Teaching Blind: How Quality Online Instruction Erases Education Stereotypes and Closes Learning Gaps

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A Short Story
About Stereotypes
The Effects of Hidden Bias

• The ability to distinguish friend from foe helped early humans survive

• The ability to quickly and automatically categorize people is a fundamental quality of the human mind
  • Categories give order to life, and every day, we group other people into categories based on social and other characteristics

This is the foundation of stereotypes, prejudice and, ultimately, discrimination.
The Effects of Hidden Bias

• Studies show a link between hidden biases and actual behavior
  • Specifically in conditions under stress, distraction, or competition
• Unconscious beliefs and attitudes have been found to be associated with language and behaviors such as eye contact, blinking rates, and smiles
• Studies have found:
  • Teachers clearly telegraph prejudices, so much so that children of color and white children in the same classroom effectively receive different educations
  • White interviewers sat farther away from African American applicants than from white applicants, made more speech errors, and ended the interviews 25% sooner
  • Subjects who had a stronger hidden race bias had more activity in a part of the brain known to be responsible for emotional learning when shown African American faces than when shown white faces
Some Common Stereotypes in the Classroom

Lazy/
Doesn’t care
Some Common Stereotypes in the Classroom

Disruptive/Troublemaker
Some Common Stereotypes in the Classroom
Some Common Stereotypes in the Classroom

Shy
Doesn’t want to participate
Some Common Stereotypes in the Classroom

Jock
Some Common Stereotypes in the Classroom

Nerd/Brown noser
So How Can Online Education Help?

- Creates anonymity on both learner and instructor end
  - Allows less stereotyping
  - Allows more freedom of expression

- Lessons the learning gap
  - No preconceived notions on what the learner is like
  - Necessitates a learning style that is understandable and accessible to all

- Student success!
  - Students don't have labels to overcome so feel as though less barriers are there to succeed
  - Instructor views students by their work and not by a 'bored' look or a face stuck behind a phone
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Enrollment in Online Courses is Increasing Each Year

6,700,000
Total number of students enrolled in online courses

275+
Current number of accredited online universities

Students with 100% Online Education Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>7,189</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>4,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Students

- **62.9%** United States
- **4.1%** Indiana
- **2.9%** Other
- **2.4%** Other
How To Ensure Quality Online Education

- Be innovative
- Be available
- Be engaging
Overcoming Online Learning Barriers

Overcoming Social Barriers

Overcoming Administrative Barriers

Overcoming Motivational Barriers
Build community! Students become disengaged if they feel isolated or if they don’t get to interact with their instructor and peers.

Overcoming Social Barriers

Before the Course Begins:

• Send an intro email with instructions on how to get started. Add a video relaying the same info so students can get a sense of your personality.

Create an Intro Activity:

• Connect your students with each other and make them feel like they’re part of a community.

Provide Opportunities for Learner Interaction

• Discussion forums
• CN Post
• VoiceThread
• Online study groups through Zoom

Encourage Sharing

• Students can share resources related to the course through a Facebook group, Twitter hashtag, Pinterest group, or CN Post.

Interactive Intro Discussions

Discussion 1: Who are you?

Lamia Scherzinger

Aug 16 at 9:53am

Since we won’t be getting a lot of face-to-face interaction, I’d like for us to “get to know” each other via a discussion.

Therefore, please introduce yourself to the class by answering the following questions:

1. Your name, where you are from, your major, and your career goal.
2. Your favorite physical activity.
3. Something you would like to learn in this course.
4. Something interesting about yourself.
5. You must also attach a picture of yourself doing a physical activity. It can be a college sport, a recreational activity, or something you do for fun (like play Pokémon Go or Wii).

To be fair, here is my info: My name is Mrs. Scherzinger, I was born in Kuwait but raised in Aurora, Indiana, I majored in Kinesiology (BS) and Clinical Exercise Physiology (MS), and I am currently working my dream job, but always am striving to learn and do more. I have a fierce love/hate relationship with running and compete in races throughout the year. I would love to learn all about you guys and how physical fitness and exercise can become a permanent fixture in your life. Here is me finishing my first marathon with my little brother in 2013. (PS It was awful! But I did it!)
Overcoming Administrative Barriers

• Students get frustrated if they don't know how and when to contact you. They also get discouraged if they don't know their progress in the course or if expectations aren't clearly communicated.

Establish Contact Methods and Hours:
• Let students know in advance when you'll be away longer than 24 hours to avoid frustration.
• Try online office hours using Zoom.

Provide Directions Often and in Various Ways:
• Be clear and concise with directions and expectations, providing them in multiple ways.
• If you create a video with instructions on how to complete a task provide the same directions in text.

Provide Effective and Timely Feedback:
• This is vital in an online course:
  • Comment in discussion forums and ask questions that keep the discussion going.
  • Have assignments graded with appropriate feedback within a week of the due date.
  • Create assignments that build on one another throughout the semester.
Students face additional distractions when completing online course work from the comfort of their own home or in a busy coffee shop.

**Overcoming Motivation Barriers**

- Breaking down information into smaller pieces makes it easier for the brain to digest.
- Organize content that guides the learning process.
- Video lectures should be broken into segments no longer than 5-7 minutes.
- Use Canvas, the syllabus, weekly announcements, modules, etc.
- Provide a weekly checklist so students know what they have to complete and when.
- You will have different types of learners in your course and using a variety of content-delivery methods and learning activities will help keep them engaged.

**Use a Variety of Multimedia and Modalities**

- You will have different types of learners in your course and using a variety of content-delivery methods and learning activities will help keep them engaged.
Tools to Increase Engagement

Start the class with an intro video!
Tools to Increase Engagement
Based on the reading, what bone is the longest in the human body?

- Humerus
- Femur
Tools to Increase Engagement
Tools to Increase Engagement
Tools to Increase Engagement

The Stressfulness of April

Have you ever tried a detox diet? (13 respondents)

- Yes (6 respondents) 46.15%
- No (7 respondents) 53.85%

Total submission(s): 13
Tools to Increase Engagement
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Tools to Increase Engagement

A person can consume too much water.
Some Caveats to Remember

- The more interaction you use, the more bias you may introduce.
- If you require/ask for photos, you will see color/race.
- If you do a mixture of traditional/online, you may have had some students before.

• Consider the number of students in your class and if some anonymity can be kept.
• Provide thorough rubrics.