Research Abstracts

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CONNECTIONS

This collection of abstracts represents research conducted around the Instructional Connections coaching model. Research has been conducted with and without small grants provided by Instructional Connections, LLC. In addition, where research was conducted outside of grant funds, there is a notation at the bottom of the page.

The abstracts may be unpublished and a notation for each abstract will identify whether it has been published or not. There is a hyperlink to published articles so that the reader may access the published version of the document.

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Lived Experiences of Graduate Teaching Assistants in an Online Nursing Course

Author: Robert Williams, Ed.D
Institution: Argosy University
Year: 2012
Dissertation

This study examined roles and perceptions of roles of online teaching assistants, through phenomenological research with ten participants in one Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science nursing course. Common themes were identified with regard to addressing three research questions. 12 primary themes were identified through open coding: perceived role, challenges, positive experiences, online vs. professional roles, formative education and professional experience, useful strategies, reorganization of life, gratification, self-learning, connection to personal experience, being appreciated, and view of students. Results support examination of online teaching assistants as a viable alternative for universities in online education. Further research should include studies with different populations, comparative studies traditional and online courses, and quantitative studies measuring retention, student satisfaction and student matriculation.

Characteristics of Academic Coaches in an Online RN-to-BSN Program

Authors: Daisha Jane Cipher and Mary E. Mancini
Institution: University of Texas Arlington
Year: 2018

Background: To achieve the growth of RN-to-Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs in the face of ongoing faculty shortages, many large online RN-to-BSN programs have embraced the use of academic coaches to assist with course delivery. Method: An associational analysis of data collected from academic coaches and their student and faculty evaluators was performed on a sample of academic coaches who were teaching students enrolled in a large online RN-to-BSN program. Results: The multilevel data consisted of 94 coaches who taught in 166 courses. Evaluation data from 12,004 students were captured and connected to each academic coach and course. Overall, the RN-to-BSN coaches received favorable ratings by both instructors and students alike. Conclusion: The use of academic coaches can help to expand capacity while delivering a high-quality educational experience. These results indicate that satisfaction with academic coaches has the potential to be very high, from both the students' and the faculty members' perspectives. [*J Nurs Educ*. 2018;57(9):520-525.]

Use of Academic Coaches to Promote Student Success in Online Nursing Programs[1]

Authors: Lisa Broussard, DNS, RN, CNE [*], Debra White-Jefferson, DNP, RN
Institution: University of Louisiana Lafayette
Year: 2018

There are currently over 700 registered nurse (RN)-to-Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) programs in the United States, with at least 600 of these degree offerings provided at least partially online (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2017a). The number of RN-to-BSN programs continues to increase each year; however, there exists a dire shortage of qualified faculty to meet the needs of these students. While the need for nurses prepared at the baccalaureate level continues to grow, faculty shortages across the United States are limiting student capacity (American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2017b). One strategy to adequately meet the needs of this growing online student population is the use of academic coaches. Although there is wide variation in the literature on the role of academic coaches in university programs and courses, their capacity to provide support to faculty by grading papers and discussion forums, proctoring examinations, providing feedback to students, and facilitating instruction of course content has been noted (Cox-Davenport, 2017; Harris, Froman, & Surles, 2009). This article describes how one large nursing program utilizes academic coaches to facilitate student success in an online RN-to-BSN program, including a brief history of the program, its rapid increase in enrollment, and the partnership with a third-party vendor to utilize qualified academic coaches. In addition, the role of the faculty and the academic coaches will be described, and the onboarding and evaluation processes and challenges experienced with this delivery model.

[1] There have been no funding sources for this article.
[*] Corresponding author.

Apply Interactive Learning Approach Provided by Academic Coach in a Graduate-Level Accounting Course

Author: Lei Wen
Institution: Emporia State University
Year: 2019
Unpublished

This paper makes a contribution to extend accounting education literature by examining the impact of applying interactive learning approach provided by an academic coach in an online graduate-level accounting course. This study finds that the use of online meetings with an academic coach helps students have a much positive view about the course and a better perception about their instructor's teaching effectiveness for the course, compared with their peers in a control group without online meetings with an academic coach. The offering of online meetings by an academic coach also improves students' evaluation about the academic coach in an online graduate-level accounting course.

The results also demonstrate that students are divided about the impact of academic performance from online meetings with an academic coach in this class. One of possible explanation could be that students enjoy having interactive learning alternative provided by an academic coach in an online graduate-level accounting course. Because the participation is totally voluntary, the participation rate in online meetings with an academic coach is extremely low. How to encourage more students to participate online meetings with an academic coach would be an important area for further study.

Keywords: Accounting Education, Accounting Course, Course Development.

The Effect of Academic Coaches on Non-Traditional Student Performance in Intensive Online Learning Environments: A Three Course Comparison

Authors: Sunyoung Park and Petra A. Robinson
University: Louisiana State University
Year: 2019
Unpublished

The purpose of this study is to examine how academic coaches impact non-traditional student performance in a time-intensive online learning program for pursuing a master's degree in a research-intensive public university in the Southern United States. The subjects of this study were 435 graduate students enrolled in their online master's degree program. By adopting the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique, we compared the academic performance of students in three courses (Principles of Adult Education, Research Methods, and Performance Analysis) with different numbers or styles of academic coaches.

The findings indicated that the average score of students was higher when students received more feedback and comments from an academic coach than less feedback and comments in the performance analysis course. Students who had an academic coach in the adult education class performed better than those who did not have a coach. However, there was not a significant difference in academic performance based on the number of academic coaches (one vs. three) in the research method course.

Keywords: academic coach, intensive online program, non-traditional student performance

Managing the Large Online Classroom Using the Academic Coach Model

Authors: Debra White-Jefferson, Lisa Broussard and Helen Fox-McCloy
Institution: University of Louisiana at Lafayette College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions
Year: 2019
Unpublished

As the need for more BSN-prepared nurses continues to grow, so does the impact of online learning as a higher education delivery model. One of the challenges in meeting the demand for more BSN prepared nurses is the nursing faculty shortage. Another challenge is nursing faculty trained in the delivery of online education.

Nursing administrators are tasked with a large number of students entering online education with insufficiently trained faculty in the delivery of online education. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to examine the role of the academic coach in RN to BSN programs, and to begin to establish best practices in order to better meet the needs of this growing student population.

One strategy to adequately meet the needs of this growing online student population is the use of academic coaches. Academic coaches possess a minimum of a master's degree in nursing and are experienced in using online learning management systems. They can operate under the leadership of nursing faculty employed by the institution. The results of this study indicate that understanding the overall expectations of the coach, appropriate onboarding and orientation and consistent academic oversight, along with some best practices are key in supporting the use of academic coaches to increase student support and engagement in large online classrooms.

Synchronous Online (SO) Culture Tellers (CuTe)

Author: Jiyoon Yoon
Institution: University of Texas Arlington
Date: 2019
Unpublished

The project, "Synchronous Online (SO) Culture Teller (CuTe)!" was to develop a synchronous online communication model with the Academic Coaches for culturally-inclusive science instruction and to measure its effects on forty teacher-candidates' understanding of multiculturalism. Fifty-six teacher-candidates from online science method courses communicated with five culture-tellers through the synchronous online tools and experienced diverse cultural difference including history, politics, art, music, dance, food, clothes, housing, geography, and education, and then they created their own culturally-inclusive science lessons. The pre-test and post-test of self-efficacy, participants' conversations with the culture tellers, and their final culturally-inclusive lessons showed that the Synchronous Online (SO) Culture Teller (CuTe) project was effective for the teacher candidates to improve their multicultural competency and to develop their skills to create and manage the equal learning environment where students can get actively involved in learning science. An important role of the academic coaches in SOCuTe was to provide feedbacks to the teacher-candidates and grade their culturally-inclusive science lessons based on the multicultural/diverse rubrics, which supported completing teacher-candidates' lessons and their understanding of multiculturalism. The culturally sensitive pedagogical approach for ethnic minority students and teachers who work with this special population was also discussed in this study.

Keywords: Science Teacher Education, Culturally inclusive Teaching, Synchronous Online Learning, Multiculturalism

Academic Coaching in an Online Environment: Impact on Student Achievement

Authors: Melissa J. Hawthorne [Principal Investigator] and Jesse V. Sealey
Institution: Louisiana State University-Shreveport and Newman University
Year: 2019

Although the idea of online education is not new, the development of massive open online courses (MOOCs) brought the idea of using 100% online courses in higher education to the forefront of educational debate. As more universities offer 100% online programs, concerns about student retention and academic outcomes continue to linger. In addition to these concerns in general, there are questions regarding the increasingly large class sizes and the effectiveness of different ways of minimizing the impact of this size on both instructors and students. Academic coaching provides a potential way of addressing both concerns. In this model, trained coaches assist instructors with course related matters such as grading assignments, overseeing and grading discussion boards, and grading and providing feedback on written assignments. However, there are concerns regarding the effectiveness of the model on student academic outcomes and student satisfaction. The current study examined differences in student satisfaction and the role of Need for Cognition (NfC) in student outcomes. Results indicate that students with higher levels of NfC are more satisfied with professors, courses, and programs overall both when coaches are used and when they are not.

Keywords: Academic coach, Need for cognition, Student achievement, Student satisfaction

Assessing Teaching Readiness in Online Programs

Author: Aziza Zemrani
Institution: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Year: 2020
Unpublished

Over the last 60 years, the educational environment in the United States has changed dramatically to try to meet the evolving needs of its citizens. According to statistics collected from the U.S. Dept. of Education, "there are over 7,000 higher education institutions in the U.S. with over 15 million students" enrolled. The 17 percent growth rate for online education enrollments far exceeds the 1.2 percent growth of the overall higher education student population (Allen & Seaman, 2010). The accessibility of the internet and flexibility of online courses have made online education an integral part of higher education (Li & Irby, 2008). In addition, financial issues facing many higher education institutions and students' demands shift the focus of these institutions more toward using online education (Limperos et al. 2015). Many empirical studies have been conducted to examine the quality of online courses from various aspects. Studies have identified and examined critical issues affecting quality of online education such as communication, technology, time management, pedagogy, and assessment (Limperos, et al., 2015). This study assesses coach/instructor readiness to teach in online accelerated programs. The purpose of the study is the use of "the Smarter Measures readiness indicator" to improve the online Accelerated Programs at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) and Instructional Connections (IC) identify gaps and challenges and then equip them with remedial resources to improve quality of the accelerated programs, especially given the class size in most graduate programs at the UTRGV. The results from the survey show evidence that the most important factor assessed "Readiness Range", out of 32, 27 score high on technical competency, and 30 out of 30 score high on technical knowledge. Although the purpose of the research is to assess the readiness for online teaching, the survey included questions on "Individual Attributes", 11 out of 34 score high whereas 22 score only medium.

The Effect of Collaboration and Utilization of Academic Coaches in Online Learning Environments

Author: Amanda Hawkins and Dr. Britany Grissette
Institution: Columbus State University
Year: 2023
Seeking Publication

The University System of Georgia (USG) is utilizing a Cooperative Academic Agreement (collaboration of 13 schools) as an important mechanism to increase pre-licensure program enrollment. For the Cooperative Academic Agreement to be utilized to its full potential, academic coaches will assist the faculty to teach students in collaborative courses who are enrolled in the Registered Nurse Bachelor of Science (RN to BSN) programs. The lead school for the agreement has used the academic coaching model for over a decade. The purpose of this longitudinal study is to examine students' perceptions of academic support provided by academic coaches in an online learning environment. The participants in this study are enrolled in an online RN to BSN program. Guided by Malcolm Knowles' adult learning theory, this article describes how the University System of Georgia (USG) RN to BSN programs developed a Cooperative Academic Agreement and followed the lead school's academic model which included academic coaches.

Academic Coach Initiated Technology-Enhanced Feedback in Online Nursing Education

Author: Char Miller
Institution: Ohio University – College of Health Sciences
Year: 2023
Seeking Publication

Nurse educators have been increasingly challenged to maintain course quality and student satisfaction while navigating new technologies and growing numbers of students in online learning. The use of online academic coaches is one strategy for increasing faculty and student satisfaction in the online learning environment as they typically assist faculty with grading assignments or assessments, leading asynchronous discussions, planning for student interactions, and generally providing additional faculty support. Students have noted strategies that improved satisfaction were those that increased engagement and connectedness including regular instructor-initiated communication, working collaboratively with peers and instructors and receiving meaningful feedback on assessments and assignments. Audio or video feedback has been perceived as being more personal than traditional written feedback, with vocal tones and inflections helping provide clarity and comprehensiveness in the feedback. The purpose of this project was to determine the impact of academic coach-initiated technology-enhanced instructional feedback in an online RN to BSN course on students' perception of comfort, community, facilitation, interaction collaboration and satisfaction with instructional feedback. Results of the study indicate no significant difference in the control and intervention groups in student perception of comfort, community, facilitation, or interaction collaboration. Satisfaction with instructional feedback was slightly higher in the intervention group (8.42) compared to the control group (8.03). Focus groups (n= 24) resulted in three themes emerging through qualitative analysis which all supported technology-enhanced audio feedback as an effective instructional feedback strategy with this population. The themes included: 1) increased engagement in course, 2) increased connectedness to instructors, and 3) increased comfort to initiate interactions with instructors.

Key Words: student connectedness, student satisfaction, instructional feedback, academic coaches, technology-enhanced instructional feedback