

Missouri S&T Retention Committee Meeting

December 3, 2009

8:15-9:15 AM

Members Present: Harvest Collier, Tyrone Davidson, Larry Gragg, Rance Larsen, F. Scott Miller, Rachel Morris, Kristi Schulte, C.R. Thulasi Kumar (Alissa Fleck), Stephen Raper, Brad Starbuck, Lynn Stichnote, Laura Stoll, Summer Young

Members Absent: Jay Goff, Sunnie Hughes, Mary Ellen Kirgan, Lea-Ann Morton, Carol Smith, Amiel Weerasinghe

Guests: N/A

I. Review and Approval of Minutes

The committee members reviewed the minutes from the 11-19-09 meeting. A motion was made (Larry Gragg) and seconded (Laura Stoll) to approve the minutes as submitted. The minutes were unanimously approved.

II. New Business

The committee briefly discussed the outcome of the request to Provost Wray to provide resources to support a 25% FTE in staff position to address the Tactical Plan Action item: **Action 1.2.7:** "Establish a parent and family support/outreach services champion and document a plan to improve communication and campus engagement." [OPR: **VPUS, VCSA, and VCUA**]. Harvest Collier reported that, via Provost Wray, Chancellor Carney reviewed the request and declined to support it. Harvest Collier suggested to Group 2 to consider developing a "Plan B" to address pursuing the outcomes of Action item 1.2.7.

A. Review of Strategic/Tactical Plan Action Items Adoption

Harvest Collier provided an update on the progress of the Work Group #1 – Intrusive Intervention project.

Early Intrusive Intervention Project Update

Retention Committee Work Group #2

L. Gragg

R. Morris

K. Schulte

T. Kumar

A. Weerasinghe

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

Pilot Course: Chemistry 1

Total Number of Students: ~800

Students earning a grade of "D" or less after first 4-weeks of class were identified: 160 students

Students were invited to take the LASSI via Academic Alert System, direct email, and Blackboard

Students that took the LASSI: 154/160

Learning and Study Strategies Inventory

The LASSI Scales

ATT - Attitude Scale assesses students' attitudes and interest in college and academic success.

MOT - Motivation Scale assesses students' diligence, self-discipline, and willingness to exert the effort necessary to successfully complete academic requirement.

TMT - Time Management Scale assesses students' application of time management principles to academic situations.

ANX - Anxiety Scale assesses the degree to which students worry about school and their academic performance.

CON - Concentration Scale assesses students' ability to direct and maintain attention on academic tasks.
Learning and Study Strategies Inventory

The LASSI Scales

INP - Information Processing Scale assesses how well students' can use imagery, verbal elaboration, organization strategies, and reasoning skills as learning strategies to help build bridges between what they already know and what they are trying to learn and remember.

SMI - Selecting Main Ideas Scale assesses students' skill at identifying important information for further study from among less important information and supporting details.

STA - Study Aids Scale assesses students' use of supports or resources to help them learn or retain information.

SFT - Self-Testing Scale assesses students' use of reviewing and comprehension monitoring techniques to determine their level of understanding of the information to be learned.

Test Strategies Scale assesses students' use of test preparation and test taking strategies.
Learning and Study Strategies Inventory

What Does the Scoring Mean?

Any score at or above the 75th percentile level indicates an area of relative strength. However, improving in any area of learning and studying can still be helpful.

Any score between the 50th and 75th percentile levels indicates an area where you may need to improve your strategies and skills. Consideration of participating in improvement strategies is strongly recommended.

Any score at or below the 50th percentile level indicates an area of relative weakness. Improving your strategies and skills in these areas should/must be your highest priority. **It is very likely that your strategies and skills in these areas are not sufficient to help you succeed in college**

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

Students that took the LASSI were directed to "best practices" resource and encouraged to take action immediately.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

BEST PRACTICES

ANX – Anxiety and Worry About School Performance

- √To reduce test anxiety, study enough to feel confident that you know the material.
- √Start studying early. The night before a test, review the material and get a good night's sleep.
- √Mentally practice going through the testing experience. Close your eyes and see yourself answering the questions correctly, and receiving the grade you want.
- √If you act confident, you just may find that you feel more confident.
- √Take a deep breath. Then slowly release your breath, along with any tension. Do this until you feel your body relax.
- √Start at the top of your head, flex, and then relax each part of your body.
- √Think of a place where you feel relaxed and calm. Close your eyes and visualize being in that place.
- √The more you practice positive thinking and relaxation techniques, the better you'll get at using them. If you continue to have problems with test anxiety, talk to your advisor or to a counselor.
- √Take time to relax. Schedule breaks each day. Allow a minimum of 1-2 hours a week for your stress relieving /preventing activity.
- √Try to get adequate sleep. Sleep deprivation can lead to anxiety.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

ATT – Attitude and Interest

- √Participate in class. Whenever there are discussions, group projects, or labs, be an active participant. The class will be more enjoyable, and you'll learn more. When you participate, you also show your instructor that you know the material and that you're interested in class.
- √Choose a major that interest you. It's going to be a long 4 years if you choose a major you don't enjoy.
- √Have a positive attitude towards your assignments. First, you must want to do the assignment. You need to see the relevance, value, and importance of the task. Before beginning the task, think about how it will

benefit you. Second, you must believe that you can do the assignment. Tell yourself you can successfully complete the task. Having a positive attitude will help you focus as you begin to study and will help sustain your focus as you work.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

CON – Concentration and Attention to Academic Tasks

√Take notes to help you pay attention. You can think much faster than anyone can talk. This is one of the reasons that your mind sometimes wanders when you're listening to a lecture. When you take notes, however, your mind has something additional to do. Taking notes help you pay attention and stay focused.

√Sit in the front of the class whenever possible. Research shows that sitting in the front of the class is directly related to higher grades. It's easier to pay attention, easier to hear the instructor, and there are fewer distractions.

√Use a student planner. Take a student planner with you to every class. Record each assignment under the date it's due. When an assignment is completed, check it off. Also use your planner to keep track of test and quiz dates, appointments, etc.

√Eliminate distractions. You can dramatically improve your ability to concentrate by creating a positive learning environment.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

INP – Information Processing, Acquiring Knowledge, and Reasoning

√Write down what you want to memorize and stare at it. Close your eyes and try to see it in your mind. Say it, and look at it again.

√Use flashcards to memorize terms, facts, formulas, and lists.

√Information is easier to remember if it's grouped or categorized. Use lists and diagrams to group related terms, facts, and ideas.

√Use acronyms to help you memorize information. For example the acronym HOMES can help you remember the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior)

√Look for a logical or simple connection.

√Be sure you understand the material you're trying to remember. It's very difficult to remember something that you don't understand.

√Review often. When you review, you move information from your short term memory into your long term memory. Review is the key to learning anything.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

MOT – Motivation, Diligence, Self-discipline, and Willingness to Work Hard

√If you want to get good grades in college, you must attend every class.

√Do every assignment. Don't think of homework as something you should do. Think of homework as something you must do.

√Collect contact information from classmates. Make sure that you have a phone number or e-mail address for at least one person in each class.

√Getting started on your studying is often the hardest part. Don't put your studying off until "later," don't make excuses, and don't wait until you're "in the mood." If you have trouble getting started, begin with something simple or a subject that you like.

√Set goals and strive to accomplish them. Make a list of the courses you're currently taking. Then write down the highest grade you think you can earn in each course. Think of these grades as your academic goals for the term.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

SFT – Self-testing, Reviewing, and Preparing for Class

√Read class material before going to class

√Review notes before and after lectures

√Keep returned papers, quizzes, and tests. Have a different color pocket folder for each class, and keep all returned papers, quizzes, and tests in these folders. Old tests can help you study for future tests, and they'll come in handy if there's ever a question about your grade.

√Learn how to adapt to different instructors. Part of your education is to learn how to adapt to different personalities, teaching styles, and expectations. At the beginning of each term, learn what each instructor expects with regards to homework, attendance, etc.

√Whenever possible, arrive early for class. You'll be more relaxed, and you can use the time to look over your notes, talk to classmates, or speak with your instructor.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

Best Practices

SMI – Selecting Main Ideas and Recognizing Important Information

√Learn how to read a textbook. When you know how to read a textbook, you are able to comprehend and remember what you read.

√Scan. Scanning gives you a quick overview of the material that you're going to be reading. To scan, read the title, the subtitles, and everything in bold and italic print. Look at all of the charts, and graphs, and read

the introduction, the review questions, and the summary. Scanning provides you with a great deal of information in a very short amount of time.

√Read. When your reading has a purpose, you have a reason to stay focused and your comprehension improves. To give your reading purpose, try turning each bold-faced subtitle into a question. Keep your question in mind as you read. At the end of the section, see if you can answer it. Your question will give you something specific to look for, and it will keep your mind from wandering.

√Review. Scan the material after you've read it to check your comprehension.

√Recognize important information in class. You can often hear a change in your instructor's voice when something important is being said. Anything your instructor takes the time to write on the board or overhead should be considered very important. In your notes, underline or put a star beside the most important information. That way you'll know to give it special attention when you're studying later.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

Best Practices

STA – Use of Support Techniques and Materials

There are a wide variety of services provided to help students get the most out their college experience. Use them.

√Academic Advisor

√Career Opportunities Center

√Clubs/Activities

√Computer Learning Centers

√Counseling Center

√Financial Aid

√Student Health

√Library

√Recreation Center

√LEAD Academic Assistance

√Writing Center

√Math Help Room (click on "Current Courses" > "Math Help Room")

√Disability Support Services

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

TMT – Use of Time Management Principles for Academic Tasks

√With good time management, you have more free time.

√Don't overextend yourself. Don't commit to more than you know can handle.

√Be organized. When you're organized, you know exactly what you have to do and how much time you will need.

√Schedule 90-minute study sessions. During your study sessions, don't do anything else. Focus completely on your work.

√Make efficient use of your time. You can study while you're doing your laundry. Use the time between classes to talk to an instructor, study or run an errand.

√Learn to say no. There's so much to do and so much going on that it's easy to get sidetracked. Know what you need to do and don't let anything get in the way of your schoolwork.

√Make "to do lists" and prioritize items. Make a list of everything you need to do. Then rate each item as an A(must do today), B(should do today), or C(would like to do today, but it can wait). Then, take all the As and rank them in the order of importance. Do the same with the Bs and Cs. When you accomplish a task, cross it off your list. At the end of the day, take the tasks that didn't get done and put them on the next day's list.

√Do difficult assignments first while you're still fresh and alert.

Intrusive Intervention Strategy

Best Practices

TST - Test Strategies and Preparing for Tests

√Find a good place to study. Your study area needs to be free of distractions. Don't study with friends, and if you're living in a dorm, go to the library or to your dorm's study area.

√Organize your study time. Always allow more time than you think you'll need. Know when and how to take breaks.

√Learn how to take tests. In order to do well on any test or exam, you must study hard and be prepared.

√Get off to a good start. Have everything you need, and get to the test early. As soon as you get your test paper, write anything that you need to remember in pencil at the top of the test. Listen closely to any verbal instructions, and read the test directions carefully.

√Mark the questions you want to return to. Put a check or a dot by any answer that you're not sure of. After you've gone through all of the questions, go back to the ones that you've marked and try them again. If you're not sure of an answer, go with your first instinct.

√Increase your odds on multiple choice questions. When you're reading a multiple choice question, try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the answer choices. Read all of the answer choices. Don't be tempted to mark the first one that sounds good. If two choices are similar or opposite, one of them is probably the correct answer. If you're not sure, make an educated guess.

√When studying for an exam, go over old tests and quizzes.

√Form a study group with three or four students who are doing at least as well as you are in the class. Review important concepts, formulas, etc. Ask each other questions, share notes, and go over difficult material.

√Write down any names, dates, formulas, or facts that you need to remember on an index card. Carry this card with you as you prepare for the test, and go over it as often as you can before you take the test.

Harvest Collier reported that at least one Chem 1 instructor has agreed to continue this intervention strategy during the spring semester. A complete report of this semester's outcome for all 4 Chem 1 sections will be made at the end of the semester.

It was also mentioned that this semester, Chem 1 students got points for attending LEAD sessions and writing a statement about what they learned.

Laura Stoll expressed concern that students are not reading email, maybe communicating on Facebook or texting. Steve Raper commented that these students will have to communicate by email in industry, so we cannot go overboard on accommodating them. Larry Gragg agreed, that we give them plenty of ways to communicate with us.

It was recommended that at the next Retention Committee meeting, Work Group #3 and its action item to "Establish a central information center for student academic support services, staffed with trained professionals" present an update on the progress of its project.

III. Next Meeting: December 17, 2009- 8:15-9:15 AM, Silver & Gold room, Havener Center

The meeting was adjourned.