

Improving Student Retention

Patrick R. Lowenthal

Boise State University

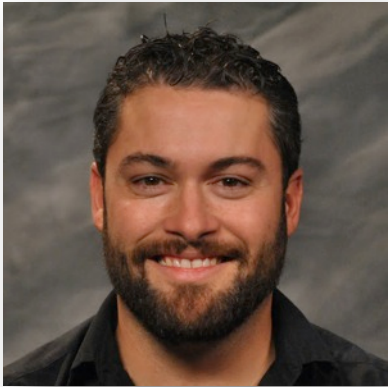
June 10, 2014

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Today's Speakers



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Casey Green, moderator

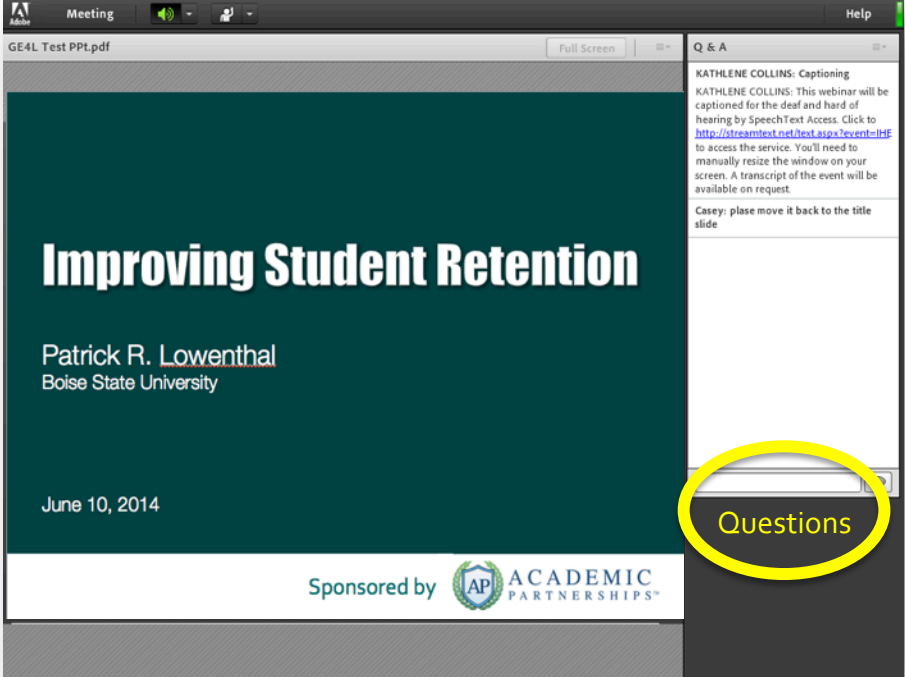
Founding Director, The Campus Computing Project

Moderator, This Week @ Inside Higher Ed

<http://campuscomputing.net>

Before We Begin

- We are using Adobe Connect. Please enter questions in the text field at the bottom of the Q&A Window. *We are monitoring the discussion and will try to bring the Q&A comments into the conversation.*
- We will not use the “raise your hand” feature.
- We are recording the webinar; the webinar archive and slides will be available later today.



The screenshot shows an Adobe Connect meeting window. The main content area displays a presentation slide titled "Improving Student Retention" by Patrick R. Lowenthal, Boise State University, dated June 10, 2014. The slide is sponsored by AP Academic Partnerships. On the right side, there is a Q & A panel. The panel contains a message from KATHLENE COLLINS regarding captioning services and a text input field at the bottom labeled "Questions" which is circled in yellow.

Meeting | GE4L Test PPT.pdf | Full Screen | Q & A | Help

KATHLENE COLLINS: Captioning
KATHLENE COLLINS: This webinar will be captioned for the deaf and hard of hearing by SpeechText Access. Click to <http://streamtext.net/text.aspx?event=HJ> to access the service. You'll need to manually resize the window on your screen. A transcript of the event will be available on request.

Casey: please move it back to the title slide

Questions

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Background

About Patrick



- educator
- researcher
- designer
- developer

patricklowenthal.com
Twitter @plowenthal

Meet Steve

Busy full-time teacher with a family. He needs a graduate degree to advance up the salary scale and in his career.



Steve started off the semester strong. But about half way through the semester he disappeared. After multiple emails and phone calls he emailed to say he just needed to take an “F” in the course.





Meet Julie

Works for an education publishing company.
Just had gave birth to her second child.
Started a fully online Ed.D. program to help
further advance her career.



Julie was by far one of the strongest students in the program. But one day out-of-the-blue she emailed me to tell me she was dropping out of the doctoral program to spend more time with her family.

AO..

QUESTION
EVERYTHING

"
TEASE F
TLW



Online Attrition

“10% - 20%”

higher

1st Poll

At your institution, do online courses have a higher dropout rate than traditional face-to-face courses?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know



Research

Practitioner Research Strategies

Read top 10 cited articles

Read 10 most recent articles

Read first page of a “Google” search

Ask your PLN / Crowd source

Google Scholar's Top 10

Scholar About 2,050 results (0.04 sec)

Articles [\[PDF\] Strategies to Engage Online Students and Reduce Attrition Rates.](#) [\[PDF\] from ed.gov](#)
 LM Angelino, FK Williams, D Natvig - Journal of Educators Online, 2007 - ERIC
 ... Key Terms Distance education, **attrition**, **retention**, engage, integration, **persistence**, **online**, **learning**, community, asynchronous ... engaging the distance learner with the goal of increasing **persistence**. Reducing **attrition** rates is ...
 Cited by 119 [Related articles](#) [All 7 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#) [More](#)

Case law

My library

Any time [In search of higher persistence rates in distance education online programs](#) [\[PDF\] from ihmc.us](#)
 AP Rovai - The Internet and Higher Education, 2003 - Elsevier
 ... He also observed that the focus in **online learning** is often less on the content than ... 1989, p. 1).
 Deficiencies in these special skills can lead to academic difficulties and **attrition**. ... subsequent to college admission can have a profound effect on a student's **persistence** decision (Tinto ...
 Cited by 286 [Related articles](#) [All 9 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#)

Sort by relevance [\[PDF\] 13: 5 A Model for Sustainable Student Retention: A Holistic Perspective on the Student Dropout Problem with Special Attention to e-Learning](#) [\[PDF\] from psu.edu](#)
Sort by date [ZL Berge, YP Huang - 2004 - Citeseer](#)
 ... In the **online learning** context, dropout rates appear to be higher than for traditional courses. While there are ... predict student **persistence**, **attrition** and **retention**. These frameworks include: Graduated, 58% ... college student decisions to **persist** or to depart (Tillman, Sr. 2002) ...
 Cited by 118 [Related articles](#) [All 6 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#) [More](#)

include patents
 include citations

My library to assist institutions across the higher education community in preventing **attrition** and advancing student **persistence**, therefore setting the path for matriculation. ...
 Cited by 19 [Related articles](#) [All 7 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#) [More](#)

Any time [A structural equation model of predictors of online learning retention](#)
 Y Lee, J Choi - The Internet and Higher Education, 2013 - Elsevier
 ... Despite the popularity of **online learning**, the constant high dropout rates for online courses have ...
 Comparing **attrition** in online and face-to-face courses, Patterson and McFadden's (2009) study ...
Persistence/retention has been defined as the learner's will to continue in order to ...
 Cited by 6 [Related articles](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#)

Sort by relevance [Assessing retention in online learning: An administrative perspective](#)
Sort by date WE Boston, P Ice - Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 2011 - editlib.org
 ... Assessing **Retention** in **Online Learning**: An Administrative Perspective. ... Models for understanding student **persistence** in the face-to-face environment are well established, however, many of ... With **attrition** rates higher than in face-to-face programs, the development of models to ...
 Cited by 15 [Related articles](#) [All 4 versions](#) [Cite](#) [Save](#) [More](#)

include patents
 include citations

[Counting Chickens Before They Are Hatched: An Examination of Student Retention, Graduation, Attrition, and Dropout Measurement Validity in an Online Master's ...](#)

Articles reviewed listed @ <http://tinyurl.com/online-retention>



Word Play

Retention *vs.* Attrition

Persistence

Dropout *vs.* Stop out

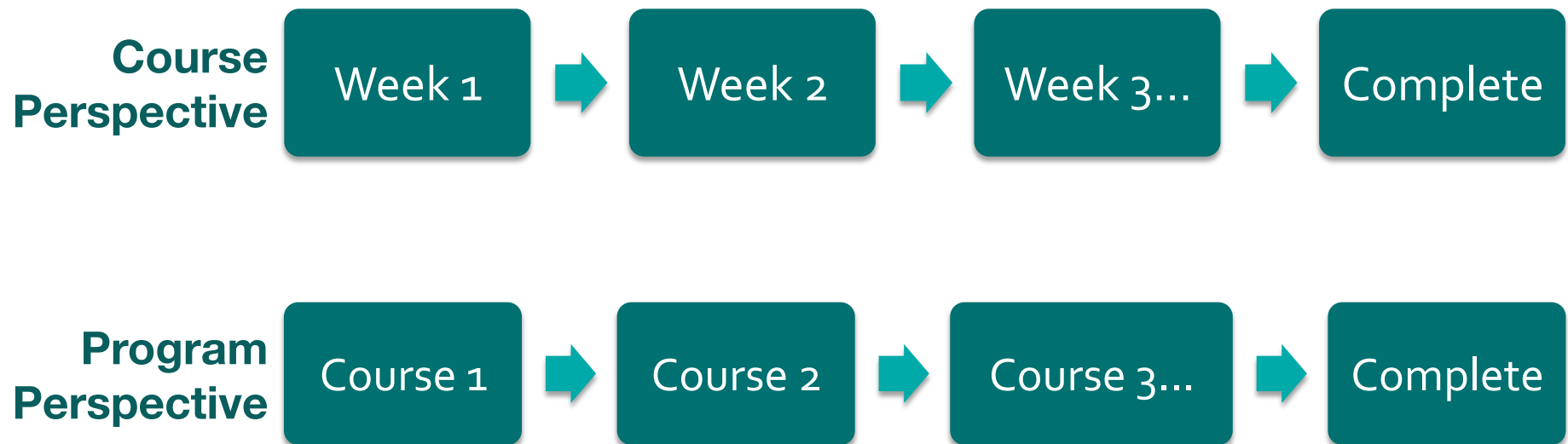
Word Play

Retention *vs.* Attrition
Persistence

Dropout *vs.* Stop out

What are some other words you have heard or use regarding retention / attrition / persistence?

Course vs. Program Perspectives



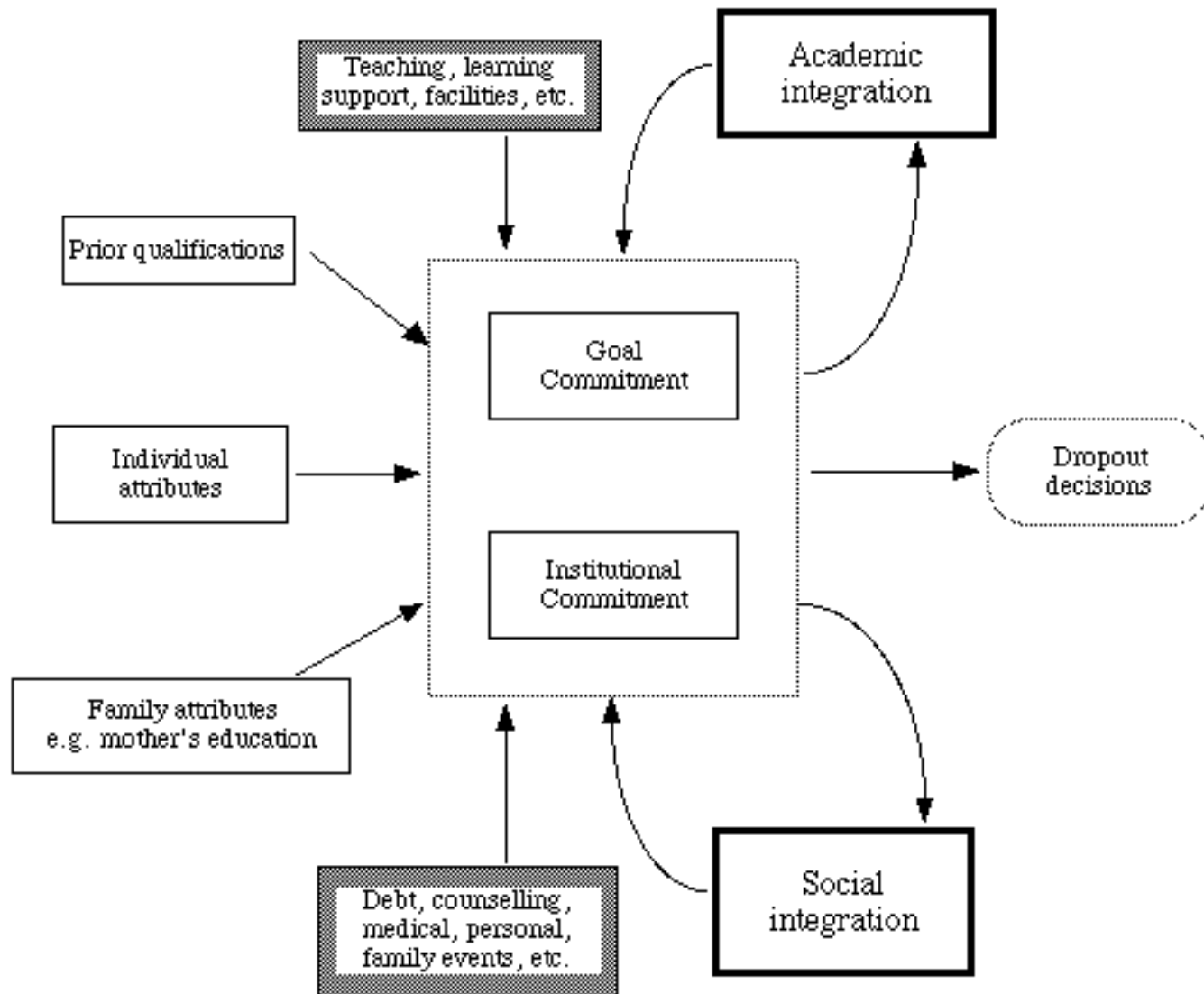


So Why Bother?

- **5+ million** students taking courses online
- Online courses take **time & money** to develop
- High attrition is **perceived as low quality**
- Online learning is still seen **inferior than f2f** by many
- We owe it to the Steve & Julie's in our courses / programs

Themes

Tinto's Foundational Work



Different Interests

1. How do you **predict** who will persist?
2. Why do students **leave**?
3. What **barriers** are there to learning online?
4. Why do students **stay / persist**?

“Best” Predictors

1. GPA

2. Test Scores

A⁺

Why They Leave

Berge and Huang:

1. Personal variables;
2. Institutional variables, and
3. Circumstantial variables.

Wang et al:

1. Personal motivation;
2. Instructional design of course/program;
3. Conflicts between study, work, & family; and
4. Learned what they needed or wanted.

Barriers

Berge:

1. Technical problems
2. Cost of & access to internet
3. Time & support for studies
4. Personal motivation
5. Technical skills
6. Academic skills
7. Social interactions
8. Administrative / instructor issues

Müller:

1. Balancing multiple responsibilities
2. Disappointment in faculty
3. F2F learning environment preference
4. Emotional hurdles (e.g. scheduling conflicts; overwhelmed w/ assignments)
5. Technology problems
6. Additional barriers (health, financial issues; time management or procrastination)

Why They Stay

1. Engagement in learning community
2. Feeling challenged and personal growth
3. Schedule flexibility and convenience
4. Support from classmates and faculty
5. Additional factors

Strategien

2nd Poll

Does your college or university or program intentionally do anything to improve retention in online programs?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know



Share Your Experience

Using the following Google Form, please share what your college or program is doing to help online students persist.



Form: <http://tinyurl.com/retention2014>

Quick View of Results: <http://tinyurl.com/retention2014-results>

Complete view of results: <http://tinyurl.com/complete2014>

Researched-based Strategies

1. Program Orientation
2. Cohorts
3. Clear Expectations
4. Regular faculty-student interaction
5. Social interaction / social presence
6. Student services / support

How Can Faculty Help?

1. Technical problems
2. Cost & access to internet
3. Time & support for studies
4. Personal motivation
5. Technical skills
6. Academic skills
- 7. Social interactions**
- 8. Instructor issues**

1. Program Orientation
2. Cohorts
- 3. Clear Expectations**
- 4. Regular faculty-student interaction**
- 5. Social interaction / social presence**
6. Student services / support

Social Presence Strategies

Bio strategies

Orientation strategies

Reconnecting strategies

Feedback strategies

Discussion strategies

Small group strategies

Organic interaction strategies

Teacher Bios

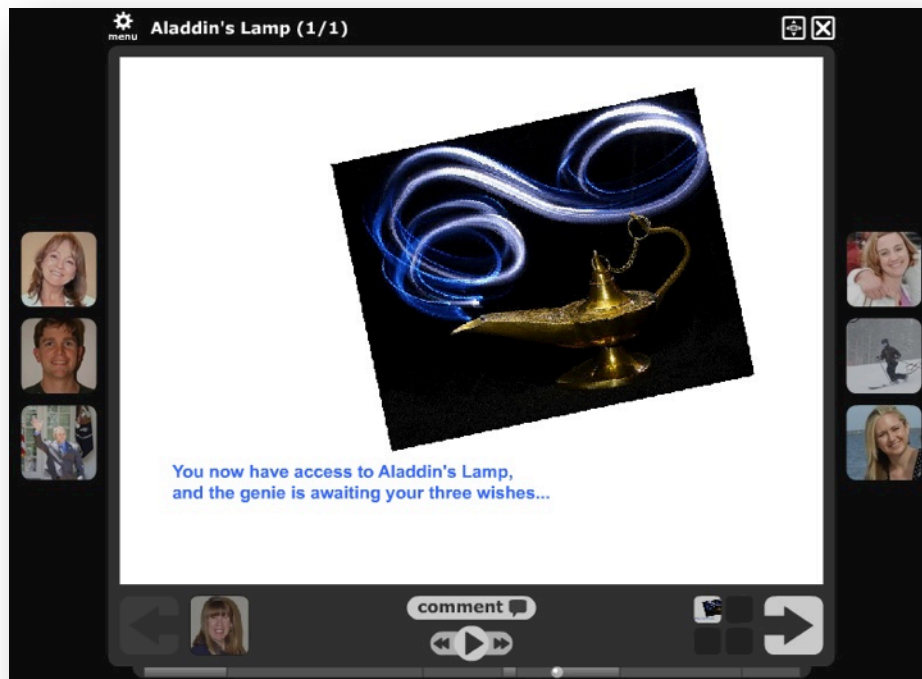


Digital Stories

For more info:

From Pixel on a Screen to Real Person in Your Students' Lives: Establishing Social Presence using Digital Storytelling

Student Bios



Aladdin's Lamp



Superhero Powers

For more info:
Getting to know you: The first week of class and beyond

Student Bios

5 minute phone call

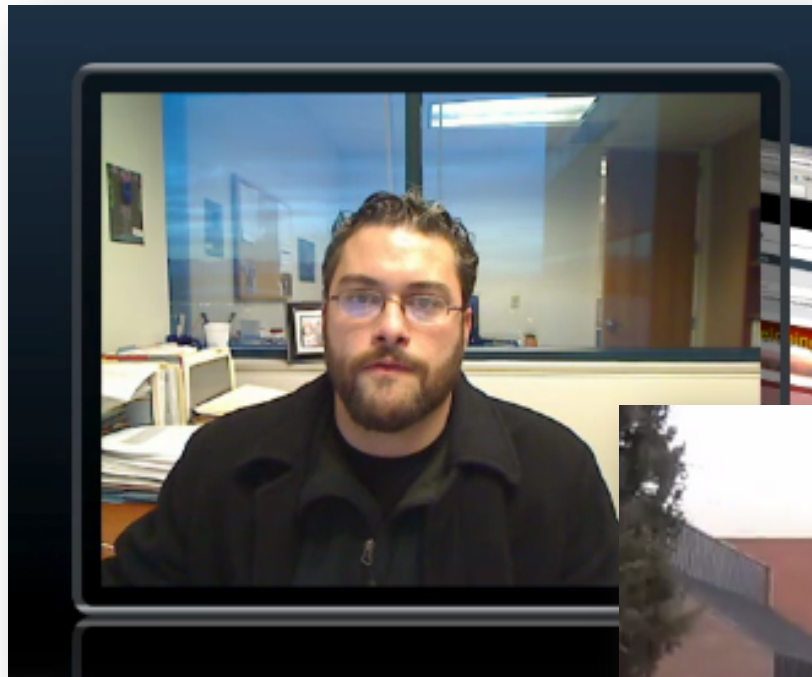


For more info:

Defeating the Kobayashi Maru: Supporting Student Retention by Balancing the Needs of the Many and the One

Orientation Strategies

Orientation Videos



Reconnecting Strategies

Soundtrack of your life

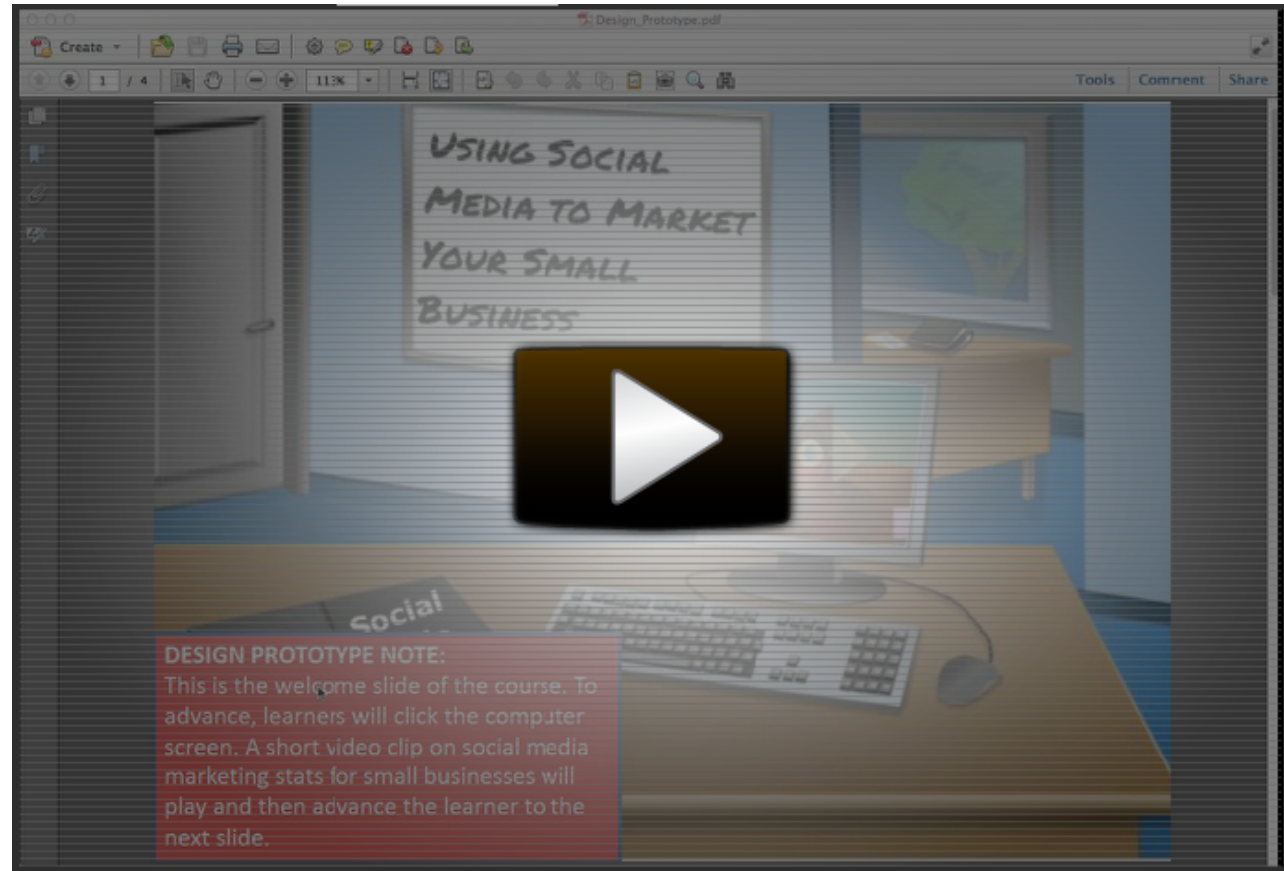


For more info:

Hot for teacher: Using digital music to enhance student's experience in online courses

Feedback Strategies

Video Feedback

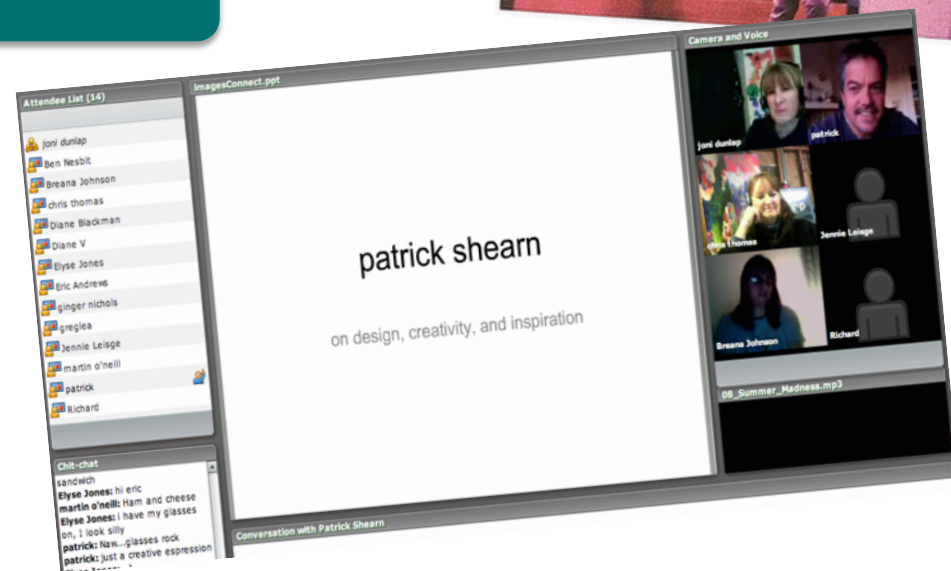


Discussion Strategies

Non-threatening discussions

Discussion Protocols

Synchronous Discussions



For more info:

Protocols for Online Discussions
<http://cuonline.ucdenver.edu/handbook>

Tips to Building Presence

- One-to-one communication matters
- Low tech strategies can help
- Past/future relationships matter
- Group projects can help
- Small groups
- One size doesn't fit all

Conclusion

“It Takes a Village...”

1. Retention is everybody’s job
2. One size doesn’t fit all
3. Sometimes not completing a course is ok
4. Every instructor can add “social” elements to their courses
5. Faculty should be tracking their percentage of completers!

***So what’s your number?
Don’t know it? Go find it & improve it!***

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Articles @ <http://patricklowenthal.com/research/>

- The power of presence: Our quest for the right mix of social presence in online courses
- What was your best learning experience? Our story about using stories to solve instructional problems
- Examining faculty motivation to participate in faculty development
- Developing a tool for assessing student readiness for online learning: A validation study
- Minority college students and tacit "Codes of Power": Developing academic discourses and identities
- Defeating the Kobayashi Maru: Supporting student retention by balancing the needs of the many and the one
- Death to the Digital Dropbox: Rethinking student privacy and public performance
- Digital campfires: Innovations in helping faculty explore the online learning wildness
- Hot for teacher: Using digital music to enhance student's experience in online courses
- From pixel on a screen to real person in your students' lives: Establishing social presence using digital storytelling
- Horton hears a tweet
- Tweeting the night away: Using Twitter to enhance social presence
- Online faculty development and storytelling: An unlikely solution to improving teacher quality
- Teaching presence