Encouraging Success: Using Help Sessions to Connect Students and Enhance Learning

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When you think of nontraditional students, what comes to mind?

Purdue University Global Students

- Almost 60% of students are over the age of 30
- Students have an average of 3.7 nontraditional factors
  - Older than traditional student age (18-22 yrs old)
  - Attends school part time
  - Is independent
  - Earned a GED instead of a high school diploma
  - Works full time
  - Has legal dependents
  - Is a single parent
- 55% of students are from families where neither parent attended college

Non-traditional Students

- Need more support
- Can be more prone to dropout
- May lack an understanding of how to gain support or use university resources
- Do not always ask for help

In your experience, how often do students normally seek out assistance to understand assignments or concepts in the course?

In what ways do they seek assistance?

What are Help Sessions?

- Optional open sessions where students can meet with the instructor
- Students can meet live with the instructor to
  - Focus on remediation
  - Allow students to seek clarification for
    - Class Assignments
    - Technology and Navigation Issues
    - Academic Success Tips

Why Use Help Sessions?

- Help Sessions can:
  - Increase Social Presence
  - Support Academic Success
  - Encourage Self-Efficacy
    - Self Efficacy is linked to higher academic performance (Wang & Wu, 2008)
      - Students who receive more detailed feedback show more self efficacy
      - Students with higher self-efficacy tended to use "higher level learning strategies" (Wang & Wu, 2008)
  - Correlation between help session attendance and academic success (Jensen & Moore, 2009)

- Students need additional support
  - Students who are newer in their college programs at the university
  - Students who do not have previous college experience
  - Students need connections with others in the online environment when taking online courses

What Types of Help Sessions to Offer

Live Meeting – Webinar on line, Open Meeting on Ground

- ▫ In response to student needs
- ▫ In anticipation of a challenging assignment
- ▫ Following the presentation of a challenging topic
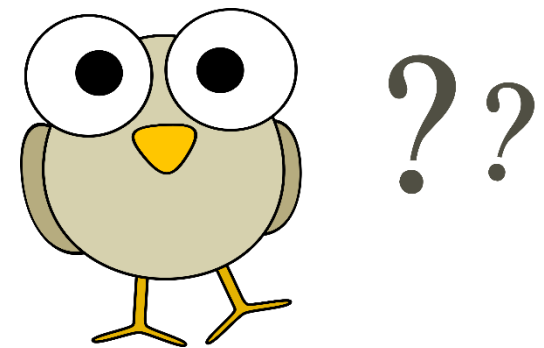- ▫ Following the return of assignments

Weekly Session Announcement

Need Help? Have Questions?

If you have questions, need help, want to discuss your progress in the course, or just spend some time visiting, join me Tuesday, [Insert Date Here] for open office hours.

6:45 pm – 8:00 pm EST

[Insert link to or location for Help Session here]
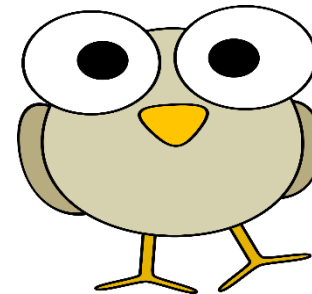
Targeted Session Announcement

Need Help? Have Questions?

How are things going? Are you learning your way around the online classroom? If you have questions, please join me.

Monday, [Insert Date here] for open hours HELP SESSION.

12 noon – 1 pm EST
8 – 9 pm EST

[Insert link to or location for Help Session here]

When to Offer Help Sessions

- Different approaches to offering Help Sessions (dependent on instructor)
  - **Weekly Sessions**
    - Assists with consistency and routine
    - Students can "drop in" any time during the hour to gain assistance (like office hours)
    - Allows students to connect with other students and instructor
    - Best used with newer students to the university
  - **Targeted Sessions**
    - When an assignment is due
    - Focus on a specific academic need
      - APA formatting
      - Completing discussion boards effectively
      - Course expectations
      - Spotlight a university resource

Ways to Set Up Help Session Webinars

- Use of Live Chat Tools
  - Adobe Connect
    - Meet altogether in one larger room
    - Allows use of break out rooms for private discussions with students
  - Google Hangout
    - Must have Gmail account
    - Students can use student email address to access room

  What other tools do you have that you can use?

Discuss and Brainstorm

- Do you currently hold Help Sessions for your students?
- Online or face to face?
- If so, what do you do and how do you do it?
- How could you use Help Sessions to help your students succeed?

Questions?

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References

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Wang, S., & Wu, P. (2008). The role of feedback and self-efficacy on web-based learning: The social cognitive perspective. *Computers & Education, 51*(4), 1589–1598.