

Chapter 8

Increasing Student Engagement and Motivation Through Academic Coaching

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the importance of lowering the affective filter of adult learners at online universities, specifically in online academic success centers, is relevant for university leadership, faculty, staff, and students who aim to accomplish their desired education outcomes. As a result, this chapter addresses the problem of how to support adult learners in lowering their affective filter by exploring best practices and theories. There is a need for further evidence when the science of learning is incorporated with student engagement, motivation, and goal setting to accomplish the application of knowledge acquisition. The mission of this chapter is to discuss successful strategies that can be replicated to support students in online academic success centers.

INTRODUCTION

As online universities continue to increase enrollment, there is a need to prepare for diverse learners with different backgrounds and skill sets. Lowering affective filters for adult learners at online universities is a concept worthy of exploration for online academic success centers, online writing centers, and online tutoring centers. Furthermore, understanding students' assumptions about receiving support can add to the existing literature on how to overcome barriers for students who are hesitant to seek additional academic support (Arko-Achemfuor, 2017; Babcock et al., 2019). Understanding university students' barriers have led university leadership, faculty, and staff to question the significance of how to identify and lower affective filters for student success. What is already known about affective filter levels is students with high affective filters are less likely to seek support. When these students with high affective filters face challenges with academic achievement, they are less likely to persist than those with lower affective filters (Ch'ng, 2019; Rahman et al., 2020).

Many internal and external factors can limit a student's ability to fully learn the material being reviewed during a class or an academic coaching session. Those factors include the student's self-confidence to learn the topic or concept, the student's stress level either related to the topic or an outside entity, or any emotions the student might be experiencing related to their lives within or outside the learning environment. The Affective Filter Principle explains that as the student experiences any of the factors, the student's affective filter rises and prevents learning from occurring (Krashen, 1982). The goal of the academic coach is to provide the student with a space that allows the student to engage and experiment with new information. This, in turn, lowers the student's affective filter and empowers the student to begin learning and applying the new information (Patrick, 2019).

A distinctive approach to university online academic success centers includes opportunities for students to expand their knowledge while having opportunities to lower their affective filter. Such opportunities stem from scaffolded learning modalities through asynchronous or synchronous experiences. The challenge arises when supports are in place for students, but those with higher affective filters are less likely to utilize the supports. The implications of the challenges students face when they are unable to lower their affective filter highlight the need to establish the benefits of online academic success centers, online writing centers, and online tutoring centers. Therefore, discussing student engagement, cognitive science (the science of learning), and how student motivation can benefit student success is relevant when students can apply what they are learning.

BACKGROUND

The emerging trends in higher education include student success and the importance of student support for meaningful student engagement and goal accomplishment. Therefore, there is a need to explore how online university academic success centers, writing centers, and tutoring centers can have measurable achievements when developing an autonomous coaching model based on the student's individualized needs through skill development following the process of lowering affective filters and understanding the dynamics of the Science of Learning. When the focus is on adult learners in the online university setting, there are common assumptions that adult learners have a wealth of experience that they bring to the educational setting, are self-directed learners, and are self-motivated (Knowles, 1968, 1980). However, along with these assumptions, some assumptions should be clearly debunked when working

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