Blended Interventions to Aid Transfer Students’ Transitioning from Face-To-Face to Online Courses

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Denise Nadasen, AVP Institutional Research
Alexandra List, Research Associate

University of Maryland University College
Today's Presentation

• Transfer student research
• Kresge project framework
• Interventions development, implementation, and results
• Conclusions
• Lessons learned/next steps
Community college students comprise 45% of undergraduate students.

Only 15% of transfer students complete a degree within 6 years.

Prior academic work and first semester of transfer from community college to four-year university are key factors in transfer students success, persistence, and graduation.
Goal: To support community college transfer students to achieve success in their first semester at a four-year university.

Project Scope:
- Collaborate with community colleges
- Build an integrated database
- Conduct data mining
- Predict transfer success at the four-year
- Identify factors associated with success
- Implement and evaluate interventions
Institutional Profiles

University of Maryland University College (UMUC)
• Large, open-access, online university serving adult students who work and have families

Maryland community colleges:
  Montgomery College
  Prince George’s Community College
• Large, diverse institutions with lower-income students who have little or no online experience.
• Provides the largest number of transfer students to UMUC
Focus of Kresge Research

- Community College Data
- UMUC Data

Predict Student Success

Intervene to Improve Student Performance
Academic Trajectories for Transfer Students

1. Community College Data
2. UMUC First Term GPA
3. Re-enrollment
4. Retention
5. Graduation
Drivers for the Interventions

Academic Planning and Goal Setting

Social and Institutional Integration

Academic Success
Literature Insights

• Transfer challenging for students
  – “Eco-shock”
  – Challenges navigating new environment
  – Challenges with academic and social integration
  – Inadequate information about the transfer institution

• Transfer students need three types of resources:
  – Institutional resources (Formal)
  – Peer support (Informal)
  – Independent self-support (Initiative-based)

• Support for specific interventions developed
  – Students’ desire for a checklist
  – Large literature on benefits of mentoring
Stakeholder Insights

• Community College partner insights:
  – Students need role models
    • Having a mentor who was like them.
  – Institution should provide social support

• UMUC insights:
  – Review of previous interventions

• Advising insight:
  – Information students need when they start
Interventions

- Student Resource Checklist
- College Success Mentoring
- Jumpstart & Jumpstart Summer
- Coaching Undergraduates for Success and Persistence
Key Outcomes

- First-term GPA
- Successful Course Completion: percent of courses completed with grade C or above
- Re-enrollment: enrollment in semester following the first semester of transfer
- Student perceptions: satisfaction survey results from students
Student Resource Checklist
Checklist Description

• Students are asked to identify academic and social resources
  – Learners are active in finding university resources
  – Practice navigating online support services
• Targeted areas:
  – Academic planning (e.g., identify school calendar)
  – Institutional navigation (e.g., access student account)
  – Social orientation (e.g., communicate with advisor)
Checklist Samples

Manage Student Account Information

Successful UMUC students use the MyUMUC site to manage their account and course information.

☐ Log into MyUMUC

What is the link to check your course grades on the MyUMUC site?

What is the link to view your transcript on the MyUMUC site?

Use Academic Resources

Successful UMUC students ask for help when they need it. They often consult with the 24/7 librarian service, have their papers reviewed by the Effective Writing Center, and receive tutoring in math and computer courses.

Bookmark each of these valuable resources in your browser.

Library

What is the link to chat with a librarian 24/7?

Writing Support

What is the link to the Effective Writing Center's Online Guide to Writing and Research?
Checklist Implementation

• Checklist intervention targeted all new community college transfer students (N=343)
• Students randomly assigned to test and control groups
• Checklist was available online or a Word doc
• 59 students completed the checklist
  – Completion rate: 24%
Checklist Results

No significant differences in GPA or rate of successful course completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Test (n=240)</th>
<th>Control (103)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term GPA</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Course Completion</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.82</td>
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<th>Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Checklist Completers (n=59)</th>
<th>Control (103)</th>
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<td>Term GPA</td>
<td>2.93</td>
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<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.82</td>
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College Success Mentoring Program
Mentor Selection

• Criteria for mentor invitation:
  – Transferred from MC or PGCC
  – Enrolled at UMUC in Spring 2014
  – Enrolled at UMUC for at least 1 year
  – GPA: 3.0 or above

• Mentor Orientation (7 day training):
  – Mentor handbook
  – Seven discussion topics
  – Composed introductory email to mentees
  – 80 mentors successfully completed orientation
Mentee Selection

- New community college transfer students in Spring 2014
- Random assignment to test and control groups
  - **Test group**: 90
  - **Control group**: 34
- Mentor-mentee matching based on:
  - Community College of origin
  - Major
  - Demographic factors: age, gender
Eight topics for 8 weeks of classes:
- Setting goals
- Time management
- Class participation and communicating with instructors
- Study skills and managing workload
- Academic support at UMUC
- Maintaining motivation
- Self-assessment and long-term goal setting
- Re-enrollment and developing an academic plan
Mentee Results

No significant differences in GPA and rate of successful course completion were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Test (n=90)</th>
<th>Control (n=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term GPA</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Course Completion</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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Mentor Results

Significant differences were found between mentors (test) and non-mentors (control) for cumulative GPA and Successful Course Completion.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Test  (n=70)</th>
<th>Control (n=116)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative GPA</td>
<td>3.56*</td>
<td>3.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term GPA</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Course Completion</td>
<td>0.95*</td>
<td>0.90*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Jumpstart and Jumpstart Summer
Jumpstart

- Designed to replace previous orientation course
- Four-week, 1 credit, “onboarding course”
- Targets unique needs of adult learners by connecting academic planning and life goals
- Skill-focused - to teach students about UMUC online tools
  - Smarter Measures Diagnostic
  - Academic Planner
  - Online Resume Builder
Jumpstart Results

- For comparison, random sample of students was created
  - Quasi-experimental design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Test Group (n=40)</th>
<th>Random Sample (103)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term GPA</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Course Completion*</td>
<td>0.77*</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-enrollment*</td>
<td>82.5%*</td>
<td>58.4%*</td>
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* Significant differences in the rate of successful course completion and re-enrollment.
## Jumpstart Summer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>No Mentoring</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jumpstart</strong></td>
<td>Jumpstart Summer n=75</td>
<td>Jumpstart n=75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Jumpstart</strong></td>
<td>Mentoring n=75</td>
<td>Control n=45</td>
</tr>
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*University of Maryland University College*
Coaching Undergraduates for Success and Persistence (CUSP)
CUSP Program

• Targeting academic writing skills
• Three program components:
  – Paired with peer mentor to provide academic and social support
  – Partnered with *Effective Writing Center*
    • Provide students with writing coach
    • Coach developed mini-lessons and workshops
  – Participants completed writing skills diagnostic and writing milestones
CUSP Results

- Test group, compared with a control group, had significantly higher:
  - term GPA
  - rate of successful course completions
  - rate of re-enrollment
- Test group, compared with a random sample of students, had a significantly higher rate of re-enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Outcomes</th>
<th>Summer 2013 and Fall 2013</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test (n=59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term GPA</td>
<td>2.67**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Course Completion</td>
<td>75%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Enrollment</td>
<td>83%*</td>
</tr>
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Conclusions

• Interventions were successful in improving students’ transition to UMUC
• Interventions are able to produce demonstrable improvements in students’ success and performance, relative to comparison groups
• Further, interventions promoted students’ re-enrollment, resulting in persistence
Indirect Benefits

• Interventions offer indirect benefits to students
  – Students know there are resources devoted to helping them to be successful
  – Students feel cared for and supported by the university

• A challenge for online institutions is creating a social community for students
  – Interventions provide a way to socially integrate students into the community and culture of the university
Lessons Learned

• Integrative interventions offer a holistic approach to student success
• Value in collaboration with cross-institutional stakeholders
• Evaluate interventions to determine their effectiveness using measurable outcomes
• Lather, rinse, repeat – modify interventions based on evaluation and feedback
• Consider scalability and resource allocation
Next Steps

- Women’s Mentoring/Boys to Men
- Diverse Male Student Initiative
- Development Education (math modules)
- Accounting 220/221
- JumpStart Summer
Thank you!

Alexandra List
(alexandra.list@umuc.edu)

Denise Nadasen
(denise.nadasen@umuc.edu)