Dropout Prevention
A Strategic Approach
An Online Graduate Course

Course Description

The problem of school dropouts is placed in the context of literacy, not numbers. There is abundant research on school dropouts, but there is no indisputable solution to the dropout problem. A need is to review the research and develop an explanation of school dropout. Once an explanation is developed, the explanation will be used to evaluate existing dropout programs, to use as a basis in developing dropout prevention strategies, to provide a reference for identified antecedents, and to develop an appropriate pedagogy for potential dropout.

Much of the work to prevent students from making a decision to dropout focuses on symptoms, the "end" attribute. What is unique about this course is that it provides a model to delineate cause. The notion of causality must encompass the identification of antecedents that underlie the cause. However, it is doubtful that a definitive cause can be found by isolating antecedents. What the model, presented during this course, provides is a systematic process for relating the functional interaction among discrete antecedents. Systems theory clearly demonstrates that system components are never isolated and their function ripples across the system. At the conclusion of this course you will have the capability to use the course model to identify why students who do choose to leave school before graduation.

Course Objectives

- Participants will:
- Define dropout
- Identify ways to count dropouts
- Discuss early warning signs of students who may be at risk for dropout.
- Explain the standards parent and family involvement.
- Assess the processes for encouraging family and community involvement in place at current work location.
- Recommend revisions to current family and community involvement plans.
- Formulate an explanation of why a student makes a decision to leave school early
- Analyze a test to measure attributes associated with school dropout
- Create definitions for end behavior, antecedent, ripple effect, attributes, and cause
- Use "The Big Three" to intervene and develop a plan for student success
- Utilize attributes, antecedents, end behavior, ripple effects, and cause to identify potential dropouts
- Identify verbal cues from student dialogue that may indicate risk for dropping out
- Delineate the influence of the school on students who choose to drop out

- Describe the importance of alternative education opportunities for students
- Assess the impact of early intervention
- Explore the early intervention process
- Develop academic interventions to be used at tiers 1-3
- Discuss the importance of transition years on preventing drop outs
- Identify methods for using the instructional system to prevent school dropouts
- Create an intervention strategy to reduce dropout rate
- Create a strategic intervention outline
- Identify online resources that could benefit student population

Curriculum Design

This course is 13 week 3 graduate credit course taught online. The pedagogical emphasis is to translate research on school dropouts to prevention strategies teachers may implement in their classrooms. Most activities are experimental in design.

Course Materials

The required course text is, Dropout Prevention, by C.Lee Goss and Krista J. Andren. Readings and Must-See Websites are included in the course Modules.

Hardware and Computer Skills Requirements

Computer and Internet access required. Students must have regular access to a computer and be able to use computer skills to successfully complete this course. Many problems instructors and students run into stem from mis-configured browsers, incorrect software versions, pop-up blockers, and other issues. Most of these issues can be prevented by performing the browser tune up before the course or once a problem arises. Often students find it easier to use *Mozilla Firefox*, *Google Chrome*, or *Safari* rather than Internet Explorer; for some applications Internet *Explorer* may work well.

Module Outline

Module One: What is a dropout?

Objectives:
1. Define dropout
2. Identify ways to count dropouts
3. Discuss early warning signs of students who may be at risk for dropout.

Module Two: School, family and community involvement

Objectives:
1. Explain the standards parent and family involvement.
2. Assess the processes for encouraging family and community involvement in place at current work location.
3. Recommend revisions to current family and community involvement plans.

Module Three: Dropout Explanation

Objectives:
1. Formulate an explanation of why a student makes a decision to leave school early
2. Analyze a test to measure attributes associated with school dropout

Module Four: New Terms
Objectives:
1. Create definitions for end behavior, antecedent, ripple effect, attributes, and cause
2. Use "The Big Three" to intervene and develop a plan for student success

Module Five: Identifying the potential dropout
Objectives:
1. Utilize attributes, antecedents, end behavior, ripple effects, and cause to identify potential dropouts
2. Identify verbal cues from student dialogue that may indicate risk for dropping out

Module Six: Role of the school

Objectives:
1. Delineate the influence of the school on students who choose to drop out
2. Describe the importance of alternative education opportunities for students

Module Seven: Interventions

Objectives:
1. Assess the impact of early intervention
2. Explore the early intervention process
3. Develop academic interventions to be used at tiers 1-3

Module Eight: Instructional system

Objectives:
1. Discuss the importance of transition years on preventing drop outs
2. Identify methods for using the instructional system to prevent school dropouts

Module Nine: Synthesis of course content
Objectives:
1. Create an intervention strategy to reduce dropout rate

Module Ten: Into the future

Objectives:
1. Create a strategic intervention outline
2. Identify online resources that could benefit student population

Student Requirements

	Points
Participation in class activities	10
Eight Module reflections (5 points per reflection)	40
Dropout prevention strategy	35
Mid-term exam	5
Final exam	<u>10</u>
	100

Grades
93-100	-	A
85-92	-	B
77-84	-	C

Student Academic Integrity
Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and are subject to disciplinary action.