

How Can I Help Students Who Are Struggling with Online Learning?

Presented by:

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Brian Udermann has more than 20 years of teaching experience in higher education. He started teaching online in 2005 and has served as the director of online education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse since 2007. Udermann has published more than 70 peer-reviewed scientific manuscripts, five book chapters, and two books, and has done more than 200 national and international presentations.



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Reflection questions

- Generally speaking, do I usually take an empathic or punitive approach to students who are struggling in my courses?
- Does my institution utilize some type of a campus wide early alert system? If yes, do I fully participate in helping identify students who may be struggling in my courses.
- Do I utilize my own early alert strategies in my courses? Strategies such as reaching out to students who haven't logged into the course in the first few days, failed to complete a required assignment, or who stops participating and being active in class.
- Do I ever offer to meet face-to-face with students who are struggling in my courses? If no, is that something I can try in the future?
- Have I considered alternative communication strategies (e.g., contacting students on their smart phones) to more effectively reach students who may be struggling in my courses? Note: Some institutions have systems in place which allow faculty to contact students on their phones but this is done through an instructor's computer and a student's response will be received via email.
- Do I consider things from a student's perspective and try to appreciate that many students live busy lives, attempting to balance taking multiple courses, part or full-time jobs, family obligations, focusing on their health (e.g., exercise, eating healthy, getting adequate sleep), spending time with friends, etc.
- Do I think about and consider how my course is likely not my student's number one priority? Even though I might want it to be.
- Am I fully aware of the student support services that are available to students on my campus? And do I routinely encourage students who need help to utilize the services of those offices and units?
- Providing additional help for students who are struggling in class can be time intensive. Are there things I routinely do during a given day or week that I might eliminate in order to free up more time?
- Do I ever talk to students about overcoming failure, the difference between having a fixed and growth mindset, etc. If no, is that something I could start doing in the future?
- Do I give students a chance for a do-over? To possibly retake one quiz or redo one assignment they did poorly on?
- Have I ever utilized students in my courses to help other students who may be struggling?