

Using the ARCS-V Model to Reframe Success in Online Courses (B)

This session addresses questions about online course design and factors of student retention:

(1) Should the Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction, and Volition (ARCS-V) motivation model by John Keller reframe the design and teaching of online courses?

(2) Do factors of student retention in higher education continue to make sense in the growing context of online education?

Worth noting:

70.8% of academic leaders report in 2014 that online learning as critical for their institution's long-term strategy, compared to 48% in 2002 (Allen & Seamon, 2015, p. 4)

Not all universities have low online course retention. [University of Illinois, Springfield](#), reported maintaining a retention rate just 2-3% below classroom courses, 94% online reported in 2007. This university uses "high touch" strategies, e.g., contact with students, use of student peers in online learning. Faculty development includes online workshops and certificate programs, and classes are kept small, e.g. 25 students. [U.S. News](#) ranks the top online programs. What do they do?

QM™ reports express concern about satisfaction but the QM™ rubric does not include satisfaction such as expressed in ARCS elements. **REFLECTION:** Compare the QM™ rubric with the ARCS-V model.

Answers to the two questions listed at the top will evolve from discussing the following findings:

- A. Different variables affect dropout rates in on-campus v. online courses[or do they mirror traditional college completion patterns?] [and, if the factors are the same, what does this say about the quality of online course design and instruction when retention rates tend to be lower online? Or is it only a difference in students?] This discussion issue OVERLAPS with "c." on predictors of success.
- B. Student effort overcomes other variables.
- C. Predictors of success (retention) include organizational support, online resources, relevance, confidence (including Internet self-efficacy), and satisfaction
- D. Student-student interactions can increase withdrawals, but some interactions improve retention.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

Summarize your experience related to online course design, instruction, learning, and evaluating online courses. (If you are in a group, summarize your "group experience." For example, "We have all taught online 10 or more years, and some of us have done peer reviews of online programs.")

You will be given research excerpts for one of the discussion issues. Your task is to review the research findings and discuss them with your partner or group.

(1) Come to a decision about whether the discussion issue statement (A, B, C, or D in the above list) is verified or nullified by the research, or if the jury is still out.

(2) Determine if your review and decision has implications for integrating the ARCS-V model in some way with the standards for online courses.

Share your group experience and your decisions and rationale with the whole group.

REMINDER:

Felten, P. (2013). *Principles of good practice in SoTL*. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, 1(1) 121–125.

- Inquiry focused on student learning
- Grounded in context
- Methodologically sound
- Conducted in partnership with students
- Appropriately public

B—Student effort overcomes other variables.

Firmin, Schiorring, Whitmer, Willett, Collins, & Sujitparapitaya, 2014: Student **effort** was the strongest indicator of success. [Surveys and data for 213 students in massive online open enrollment courses, MOOCs. Effort: problem sets done, time online.]

Henson, 2014: Students need computer skills. However, nontraditional students “did not have higher withdrawal rates from courses that required an extensive use of computers, including online courses” (p. 8). “...individuals with low efficacy may be compensating for and ultimately overcoming low skills by actually spending more time using the technology that they feel insecure about.” (p. 9). [Surveys and data on students enrolled in classes at two community colleges, 336 traditional, 337 older students.]

Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Shroder, 2013: Satisfaction contributes to student persistence. “Student satisfaction is related to several outcome variables such as persistence (Allen & Seaman, 2008), retention (Debourgh, 1999; Koseke, & Koseke, 1991), course quality (Moore & Kearsley, 1996), and student success (Keller, 1983; Pike, 1993; Noel-Levitz, 2011).”(p. 17). “Higher satisfaction leads to lower attrition rates, higher persistence in learning, and higher motivation in pursuing additional online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2008; Biner, Welsh, Barone, Summers, & Dean, 1997; Keller, 1987; Koseke, & Koseke, 1991).” (pp. 17-18)

Chang, C., Liu, E., Sung, H., Lin, C., Chen, N., & Cheng, S. (2014): “Internet self-efficacy had less influence on learning performance for the female students than for the male students; however, Internet self-efficacy did influence the confidence and learning performance of the male students.” (p. 374)

Park & Choi, 2009: “This study showed that dropouts were significantly different from persistent learners in external factors (i.e., family support and organizational support), and the results of this study are consistent with those of previous studies....Adult learners are more likely to drop out of online courses when they do not receive support from their family and/or organization while taking online courses, regardless of learners’ academic preparation and aspiration.”(p. 215)

Hart, 2012, research review: Higher self-efficacy supports persistence and affects the effort students will expend on studies in the face of obstacles; persistent students are motivated to complete rather than withdraw from a course or program.

Valasek, 2013: Nontraditional students (older) are more likely to persist and succeed than the traditional ones (younger). Persisting students had more realistic expectations about how much time online learning will demand. Level of computer skills did not affect persistence. Students who persisted kept pace with the course work and participated at higher levels with “hits,” “reads,” and “posts” in online discussions. [Data from 167 students in 8 online courses.]

Tello, 2007: “A larger percentage of non-persisters reported working more than 40 hours per week for pay. A significantly larger percentage of persisters were enrolled in a certificate or degree program and a significantly larger percentage of persisters indicated they intended to take another online course in a subsequent semester. Situational barriers -- comprised primarily of student work commitments, student family commitments and student time commitments -- accounted for the majority of reasons non-persisters provided for withdrawing from their online course.” (p. 47)

Svedberg, (2010): “GPA and how the student connects to the internet from home were statistically significant,” (p.), but not self-direction. [Data from 241 persisters, 43 nonpersisters in online courses.]