INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT RETENTION

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Which of the following gives you the most concern as an institutional leader?

1. Too many students drop out
2. Too many students fail classes
3. Students take too long to graduate
4. Faculty are bad teachers
5. Faculty do not produce enough research

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What is retention?

- Keeping a student continuously enrolled in your school from first year until they graduate
  - In a timely manner, with limited repetition and stopping out

And why care about retention?

- When students are not retained there are significant financial, social and institutional costs

Why is it so hard to retain students?

1. Students lack financial resources
2. Parents do not emphasize the importance of education
3. Students are not motivated to learn
4. Students do not know how to study
5. Students do not know how to manage their time
6. Students have poor math and reading and writing abilities

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What is college readiness?

- When students have skills and abilities necessary to be successful in college

Why aren't our students ready?

Write down the three most important things students need in order to succeed college.

What happens when students who are educated in this manner arrive at your institutions?

- ☐ They fail their college classes
- ☐ They drop out of college

Goals for today

After taking this seminar you will be able to:

☐ Understand the dimensions of readiness that contribute to student success

☐ Identify institutional strategies that can improve retention and student motivation and diminish repetition

One Minute Paper

What does students' readiness to succeed look like at your institution?

"I would have learned more skills like guitar-playing so I could woo the girls, and maybe studied harder for my advanced classes, also for the same reason."

Sophomore, Engineering

Student perceptions of readiness

- I wish I would have been tested more on theories and ideas. I feel that in high school we are taught more to memorize. College is not about memorization. It's about understanding.

- I wish I would have been more informed about the whole college experience. Also, wish I would have known how crucial it is to study and be responsible once one is on his/her own.
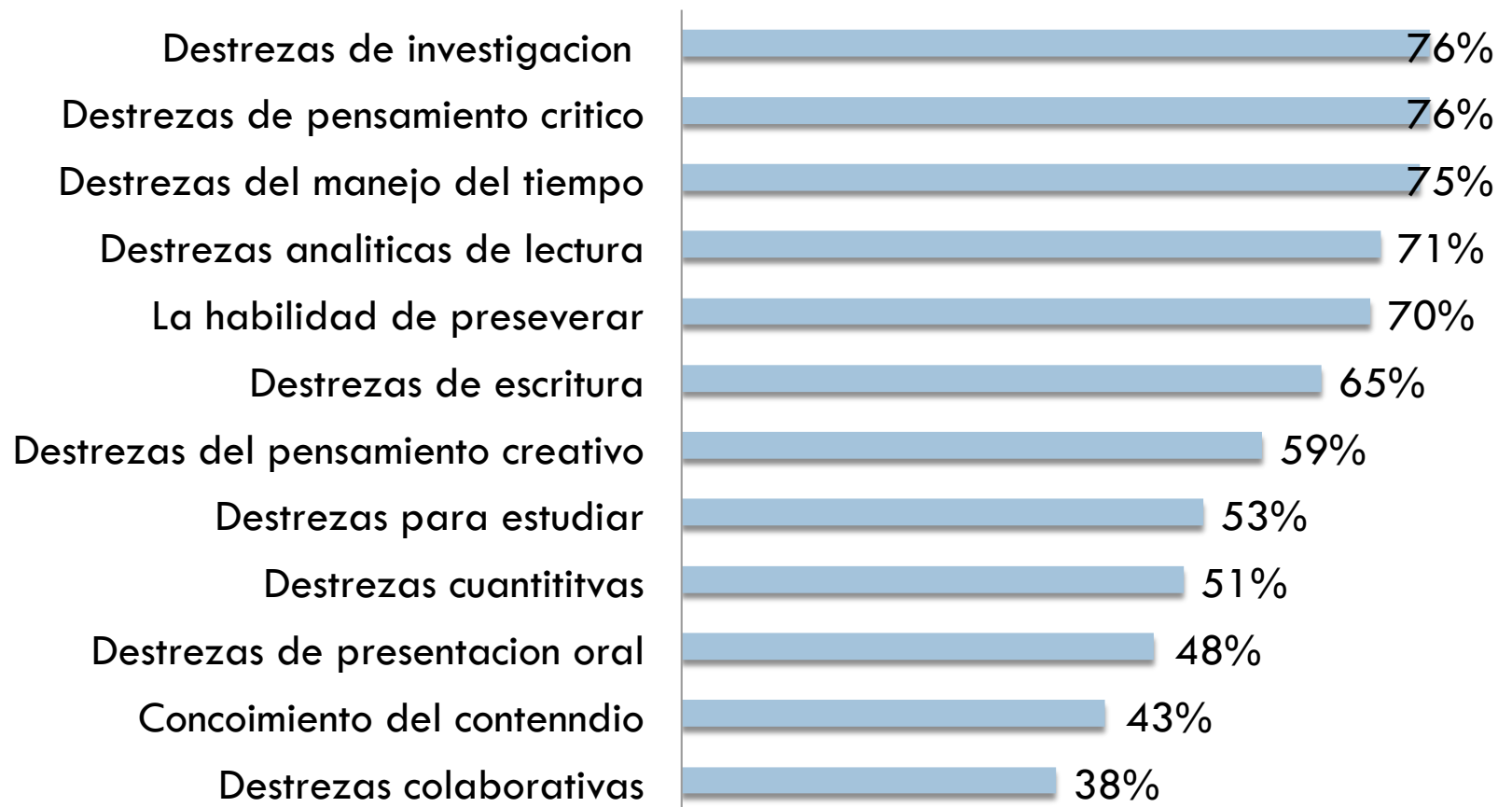
Faculty Perceptions of Readiness

☐ Intellectual and historical curiosity, the ability to read carefully, the ability to make connections between/ among diverse ideas.

☐ Some time management and responsibility, as well as basic grammar and sentence structure abilities. I did not expect any area knowledge or advanced research skills.

International perceptions of readiness

El nivel de habilidad de sus estudiantes
Muy debil or debil

Destrezas de investigacion	76%
Destrezas de pensamiento critico	76%
Destrezas del manejo del tiempo	75%
Destrezas analiticas de lectura	71%
La habilidad de preseverar	70%
Destrezas de escritura	65%
Destrezas del pensamiento creativo	59%
Destrezas para estudiar	53%
Destrezas cuantititvas	51%
Destrezas de presentacion oral	48%
Concoimiento del contenndio	43%
Destrezas colaborativas	38%

Defining college readiness

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Main Message

Student readiness is not only about content knowledge

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Self Knowledge

College Knowledge

Academic Skills

Habits of Mind

Content Knowledge

Self Knowledge

- A holistic and developing view of the self
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-monitoring
  - Self-control
  - Self-efficacy
  - Identity development

College Knowledge

- Formal and informal information necessary for navigating

- Deadlines, timelines, routines

- Awareness of the structure of the higher ed system and the university

- Conventions of interactions in the college context

- Human relations skills to cope with the system expectations

Academic Skills

- ☐ Study skills
- ☐ Perseverance
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Critical reading

Habits of Mind

- ☐ Intellectual openness
- ☐ Inquisitiveness
- ☐ Analysis
- ☐ Reasoning, argumentation, proof
- ☐ Interpretation
- ☐ Precision and accuracy
- ☐ Critical thinking about content
- ☐ Creative thinking

Content Knowledge

- Core Subject Content
- Writing
- Research

Readiness Reflection

	1 – Not present or poorly developed	2- Developing Evidence of some competency in dimension	3 – Expert Complete mastery of this dimension
Self knowledge			
College knowledge			
Academic skills			
Habits of mind			
Content knowledge			

Think about your life as a student in your first year of university. How did you rate in each of these areas?

Key Characteristics of Readiness to Succeed

- Readiness is NOT a binary.

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- Readiness is NOT a binary.

- Students fall on a spectrum of readiness.

- Success is NOT only a matter of mastery of content knowledge, other dimensions may be equally if not more important.

Coffee break

Which of the following is not a dimension of readiness?

1. College knowledge
2. Financial knowledge
3. Content knowledge
4. Academic Skills
5. Habits of Mind

How do we fix the universal problem of student readiness?

Fix the students, they are broken

How do we fix the universal problem of student readiness?

Fix the students, they are broken

One step is to fix the systems that support students across the dimensions of readiness

Write down the three most important things for students to learn in college?

What about Rob?

A framework for student success

- ☐ Signaling
- ☐ Diagnosing
- ☐ Transmitting
- ☐ Intervening

Signaling

- *Telling students exactly what you expect*
- *Making those expectations explicit for the institution and the classroom*

Signaling

Institutional Signals

- New student orientation
- Student handbooks
- Core curriculum/ catalog statements

Signaling

- Classroom Signals
  - Make explicit on the syllabus the prior knowledge and skills expectations and learning goals for your course in all dimensions, *not just content knowledge*

Diagnosing

- *Figuring out where students fall along the readiness spectrum*

- *Looking for gaps in their knowledge or places where readiness impacts their learning*

Diagnosing

Institutional Diagnosing

- Assessments of readiness across the dimensions

- Pre-enrollment surveys

- Review of students admissions materials

Diagnosing

- Classroom Diagnosing
  - Baseline diagnostics in the first two weeks
  - In-class formative evaluations (ConcepTests, JiTT, One Minute Papers, Grading Exercises/Rubrics (self, peer, expert assessments, Homework
  - Baseline evaluation of of 13 performance tasks for competency in college readiness

Transmitting

- *The bridge between diagnosing and intervening*
- *Diagnosing is too often a one way street*

Transmitting

- Institutional Transmitting
  - Student Norming
  - Individual advising for students
  - Early Warning Systems

Transmitting

□ Classroom Transmitting

Transmission is almost always about content, need transmission that is more than right/wrong why right, why wrong.

  ▫ Case Example: Tutoring
  ▫ You need help with your writing go see a writing tutor
    ■ Why doesn't this work? Because the student doesn't understand why they need a writing tutor

Intervening

- Creating systems to address the dimensions of readiness BEFORE students are in a crisis situation

- Policies and procedures that empower intervention for the students

- Structuring intervention across the spectrum of readiness

Intervening

Institutional interventions

- Learning communities
- Academic coaching
- Co-curricular involvement

Institutional Interventions

- Learning Communities
  - Clusters of students who share the same major or area of academic interest
  - Concurrent enrollment in several courses that are common in their major
  - Once-a-week seminar, facilitated by a peer mentor or staff advisor
  - Focuses heavily on college knowledge and self knowledge

Institutional Interventions

- Academic Coaching
    - Peer-to-peer learning about HOW to be a student, within the context of specific content
    - Helps students develop habits of mind and academic skills
    - Doesn't focus on content tutoring – reinforcing concepts, but rather HOW students organize themselves and their academic work

Institutional Interventions

- Co-curricular programs
  - Designed to help students think about their self-knowledge in a context that applies to their interests outside of their academic study
  - Develops leadership, time management, organization, and other skills necessary for life-long learning
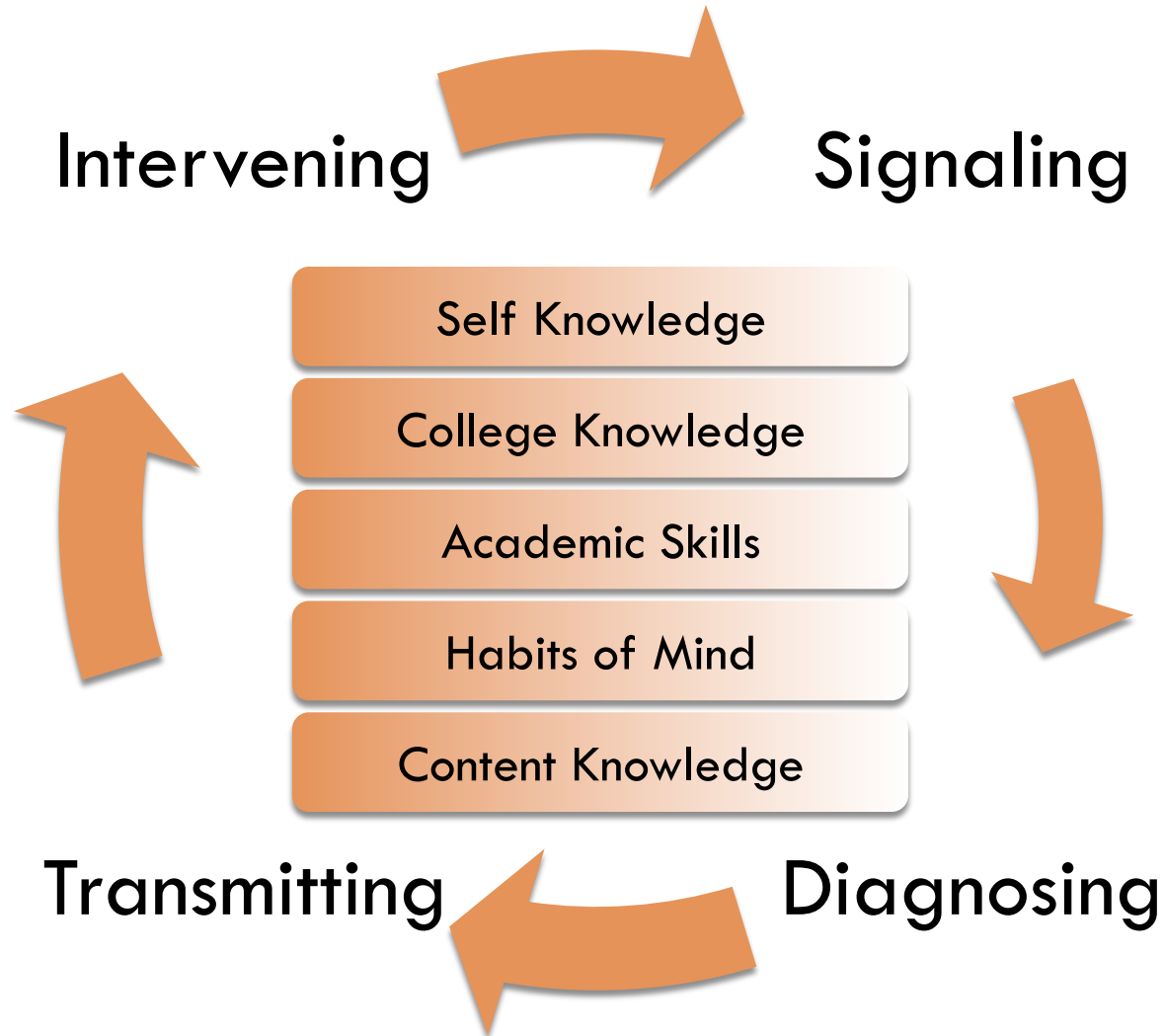
Classroom interventions

- Research-based pedagogies that build readiness skills and abilities
- Authentic Assessments
- Modular or customized learning

If an institution requires faculty members to list prior knowledge expectations on their syllabus, this is an example of which aspect of the success framework?

1. Signaling
2. Diagnosing
3. Transmitting
4. Intervening

Framework for student success in college

Intervening → Signaling → Diagnosing → Transmitting → Intervening

Self Knowledge
College Knowledge
Academic Skills
Habits of Mind
Content Knowledge

One Minute Paper

What is one thing that you can do to improve retention when you return to your campus?

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LASPAU
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What happens when institutions ignore readiness?

What happens when institutions ignore readiness?

- ☐ Student success is limited
- ☐ Lack of retention in courses and programs
- ☐ Inauthentic learning cycle continues
- ☐ Institutions waste scarce resources
- ☐ Faculty waste scarce resources
- ☐ Economic growth is slowed
- ☐ Students never reach their highest potential