

# **Dropout Prevention**

## **A Strategic Approach**

### **An Online Graduate Course**

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#### **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, *The Dropout Prevention Specialist Workbook: A How-To Guide for Building the Skills and Competencies for Addressing the School Dropout Crisis (SSWAA Workshop Series)* by Blonsky, Howard M. 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.

Obj

2. Identify ways to count dropouts

## ***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**

	<u>Points</u>
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.