Strategies to Improve Student Retention and Persistence

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Principia College

Center for Teaching and Learning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lesson Plan/Activity</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No meeting was scheduled</td>
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</table>
| 2    | Get to know you M&M activity  
   - Anticipation guide  
   - Goals and expectations for SLC  
     - “SMART” goals | Bring syllabi |
| 3    | Reflection: What worked for you last semester? What do you need to work on?  
   - Map out assignments and met with Cherie or Molly to plan one-on-one | Bring homework and a writing utensil |
| 4    | Spent time doing work  
   - Have students make a plan of what they’re going to work on during the time together.  
   - After they’ve had time to work, have the students work and then reflect on what they accomplished and what they need to work on to support themselves as learner. | |
| 5    | Study strategies to prep for midterms  
   - Two column chart (one column-best study skill you’ve ever used)  
   - Note taking discussion and how to actively engage in class | Practice some of these study strategies while prepping for midterms |
| 6    | No meeting-Fall Break |          |
| 7    | Discussed various learning styles and how to best support your style of learning in classes that may or may not have your preferred style of learning  
   - Learning styles discussed: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, verbal  
   - Spent time working on homework | |
| 8    | Show students how to locate midterm grades at the registrar’s website  
   - Reevaluate goals and how to accomplish these goals for the remainder of the semester | |
   - Homework time | |
| 10   | Graduation activity… chart paper and markers … review grades as well  
Activity:  
   - Draw a picture of a graduate  
   - List the skills you believe future employers will be looking for in you as a graduate | |

**Student Learning Community**  
**Molly Broere and Cherie Hufford**  
**Fall 2017**
• Now think about each of the classes you have this semester. Which of the skills listed as a graduate are being developed in the courses you are currently taking

11 • Students need to meet with the registrar’s office to discuss what grades are needed to get off of academic probation or have extended academic probation
   • Have students review goals

12 • Motivation mini-lesson
   • Have students look up their exams and culminating major assignments to map out the last few weeks of the semester

13 • Give students the night off (Thanksgiving)

14 • Exam study
   • Review mini-lesson on various study techniques

15 • Provide time for students to study exams and work on major assignment

16 FINALS WEEK - No meeting

Other activities that we have used or recommend:

• Building community
  o Get to Know You guides
  o Two truths and a lie
  o Academic successes (M&M’S)
  o Four corners (can be modified in a variety of ways for anticipation of a topic or even an informal assessment in the class/course)

• Building success and motivation
  o Small victories-students share an positive academic experience where they excelled or something they’re grateful for relating to academics
  o Set goals and have check in points
  o If students earn high enough grades by midterms they do not have to meet with us individually (but they continue the SLC weekly meetings)

• Sharing resources
  o CTL workshops
  o Librarians or library sessions

• Teaching Reading strategies
  o Say Something

• Teaching time management
  o Map out assignments (semester overview)
  o Map out weekly schedules (weekly planner)
  o Prioritizing

• Teaching study strategies
  o SQ3R
  o Active vs. passive
Four Corners Activity

Four Corners is an interactive game that doesn’t require as much conversation and so is appropriate for students who struggle with discussion. The activity allows students to get up and move around the classroom to the corresponding location that they self-identify best matches their belief. When students go to their corner, they can then engaged in conversation with each other about why they're there. Also, you can have students share out why their corner is the best. This active lesson encourages student moment around the room and allows for depth of thought that will elevate the conversation.

**Variation 1 – 4 Corners Change with each statement or question**

Examples of variation 1 statements or questions for the four corners
- If you could be a superhero: Wonder Woman, Spiderman, Batman, Superman
- Talking out loud in class is: scary, hard, unfamiliar, No problem
- If you had the day to yourself: sleep, exercise, shop, read.
- Would like to try: skydiving, surf boarding, bungee jumping, zip lining.
- When I am in class I feel: involved, like a stranger, confused, confident
- Which type of movie do you prefer: comedy, romance, drama, action
- If you were going to watch a sport: volleyball, baseball, basketball, soccer
- If we were having ice cream: chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, cookies and cream
- What’s your favorite food: veggies, meat, fruit, bread
- Dreaded household chore: ironing, bathrooms, dishes, laundry
- Favorite holiday: Christmas, New Year, Independence Day, your birthday
- To keep motivated I: meet with the professor, study with a friend, give myself
  o a pep talk, remind myself of my goals

**Variation 2 – 4 corners do not change for each statement or question (1 – strongly agree, 2 - agree, 3 - disagree, 4 - strongly disagree)**

Examples of variation 2 statements or questions for the four corners:
- Reading college text is challenging
- I learned a new strategy
- I feel confident in my ability to study for a test
- I have time management strategies that work for me
- I know where to go for support resources
- I know who to ask for help to write a paper
Get to Know You Guide

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Worst</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
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<td>Sports</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>Vacation</td>
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<td>Books</td>
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<td>Homework</td>
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<td>Type of class</td>
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<td>Month of the year</td>
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Directions for using this guide:

For a low stakes way to build community this activity lets students get to know their peers. The students go around the room asking other students one of the best and worst topics from the list. After they find out someone’s favorite and least favorite of a single topic, they move on to another student and ask a different favorite and least favorite repeating until their list is complete.

After it’s over, they share some of their findings. The instructor promotes that conversation by asking questions. For example, “Did anyone find a peer that had the same favorite book?” Or “Did anyone find someone who dislikes asparagus?” Say people’s names frequently so that everyone gets to know each other.