

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

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

D—Student-student interactions can increase withdrawals, but some interactions improve retention.

Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Shroder, 2013: “The results showed that learner-instructor interaction, learner-content interaction, and Internet self-efficacy were good predictors of student satisfaction **while interactions among students** and self-regulated learning **did not contribute** to student satisfaction. Learner-content interaction explained the largest unique variance in student satisfaction.” (p. 16) “Learner-learner interaction was not a significant predictor for student satisfaction” (p. 32)

Zhu, 2012: “The results are consistent with previous studies that students in general are satisfied with online collaborative learning (Dewiyanti et al., 2007). The Flemish students ranked flexibility in time as the main advantage of e-learning, and the Chinese students found that working collaboratively online was a big advantage. Both groups of students were positive about working on a group product. As to student dissatisfaction, the Chinese students found that the lack of teacher guidance and interaction in the elearning environment was the biggest problem for them. Although teacher guidance was at about the same level for the Flemish students, the latter group found it less of a problem. This might be due to the different expectations of teacher involvement with the two distinct groups.” (p. 133) [Surveys and data for 163 Chinese and 208 Flemish students enrolled in three months of online learning at a Beijing university.]

Davies & Graff, 2006: Students who fail an online course tend to interact less.

Robb & Sutton, 2014: Students who receive motivational messages periodically throughout the course have been found to earn higher grades and more often complete their online courses

Hawkins, Graham, Sudweeks, & Barbour, 2013; Herbert, 2006: The quality and frequency of instructor-student interactions increases the likelihood of students completing an online course.

Funk, 2007: Learner-instructor interactions at the start of the online learning process correlates with higher learner satisfaction, and students with weak skills need more individual attention.

Moore, 2014, citing Maor, 2003: As student-student interactions increased, failures and withdrawals increased; as instructor presence increased, failures increased; instructor presence and instructor-student interaction did not affect withdrawals (pp. 279-280). “...fewer instructor–student interactions resulted in more students passing... increasing the number of instructor–student interactions increased withdrawal...” students who received fewer instructor–student comments gave more positive evaluations. When administration mandated the number of communications, “communication substance may have switched to communication amount...” student–student communication increased passing” (p. 282) [Two years of data for 408, then 402 students.]

Grandzol & Grandzol, 2013: Increased interactions, “as measured by time spent, actually decrease course completion rates.” [Data from 359 students.]

Croxton, 2014, review citing study by Biesenbach-Lucas, 2003: Negative effects arise when students are forced to interact in unnatural ways, such as arbitrary discussion board postings.

Bolliger & Martindale(2004). Instructor variables, technical issues, and interactivity change satisfaction.

Tornsauer, 2010: “...students who have the opportunity to communicate promptly with instructors and peers are more likely to persist.”[On-campus students of $n = 3,125.548$, asynchronous online of $n = 281,702$ students, and synchronous online of $n = 31,004$ students).”]

Strachota, 2003: “...students identified learner-content interaction as the most important criteria for a satisfying online experience whereas learner-instructor interaction was identified as the second most important criteria and learner-learner interaction was identified as the least important criteria.” (pp. iv-v). [Survey and data for 849 students in 101 online courses.]