

A project that I would like to implement at Southeast Missouri State University would be an initiative to try and eliminate wait lists in our online classes. This is important to our students because it will help to promote faster graduation rates and expand access to classes for all of our students. This will also be a positive move for the university as a whole, as it will help to boost enrollment numbers and increase tuition revenue. After doing extensive research into what other universities are doing to address this same issue, I would propose that we add individuals into the courses that would function as support roles for the instructor of record.

In this scenario, the support roles (which are often dubbed “coaches”) would be added to the online courses and would take on a variety of responsibilities, but would not be creating the instructional content, delivering that content, or doing any of the grading. This would be done to make sure that the quality and accreditation aspects of the course stay in tack, but the coaches would shoulder other responsibilities for the instructors. This would include taking on large amounts of communication with students in the courses, and deciding what questions could be answered by the coach, as well as which questions should be passed onto the instructor. The coaches would also need to go through training to learn about FERPA rules and regulations regarding student privacy measures. Secondly, the coaches would handle technical and class trouble shooting issues, and would need to have an extensive understanding of how our LMS works to help facilitate any issues that arise.

Beyond that, the coaches would be working to help build academic skillsets with the students they work with, and would especially be present in any forum use to help promote Regular and Substantive Interactions (RSI) in the courses they work in. This is very important to Southeast, because as a school in the state of Missouri, our student financial aid for online classes is given based on our ability to meet state standards for online classes. RSI is a large part of that. Coaches will also receive training on what RSI is, what they can do in their courses to promote it, and how to help student be more successful in their courses overall.

While I know this initiative would benefit the school, I am even more excited about the benefits it can have for our students who need these courses to graduate, but end up on large wait lists and, inevitably, do not get into the courses they need. I would have Dr. Chelsea McNeely as a mentor for this project, as she has been a major mentor for me since starting as an instructional designer for Southeast Online. She has worked for many years at Southeast to drive innovative projects that have helped to expand access to education for our students all across the country. It is also my goal to continue expanding this access for our students in my role as the Online Instructional Coordinator. Her contact info and signature follow here:



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