



The TLC Newsletter

Trends in education



Minority Student Retention and Academic Achievement in Community Colleges

Adapted from: *ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges*
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/ERIC/digests/dig0102.html>

The American college campus, like society as a whole, is experiencing an expansion of racial and ethnic diversity. As a result of their geographic accessibility, open-door admissions policies, and reduced costs, community colleges are especially likely to serve a diverse student body.

Diverse Students, Diverse Needs

The culture-specific values and experiences that students bring to the educational environment may significantly contribute to their individual learning preferences. For community colleges, shaping the instructional climate of classrooms in a way that best benefits the individually- and culturally-influenced differences in learning styles, value systems and educational preferences of their student population holds special significance.

Educational Choices

Community college students are influenced by a variety of distinct factors when making educational and career-related decisions. In the case of minority students, family and academic support factors emerge as playing a significant role in enhancing academic achievement and success. Minority students were more likely than white students to report that the following factors were important reasons for college attendance: (1) parental influence; (2) inability to find a job; (3) desire to gain a general education; (4) desire to improve reading and study skills; (5) desire to become more cultured; and (6) desire to learn things that interested them.

Learning Styles

Research indicates that a close association exists between students' cultural backgrounds and their preferred learning styles. Students' individual learning preferences are typically accompanied by culturally determined tools that influence the way they process information and, depending on the fit between teaching and learning styles, facilitate or hinder their educational achievement.

Enhancing Retention and Learning

The successful integration of students into the college environment is a crucial element of raising retention rates. Some common efforts at community colleges include:

- *Freshman Seminars:* Students who have enrolled in a student success course generally earn higher grade point averages, complete a larger number of first-term credit hours, and increase their persistence and graduation rates.

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Fall Hours

Monday & Wednesday:
8:30 - 5:00
Tuesday & Thursday:
8:30 - 6:00
Friday: Sporadic

Fall TLC Workshops

Dealing with Personality Differences

Nov. 3, 1:00 – 2:00

For a complete listing of upcoming events, visit the TLC Workshops page at:

tlccvc.org/workshop.htm

Send us your Teaching Tips!

In addition to staying current with broad trends in education, the TLC also keeps a close eye on the individual innovations of its faculty and promotes the sharing of these to the larger college community.

Send your ideas to:
txeriland@dccd.edu
and we will post them to the TLC Web Site!

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- **Mentoring:** Mentors, by providing career-related and psychosocial assistance to their protégés, provide the individualized attention students need in dealing with the everyday problems they encounter in the college environment.
- **Campus Climate:** Having a campus climate in which diversity is valued is an important factor contributing to the comfort and educational success of minority students on community college campuses.

Role of Faculty

Creating an environment in which minority students can thrive is also the responsibility of individual instructors. White faculty members, who remain in the majority in most community colleges in the nation, often emphasize the learning styles influenced by their cultural background. However, these instructional practices may not be congruent with the educational preferences of minority students.

Conclusion

Successful efforts, whether institution-wide or in the individual classroom, place a strong emphasis on consciously building upon the diverse needs of the student population and facilitating the integration of students into the educational environment.

This Digest is drawn from "Beyond Access: Methods and Models for Increasing Retention and Learning Among Minority Students" (New Directions for Community Colleges, Winter 2000).

Diversity in the Classroom

Recognize any biases or stereotypes you may have absorbed. Do you interact with students in ways that manifest double standards? For example, do you discourage women students from undertaking projects that require quantitative work?

Become more informed about the history and culture of groups other than your own. Avoid offending out of ignorance. Strive for some measure of "cultural competence": know what is appropriate behavior and speech in cultures different from your own.

Treat each student as an individual, and respect each student for who he or she is. Try not to project your experiences with, feelings about, or expectations of an entire group onto any one student.

Do your best to be sensitive to terminology. Terminology changes over time as ethnic and cultural groups continue to define their identity, their history, and their relationship to the dominant culture.

Get a sense of how students feel about the cultural climate in your classroom. Let students know that you want to hear from them if any aspect of the course is making them uncomfortable.

Recognize the complexity of diversity. Today, demographics require a broader multicultural perspective and efforts to include many under-represented groups.

From **Tools for Teaching** by Barbara Gross Davis; [Jossey-Bass](#) Publishers: San Francisco, 1993.

PowerPointers

Insert a Video Clip

With PowerPoint you can insert and play a variety of popular movie formats to make a presentation exciting and informative. Examples of formats you can use include .mpg, .mpeg, and .m1v.

1. Select the slide you want to add video to.
2. On the **Insert** menu, point to **Movies and Sounds**.
3. Click **Movie from File**, locate the folder that contains the video, and then double-click the video you want.
4. You are prompted to click **Yes** if you want the movie to play automatically when you move to the slide, or to click **No** if you want the movie to play only when you click the movie during a slide show.

To play a movie while editing:

- Double-click the movie file in slide view or normal view (Ppt 2000 only).

To play a movie during a presentation:

- Run the presentation as a slide show and then click the movie file, if you set it up that way (see step 4, above).