

Enhancing Teaching and Learning in Open and Distance Learning: A Mechanism to Facilitate Student Success

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KEYWORDS Isolation. Student Support. Support Systems. Low Throughput. Dropout. Online

ABSTRACT This paper considers the place of students learning in an open and distance learning (ODL) institution. All students need access to a variety of support services. We need to think about the variety of support services that can facilitate student success in ODL. There are many challenges facing distance learning students in the changing context of flexible teaching and learning. Distance learning students may also have different learning styles preferences and coping strategies. Questionnaire surveys and focus group interviews were integrated and conducted with students who are studying at a distance in different distance learning institutions. The focus was on *the causes of student dropout in ODL institutions preventive measures of this escalating challenge and the possible ways of student retention*. The findings from the research raised a possible solution to effective student support in different ways and at different levels. Distance learning institutions claim that they provide a comprehensive student support system, but students disputed this. Instead, students complain of “individual isolation and loneliness”. The lack of coherent student support systems causes a low throughput rate because of a high dropout rate. A convenient sampling of 100 research interview participants and 426 respondents who returned questionnaires were selected from the four provinces of South Africa. The study therefore recommends that students should be engaged as early as possible by using techniques and strategies needed to facilitate effective teaching and learning.