Strategies for Fostering Doctoral Student Persistence

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Increasing Doctoral Student Persistence: Strategies for Fostering Community

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Purpose

• Identify persistence problem in doctoral education
• Examine factors associated with doctoral persistence.
• Identify 5 practical strategies for improving doctoral persistence.
• Discuss technologies and practices that can be used to improve programs.
The Persistence Problem

• In traditional settings, doctoral attrition rates are 40 – 60%

• In online settings, the attrition rate is 10 – 50% higher among doctoral students.
Four Factors of Persistence

• Personal attributes
• Social integration into the university
• Program structure
• Program resources and services
Factors of Persistence: Community

Developing a sense of community can improve students’ sense of satisfaction, learning, and persistence.

Doctoral Students currently express low perceived levels of community, resulting in increased attrition rates.
Factors of Persistence: Community

- Community (Rovai, 2002)
- Presence (Piccianno, 2002)
- Critical Thinking / Higher-Order Thinking (Garrison, Anderson, and Archer, 2000)
- Interaction (Moore, 1989, 1993)

Critical Elements of Effective Education
Factors of Persistence: Community

Community of Inquiry Framework: Elements of an Effective Educational Experience (Adapted from Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)
## Factors of Persistence: Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Presence</td>
<td>Ability of learner to project self socially and emotionally, thereby being perceived as a real person in mediated communication</td>
<td>Open communication</td>
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<td>Group Cohesion</td>
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<td>Affective Expression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Presence</td>
<td>Extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through reflection and discourse</td>
<td>Triggering event</td>
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<td>Exploration</td>
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<td>Integration</td>
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<td>Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Presence</td>
<td>Design, facilitation, and direction in the course of cognitive and social processes to ensure an educationally meaningful experience.</td>
<td>Design and Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitation of discourse</td>
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<td>Direct Instruction</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Community of Inquiry Framework: Elements of an Effective Educational Experience (Adapted from Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)
Using **Social Presence To Increase Persistence**

- Create Opportunities for Open Communication
- Adopt a cohort model for cohesiveness
Using **Cognitive Presence** to Increase Persistence

- **Modeling**
  - Critical Thinking
  - Reflective Processes
  - Summation techniques
  - Goal setting
Using Teaching Presence to Increase Persistence

• Organize the process
• Facilitate Discourse
  – Provide timely feedback that is personable, yet academically challenging
• Direct instruction
  – manuscript reviews
  – Frameworks (templates)
Fostering Social Presence with Technology

- Wikis
- FaceBook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Ning
Fostering Cognitive Presence with Technology

- E-Conferencing
  - Skype
  - Illuminate
Fostering Cognitive Presence with Technology

• Audio Feedback
  – Audacity
Fostering Teaching Presence with Technology
Fostering Teaching Presence with Technology
Reflection & Conclusion

Fostering community in a doctoral program through practices is likely to lead to persistence. This presentation assist faculty and administrators in identifying how they can encourage doctoral persistence and completion through practices that increase community.
References


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