

Research Abstracts



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About IC

Instructional Connections (IC) is the leading provider of high-quality instructional support services to both colleges and universities. Our clients offer online education courses and degree programs in multiple disciplines. We specialize in providing Online Academic Coaches (Online Teaching Assistants) to institutions that offer online programs for students. Our instructional support has been proven to be highly effective and scalable.

About This Document

This compilation of abstracts showcases research on the IC coaching model. Certain studies within this collection received financial support in the form of small grants from IC, while others were independently conducted. We prioritize the inclusion of the latest completed and published research at the outset. For studies undertaken without reliance on IC grant funds, a notation is duly furnished. Each abstract denotes its publication status, whether published, in the process of publication, or pending publication. Notably, hyperlinks to published articles are provided to facilitate effortless access for interested readers.



Abstracts

A Study of Activities and Effective Use as Perceived by Academic Coaches in Fully Online Higher Education Courses

Authors: Dan Keast

Institution: University of Texas Permian Basin

Year: 2024

Published: Distance Learning Administration Conference Proceedings

<https://stdlapeus1.blob.core.windows.net/craftcms/proceeding-pdf/DLA-Proceedings-Digital-Cover.pdf>

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

The literature about the use of academic coaches in higher education as supplemental instructional support is primarily limited in scope to student success, retention, and credit completion. Data collected supporting the use of these types of coaches is also recent with the bulk of the research published since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. While academic coaching existed prior to the pandemic, the increased need for their use is accelerating. The focus of this research study is for academic coaches serving as supplemental instructional support in fully online courses of higher education. This study is designed to investigate the research gap of what academic coaches are doing in the courses for professors and students, solicit the coach's perception about the efficacy of that task, and their suggestions for best utilizing an academic coach. Implications for higher education professionals will be discussed, as well as suggestions for further research. Keywords: academic coaching, instructional coach, supplemental instruction, learning activities, online student success, best practices in online education.





Abstracts

Effective Utilization of Academic Coaches for Instructional Support in Online Courses

Authors: Tracia Forman and Jessica Sanchez

Institution: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Year: 2024

Publishing in Process: Sage Publishing - E-learning and Digital Media (DOI: 10.1177/20427530241239395)

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

Quality course management is integral to establishing a thriving online learning environment. Increasing demand for online learning has resulted in different approaches to online course management. The academic coaching model is an approach that provides instructional support for learners within online courses. This research examines the attributes, behaviors, preferences, and attitudes of online faculty who use academic coaches as members of an instructional support team. The aim was to identify effective strategies or best practices for successfully integrating the academic coach model within online courses. A sequential exploratory mixed methods research design was employed, and seven themes emerged: coach selection process, coach-student ratio, communication between coaches and faculty, responsibilities of coaches, student communication, grading, and benefits and risks of using a coach. Results are presented herein that offer interested faculty guidance about using academic coaches as members of an online instructional support team.

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

Authors: Brittney Grissette, Amanda Hawkins and Sarah Kuck

Institution: Columbus State University

Year: 2023

Published: Advances in Online Education: A Peer-Reviewed Journal

Link: <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/hsp/aoe/2023/00000002/00000002/art00007>

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

A nursing shortage is being felt across the US and the problem was only amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019. There are many registered nurses (RN) who hold an Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) degree; however, hiring new RNs with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) is a national priority. Therefore, the University System of Georgia (USG) established a Cooperative Academic Agreement of 13 institutions in Georgia which offer the RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN) programme. In an attempt to increase pre-licensure programme enrolment and capacity, RN to BSN faculty were released to teach in pre-licensure programmes. For the Cooperative Academic Agreement to be utilised to its full potential, academic coaches were hired to assist students in the successful progression through the collaborative courses. The purpose of this longitudinal study was to examine students' perceptions of support provided by academic coaches in an online learning environment. To assess students' perception, the researchers added five items to the course evaluation administered in the collaborative courses. Although the response rate was low, the results from the course evaluations suggest that students perceived the academic coaches positively contributed to their academic success.



Abstracts

Graduate Students Perceptions of Academic Coaches in Accelerated Online Courses

Authors: Rosalinda Hernandez, et.al

Institution: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Year: 2022

Quarterly Review of Distance Education

Link: [Scholarworks.utrgv.edu](https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu)

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

This study aimed to investigate the graduate student's perceptions of the effectiveness of academic coaches in asynchronous accelerated online instruction in a master's educational leadership program. A mixed-method research design was used to examine student satisfaction using surveys and focus student group interviews on an accelerated online masters in the educational leadership program. The sample population for this study included participants from former and current graduate students in an educational leadership master of education program. The study is a step forward in understanding the role of instructional coaches and the support provided to students and professors in accelerated online programs. Results indicated that a sample of students believed that instructional coaches needed proper credentials, experience, and training to serve the students with whom they worked. In addition, both positive and negative experiences were both reported by the sample of graduate students. Over 53% of the students reported being extremely or somewhat satisfied with their academic coach. Many expressed those academic coaches were a supportive element in the courses they were assigned.

Academic Coaches and Student Success in Higher Education: A Quantitative Study

Authors: Nicole C. Letchworth

Institution: University of Southern Mississippi

Year: 2022

Published Dissertation

Link: <https://aquila.usm.edu/highereddoctoralprojects/25/>

The purpose of this study was to examine academic coach perceptions of the effect of their role in the online classroom on student engagement and self-efficacy. Additionally, this study sought to identify and describe the strategies that academic coaches use to assist students academically in the online classroom. A quantitative descriptive survey research design was used to systematically examine academic coach perceptions of their role in the online classroom on student engagement and self-efficacy and the strategies they use to assist students academically. Data analysis identified that academic coaches perceive that those students in the online classroom struggle more in the area of self-efficacy than in student engagement. Further, the following themes emerged in terms of the strategies that academic coaches perceived as effective for students in the online classroom; encouragement, consistent communication via email and course announcements, clear and consistent feedback, continued virtual presence in the online classroom, and engaging underperforming students. Utilizing the obtained findings, this study provides implications for research and practice in the area of promoting success of students in online classrooms and offers recommendations for future research.



Abstracts

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

Author: Lei Wen

Institution: Emporia State University

Year: 2022

Published: Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning Journal (Emerald Publishing)

Link: <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2723365515?sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

The paper makes a significant contribution to the accounting education literature by examining the impact of using online meetings with an academic coach on student-perceived learning outcomes, course and instructor evaluations in an online graduate-level accounting course. A quasi-experimental design is adopted by the author to compare the students' evaluations in fall 2018 and in spring 2019 in an online graduate-level accounting course taught by the same instructor and assisted by the same academic coach. The study finds that the use of online meetings with an academic coach helps students have a much more positive view about the course and a better perception about the instructor's teaching effectiveness for the course. 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 paper provides a new perspective to investigate students' perceptions of the use of online meetings with an academic coach.

The Effect of Academic Coaches on Non-Traditional Student Performance in an Intensive Online Learning Program

Authors: Park, S., & Robinson, P. A.

Year: 2021

Published: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

Link: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED611610.pdf>

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 public university. By adopting the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique, we compared the academic performance of students in three courses with different numbers or styles of academic coaches. The findings indicated that the average score of students was higher when students received more feedback from an academic coach, and they had an academic coach in class.

Abstracts

The Effect of Online Academic Coaches on Supporting Graduate Students' Performance in Intensive Online Learning Environments: A three-course Comparison

Authors: Sunyoung Park and Petra A. Robinson

Institution: Louisiana State University

Year: 2021

Published – European Journal of Training and Development ISSN: 2046-9012

Link: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EJTD-10-2020-0144/full/html>

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

The purpose of this study is to examine how academic coaches, through academic student support, impact graduate student performance in a time-intensive online learning program for pursuing a master's degree in leadership and human resource development in a research-intensive public university in the Southern USA. The participants in this study were 435 graduate students enrolled in their online master's degree program. Framed by the theory of transactional distance and by adopting a pre-experimental design and the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique, the student performance in three courses was compared (principles of adult education, research methods and performance analysis) with academic coaches. The findings indicate 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 versus three) in the research methods course. This preliminary work may lead to a better understanding of how academic coaches can best support adult learners in their pursuits of online postsecondary education. This study would suggest implications for online instructors and institutions to enhance student success and retention in online learning activities by using academic coaching.





Abstracts

Determining Roles and Best Practices when Using Academic Coaches in Online Learning

Authors: Debra White-Jefferson, DNP, RN, Lisa Broussard, DNS, RN, CNE, Helen Fox-McCloy

Institution: University of Louisiana Lafayette

Year: 2020

Published: Teaching and Learning in Nursing 15(4) ;210–214

Link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326326261_Use_of_Academic_Coaches_to_Promote_Student_Success_in_Online_Nursing_Programs

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. One strategy to adequately meet the needs of this growing online student population is the use of academic coaches. Methods: A qualitative exploratory methodology was used to acquire insight related to the use of academic coaches in online nursing classrooms and how they were used in similar programs. Results: All participant programs utilize 7-week accelerated sessions in online classrooms. The four emerging themes of (1) overall expectations, (2) onboarding and orientation, (3) academic coach oversight and the use of (4) best practices demonstrated how the role of academic coaches was operationalized in online classrooms. Discussion: Overall, the programs utilized academic coaches similarly. Well-defined communication strategies are necessary for the academic coach model to be effective.

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

Published: Proceedings of IConSES 2019 - International Conference on Social and Education Sciences (pp. 122-126). Denver, CO, USA: International Society for Technology, Education and Science (ISTES).

Link: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED625824.pdf>

This research was conducted with Instructional Connections grant funding.

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.



Abstracts

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

Authors: Lisa Broussard, DNS, RN, CNE ✱, Debra White-Jefferson, DNP, RN

Institution: University of Louisiana Lafayette

Year: 2018

Published - Teaching and Learning in Nursing 13(4) ;223–225

Link:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326326261_Use_of_Academic_Coaches_to_Promote_Student_Success_in_Online_Nursing_Programs

This research describes how one large nursing program utilizes academic coaches int 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.

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

Published -Journal of Nursing Education 57(9):520-525

Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30148513/>

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. 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. 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. 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.

Abstracts

The following research conducted, but not published

Assessing Teaching Readiness in Online Programs

Author: Aziza Zemrani

Institution: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Year: 2020

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





Abstracts

Synchronous Online (SO) Culture Tellers (CuTe)

Author: Jiyeon Yoon

Institution: University of Texas Arlington

Date: 2019

Presented in Japan

The project, “Synchronous Online (SO) Culture Teller (CuTe)!” was to develop a synchronous online communication model with Academic Coaches for culturally inclusive science instructions and to measure its effects on 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 differences 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 feedback 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.

Lived Experiences of Graduate Teaching Assistants in an Online Nursing Course

Author: Robert Williams

Dissertation

Institution: Argosy University

Year: 2012

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.



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