [00:08:45] Yes, of course. So, something that I would like for instructors to, that I think will be very helpful for them, is keep learning. As teachers, you teach something every day, but at the same time, you learn something every day. So keep learning and be open to new trends. Be open to suggestions. Sometimes with the feedback the students give you, for example, even do a TikTok so we can learn more about this topic or do this so we can learn it easier. So on and so forth. So just be open. And believe me, in the eLearning Department, we're here to help you. So even if we don't know it, we'll learn it with you. So, yes, just keep learning and be open to suggestions.

Hannah Higgins [00:09:27] Mrs. Reed, thank you so much for sharing your insights. I'm sure our audience will greatly appreciate you sharing your knowledge.

Alicia Reed [00:09:35] And thank you for the opportunity of sharing this conversation and having this moment to share some ideas. Thank you.

Hannah Higgins [00:09:43] Thank you.

Hannah Higgins [00:09:45] You have been listening to Behind the Keyboard: Adventures in Online Learning. Tune in next week for our next installment. I'm your host, Hannah Higgins.