

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

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

A—Different variables affect dropout rates in on-campus v. online courses.

Herbert, 2006: Completers were more **satisfied**. **Noncompleter** had time commitments, personal and instructor problems. [122 surveys of online completers and noncompleters; supporting **satisfaction**: faculty responsiveness, quality of instruction, timely feedback, student-instructor interactions.]

Park & Choi, 2009: Satisfaction and relevance were predictive of course completion. [147 surveys of completers and noncompleters from three online courses. Contributing to **persistence**: family and organizational support, **satisfaction**, and **relevance**. Relevance was particularly predictive of completion.]

Kuo, Walker, Belland, & Shroder, 2013: Being able to manage learning pace did not affect satisfaction. “students who spent less than 5 hours online had higher Internet self-efficacy than those with more than 20 hours;” “11-15 hours were an adequate amount of time”—students with low self-efficacy may have needed to spend more time; “students who spent less than 5 hours online might have rushed” (p. 32)

Levy, 2007: Dropouts have **lower satisfaction** than completers. [Survey and data for 372 completers and 81 dropouts in 18 online courses. Research review: “pedagogy, design, and faculty development” (Shea, Pickett, & Pelz, 2003) and social presence affect satisfaction (Richardson & Swan, 2003) (Levy, p. 189)]

Lee, Choi, & Kim (2013): Completers had higher academic locus of control and metacognitive self-regulation skills” (p. 328). [Online survey data from 169 adult students enrolled at a Korean university. Review of literature showed lack of consensus on background characteristics as influential in persistence; influential factors include positive support from family and others, locus of control, self-regulation.]

Shanley, 2009, 2011, research review: Ten factors to support retention: support services, instructor feedback and contact, clear expectations, orientation, relevance and accuracy of “inspiring” content, student participation, social connections. Others: previous online experience, career, family, and GPA.

Jun, 2005: ARCS-based survey and data from 259 employees in a South Korean company in 20-hour courses. Men, employees with more previous e-learning experience, and those working more hours were more likely to dropout. **Attention** was a significant motivation variable. [Jun’s review of prior research: **motivation factors** are associated with dropout from e-learning courses including Failde, 2001, Boradbent, 2001, Chyung, 2000 and two in 2001, Gilroy, 2001, Lim, 2001, Osborn, 2001. Low quality of course design also was identified in a number of studies.]

Hart, 2012: From a review of 18 studies, Hart (2012) found **relevance to personal goals, higher satisfaction, and higher self-efficacy** support completion and success. Other factors: interactions and feedback, virtual social interactions, educational experience, computer skills and access, technical support, access to resources, support from family and friends, possibly GPA, but not always.

Jackson, Jones, & Rodriguez: Satisfaction improves with: accessibility of instructor, clearly stated expectations, instructor’s enthusiasm, and comfortable climate; also clear directions and classroom activities. [Data from 426 student evaluations of two online courses.]

Cochran, Campbell, Baker, & Leeds, 2014: Cumulative GPA and class standing (n=2,314) related to student retention. Also previous withdrawal from online courses, male gender, and loans. (p. 27)

Hart, 2012, research review: “Harrell and Bower (2011) and Morris, Finnegan, and Wu (2005) report grade point average (GPA) as significantly predictive of student persistence...Muse (2003) reports similar evidence with the combination of GPA, age, and years since previous college course...Conversely, Aragon and Johnson (2008) found GPA to have a low positive correlation with successful completion of an online course.” (p. 31)