Self- Directed Learners in the Online Learning Environment

By

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About Me

- Director of Reading and Study Skills at the United States Air Force Academy Prep School, CO

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- Interests; Instructional technology, adult learning, ESL students, non- traditional adult learners, online learning, self- directed / autonomous learners

Self-Directed Learning

- *"a process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identify human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes." (Knowles, 1975, p. 18)*

Who is a self-directed Learner ?

- Traditional Aged College Students

  - 18-24 years old often with limited life experiences, and sometimes limited responsibilities or barriers to learning

- Non- traditional Age College Students

  - 25 years old and older with varying responsibilities and life experiences that contribute to or take away from their learning

What constitutes online learning ?

- Online courses are defined as a course where 80% or more of the content is delivered over the internet
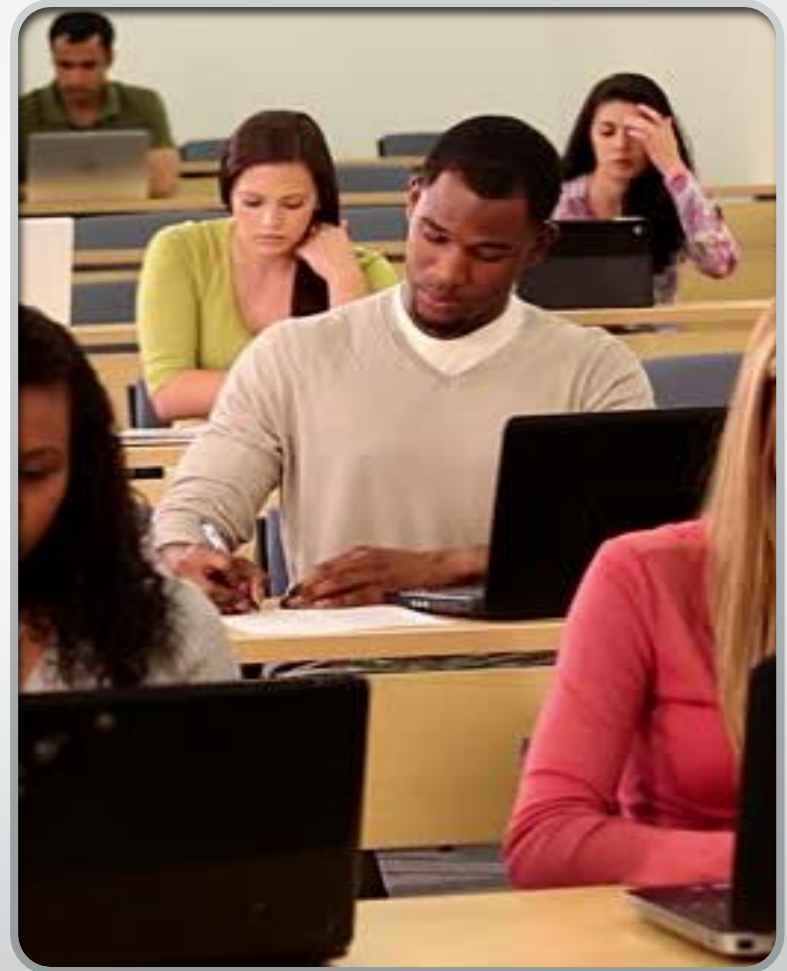
Self- Directed Learners Online

Students are enrolling in online classes because of convenience

Enrollment has increased for online learners by approximately 50 % across the US since 2012

A large majority of students are underprepared and lack foundational skills needed to be successful in online classes.
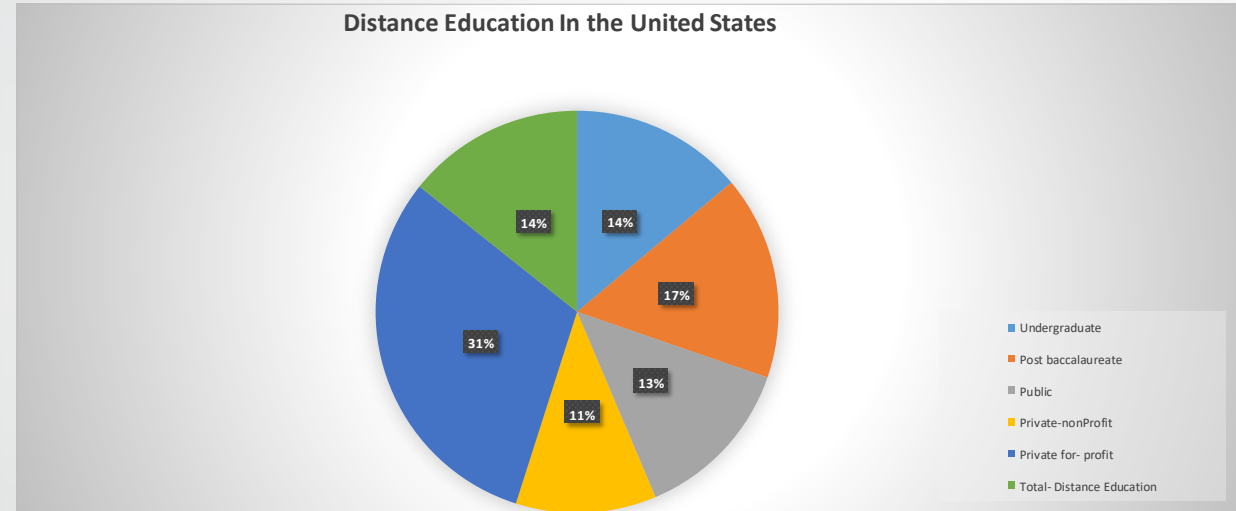
Attrition rate is 10-30% higher for online learners in comparison to traditional classroom attrition rates

Are they ready for online learning?

- Assess , Assess , Assess
- Students should be assessed before enrolling in online courses and during the course. Students should also reflect on their experience after to determine if this setting is best for them.

- **Assessment tools**
- Online Learner Readiness Scale(OLRS)
- Self Directed Learner Readiness Scale (SDLRS)

Where are online learners ?

Distance Education In the United States

■	Undergraduate
■	Post baccalaureate
■	Public
■	Private-nonProfit
■	Private for- profit
■	Total- Distance Education

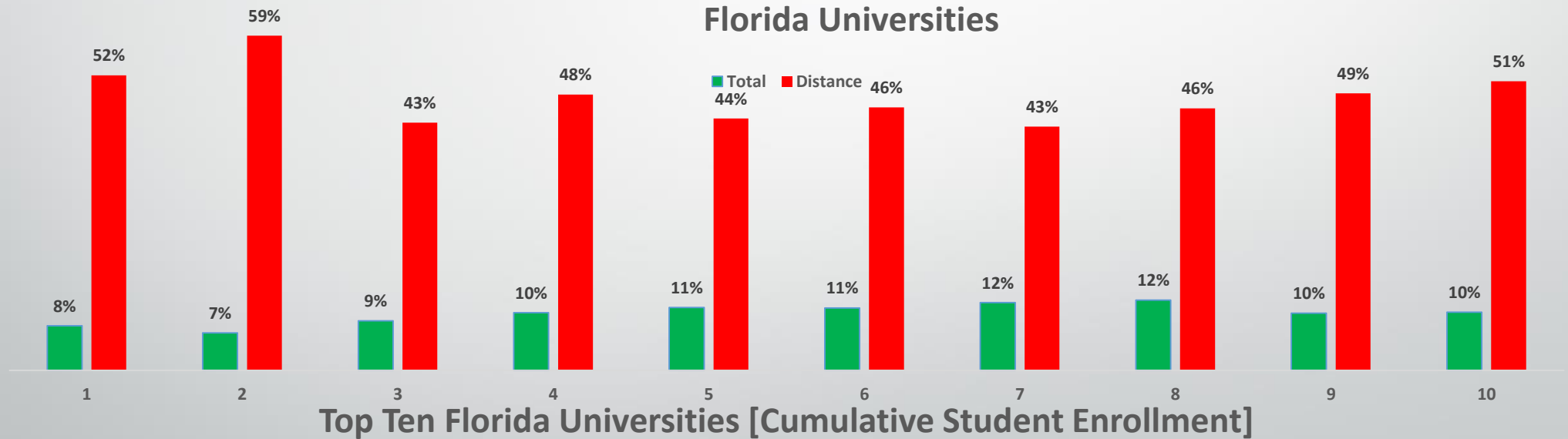Pie chart values: 14%, 14%, 17%, 13%, 11%, 31%

Bottom Line Conclusion: Distance Learning growth rate is faster in private for profit institutions than all other higher education institutions.

Source: http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=8o

Top 10 Florida Universities online enrollment 2012-2015

Average 2012-15 Cumulative Student Enrollment Growth By Category for Top Ten Florida Universities

Bottom Line Conclusion: Distance learning growth rate is approximately 5 times the total face-to-face growth rate.

Source Data: https://nces.ed/gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80

Top 10 total Florida Universities Enrollment

	Total Enrollment Growth			
	2012	2015	Change	% ChangeE
1	46171	49782	3611	7.8%
2	59601	62953	3352	5.6%
3	2484	4918	2434	98.0%
4	2703	4538	1835	67.9%
5	5748	7367	1619	28.2%
6	13445	14833	1388	10.3%
7	925	2254	1329	143.7%
8	5384	6631	1247	23.2%
9	42915	44050	1135	2.6%
10	6912	7959	1047	15.1%
Total	186288	205285	18997	10.2%

Top 10 distance education enrollment in Florida

Distance Enrollment Growth			
2012	2015	Change	% ChangeE
21782	33034	11252	51.7%
7154	12858	5704	79.7%
23180	28838	5658	24.4%
5310	10433	5123	96.5%
16241	20993	4752	29.3%
6702	11244	4542	67.8%
13985	17216	3231	23.1%
174	3304	3130	1798.9%
611	3381	2770	453.4%
743	3111	2368	318.7%
95882	144412	48530	50.6%

Barriers to online student success

Internal

- ***Lack of Motivation***
- Self- Discipline
- Interdependence
- Poor Communication

External

- ***Technology Competence***
- Language/Communication
- Cultural factors
- Socio Economic status

Fragile Online Learners

- Male students of African American or Hispanic origins
- Students from low socio- economic backgrounds
- Technologically challenged non-traditional learners
- Students who are not self-directed or intrinsically motivated

Institutional Support

- Provide the necessary resources
  - Technology, learning materials, and human resources
- Hire and train faculty and staff to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners (fund professional development)
  - Early intervention tracking systems– early alert
- Support students academically, socially, and emotionally
  - Varied students support services

Student Success Centers
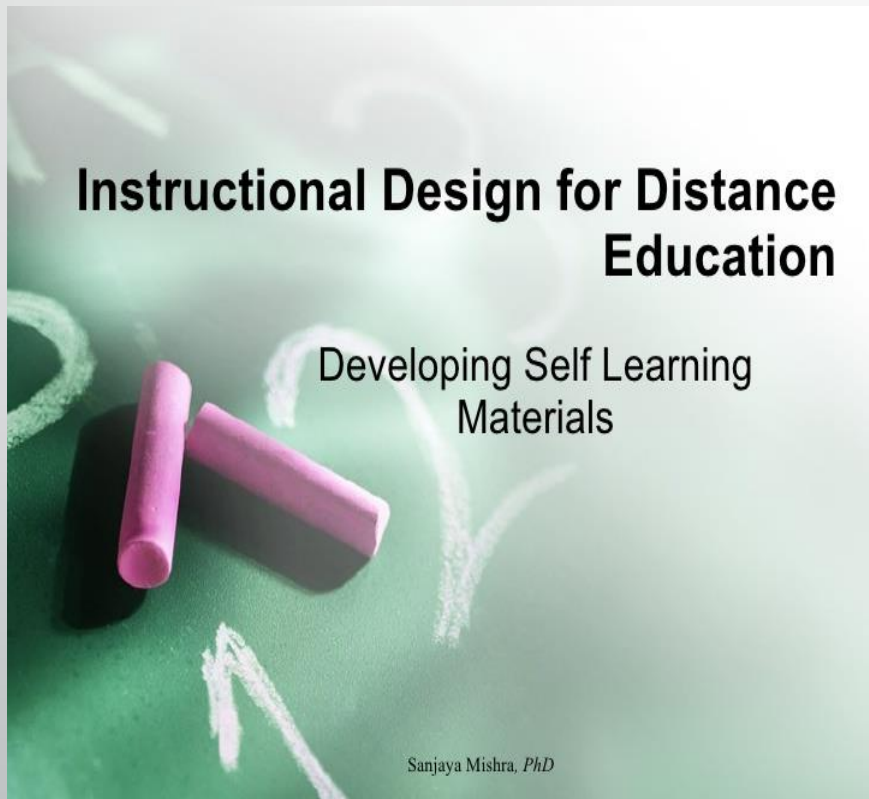
Recruit and Assess Students

- Student Readiness Assessments

- Placement in appropriate classes

- Student Success Coordinators

- Advisors, counselors, mentors

- Institution and community resources

Scaffold and Support

Faculty Support for students

- Course Design
  - Course materials and resources
  - OERs, textbooks
- Communication
  - Timely, honest, and sometimes empathetic
  - Varied locations and reminders
- Professional Development and a shift in mindset
  - Get to know students, learn how to meet their needs
  - Select self-directed online courses (Topkit and QM)
  - Cohort of learners

Instructional Design

Instructional Design for Distance Education

Developing Self Learning Materials

Sanjaya Mishra, *PhD*

- Include andragogical and pedagogical skills in lesson design (SMEs)
  - Know your student populations
- Student centered---- focusing on the needs of online learners
  - Tutoring/ learning videos, student academic support
  - Materials for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners
- Post academic reminders and non- academic information that supports the learner in multiple locations on the LMS
  - Provide examples and non- examples of required assignments

Self- Directed students should

- Develop time management skills

- Develop emotional intelligence

- Learn interdependence

- Form Cohorts

- Seek out mentors

- Assess and evaluate learning

- Make educated decisions regarding their learning

A concerted effort

- Not all students are naturally independent and self-directed in their learning

- It takes the help of faculty who are in direct contact with students to teach skills needed to be successful

- Various departments at the institutional level need to be more involved with online learners

- It is assumed that most online learners have the skills or technology it takes to be an online learner but this is not always the case.

Recommendations

- Provide all the necessary tools and materials you have available

- Do not assume all adult learners are where you expect them to be.

- Conduct formal or informal assessment of learners at the beginning of each course

- Be current with the needs and types of students because we are educating a diverse and changing student population

The Future of Online Education
Imagining Scenarios ...

Key Terms

- Online Learning
- Self- directed Learners
- Asynchronous Learning
- Synchronous Learning
- Non- traditional Student
- Traditional Students
- Instructional Design
- Early Alert
- Retention
- Student Support

Conclusion

- Distance education enrollment is increasing by approximately 50% nationwide

- The attrition rate for distance education classes are 10-30% higher than that of traditional classes

- It will take a concerted effort by all departments at institutions of higher education to ensure online learners are provided with the tools and resources they need to be successful in online classes

Let's Review...

Kahoot.it

Pin:_____

Questions or Comments ?

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