

DCCCD Retention Best Practice Submission Form

Across the district there are many successful practices that contribute to the retention of students. As the district begins to develop a greater emphasis on its retention strategy, all locations are asked to identify and submit information about successful retention programs and activities. Please complete the following information on selected practices.

College/Location: **Richland**

The Retention Best Practice is primarily supported by what college/location area:

Instruction Student Services _____ Administrative _____

Combination of areas: (Please list)

Contact Person: (Include contact information)

Ray Canham canham@dcccd.edu

Frederick Wittel wittel@dcccd.edu

Retention Best Practice Title: Direct Instructor Contact for Online Students

Retention Best Practice Area of Focus:

Math _____ STEM _____ Honors College _____ Other Science _____

Retention Best Practice Executive Summary: approximately 50 words (Please use additional pages for a detailed description)

Drop rates for online sections are higher than for on campus courses. This may be so for many reasons, but one is that students are less engaged on a personal level with their instructor and classmates. Instructors and students agree that one-on-one instruction, when possible, is highly successful. In addition when students work cooperatively they become involved in the process of teaching as well as learning. Science labs have been run cooperatively even before the term cooperative learning was coined and continue to provide a model. Students work in lab groups to solve a problem, each contributes uniquely, the experience is concrete, the success depends on teamwork, and the individual responsibility is enforced by engaged instructor oversight and requirement of individual lab reports. We consider the offering of "hybrid" science lab classes a successful example of a Best Practice for Student Retention. The time requirement is modest, a single meeting per week, and the benefit significant. Students who have met directly with their instructors and peers during the lab periods get encouragement to continue and succeed. The hands-on experience makes the theoretical instruction relevant to real world, and the level of interaction cannot be matched by email.

Please describe the evaluation measures utilized to support this initiative as a best practice.

The retention rate for our hybrid courses is comparable to our fully on campus courses. Comments from students and instructors indicate the on-campus experience increased their commitment to completing the course.

Please submit this form to Dr. Sharon L. Blackman, DCCCD Educational Affairs by October 24, 2008

Provide a summary of the results, including data (such as trend lines over time) to show how it impacted retention and is a best practice.

See above.

What would be needed to replicate the practice at other DCCCD colleges?

A decision to implement on-campus laboratories in place of a computer experience in DL Science courses because of the importance of the lab experience.

Cost to implement this practice (financial and human):

None, other than the cost of supplies already committed to other on-campus lab offerings.

Please submit this form to Dr. Sharon L. Blackman, DCCCD Educational Affairs by October 24, 2008