

## Online Retention: Keeping Students Enrolled and Engaged

*“...most definitions of student success include the idea of persistence to the completion of the student’s program. Thus, increased retention becomes the goal of many of an institution’s quality assessment and improvement efforts.”*

[“A Model for Sustainable Student Retention...with Special Attention to e-Learning.”](#)

Zane L. Berge and Yi-Ping Huang, *DEOS News*, 13(5), May 2004

Because the methods recommended for improving online student retention are not so different from those recommended for improving student retention in general, this month’s BEEP offers some of the best links related to both. In addition, there’s a section on the importance of keeping e-learners engaged in their courses, often a factor critical to their continued enrollment.

### Keeping Students Enrolled

G = General Retention Strategies

O = Online Student Strategies

C = Community College Retention Strategies

- [Center for the Study of College Student Retention](#). An extensive list of retention resources for individuals and educational institutions, categorized by topics that include distance education retention, as well as other specialized student populations. (G, O)
- [Increasing Student Retention](#). A broad look at retention in community colleges, at the ED.gov website. Includes links to research and evaluation results, noteworthy practices, and more. (G, C)
- [Keeping Online Student Dropout Numbers Low](#). Paper by Gerard A. Prendergast, 2003, on the concept of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL). Its premise is that low dropout rates are achievable, provided the issues of course design, pre-course student briefing, online tutoring skills, and technical support are addressed. (O)
- [“A Model for Sustainable Student Retention: A Holistic Perspective on the Student Dropout Problem with Special Attention to e-Learning.”](#) Editorial by Zane L. Berge and Yi-Ping Huang in *DEOS News* 13(5), May 2004, Introduces a comprehensive model in planning for interventions to address student dropout rates by taking into account personal, circumstantial, and institutional factors, as well as those factors’ interconnectedness. (G, O)
- [Online, Distance Learning Instructor Guidelines to Improve Student Retention](#). Extensive list of simple practices, above and beyond traditional guidelines, created by Susan K. Miller, Mesa Community College (AZ), to improve continued e-student enrollment. (O, C)
- [Retaining Online Students](#). Annotated slide presentation by Ray Schroeder, University of Illinois. Although the author, an expert in the field of online enrollment, created this lively document in 1999, the material presented here is as useful now as it was then. (O)
- [Retention Initiative: Frequently Asked Questions](#). Website explaining the joint work of the MetLife Foundation Initiative on Student Success and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Names colleges with good retention and shares best practices. (G, C)
- [“Retention Intentions.”](#) Article by Ann McClure in *University Business*, August 2006, about Constituent Relationship Management (CRM), a concept that emphasizes creating and maintaining vital relationships with students by communication and student data coordination. (G)
- [The Role of the Mentor in Retention of Online Students](#). Paper (2003) by Carole Hayes, Florida State University, about the school’s success in keeping online students enrolled via its effective mentoring program. (O)
- [Transfer and Retention Of Urban Community College Students \(TRUCCS\)](#). Website that reports on a five-year initiative to track the goals, success and academic patterns of 5000 Los Angeles community college students. (G, C)
- [What Works in Student Retention?](#) Links to report results on successful college retention practices, based on the results of the [ACT’s](#) national survey of more than 1000 colleges. (G)

## Keeping Students Engaged

- [The Five P's of Effective Online Instruction](#). Information posted on the online instructor resource page at the University of Wisconsin that encourages e-structors to be prompt, personal, positive, practical, and patient.
- ["Five Roles I Play in Online Courses."](#) Article by Scot Headley in *Innovate* 2 (1), 10/11/05, about five roles for distance instructors: space planner, pacesetter, host, connector, and mirror. (Mentioned in an earlier BEEP, but worth including in this issue.)
- ["How to Keep Online Students Motivated."](#) Article by Kate Butler, 5/12/03, posted on the Australian Flexible Learning Community website. Provides bulleted lists of many ideas and recommendations for online instructors.
- [Keeping the Momentum](#). Part of a larger website on facilitating online learning by Michael Coghlan, Australian educator, offering a bulleted list of methods for keeping e-students engaged.
- ["Keeping Learners Engaged: Certifying and Supporting Online Instructors"](#) Article by Jeanne C. Meister in *Chief Learning Officer*, 2/06, about the need for proper training of online faculty so they can help their students succeed.
- [Maintaining the "Connection" – Keeping Learners Learning in the Online Classroom](#). Advice from the [CertiLearn](#) company on ways to make e-students feel engaged..

## BEEP's Best Bets

### Assessment and Evaluation

- ["Electronic Student Assessment: The Power of Portfolio."](#) Article by Matt Villano in *Campus-Technology.com*, 9/20/06, about the use of ePortfolio technologies in various institutions to help monitor and evaluate student progress.

### Assistive Technologies

- [Google Site to Aid the Blind](#). New website unveiled in July 2006 for the blind and visually impaired. Takes into account several factors, including a given page's simplicity, how much visual imagery it carries, and if its primary purpose is immediately viable with keyboard navigation.

### Free Information Sources

- [Cite](#). Wikipedia entry that demonstrates how to cite its own materials using various styles, including MLA, APA, AMA, and University of Chicago.
- [Google Updates](#). In addition to the site for the blind mentioned above, Google has launched [Google Book Search](#), which offers PDF files of scanned books downloadable and printable for free. Google has also expanded its [online news index](#) to include older news articles. Google's visitors can view articles at the websites that own the content, where they may have to pay for access to the full stories. Finally, in September, Google began to offer [Google Apps for Your Domain](#), a package of free communications programs for businesses, universities and other organizations. (Ironically, this summer the Educational Testing Service released the findings of a study of college student Web use indicating ["Students Don't Know Much Beyond Google."](#))

### Student Support Services

- [Counselor-O-Matic](#). Advanced search engine sponsored by the [Princeton Review](#) that combines students' academic and extracurricular histories with their expressed preferences to offer suggestions of appropriate colleges.
- [Hotmath](#). Website created by math teachers that offers free help with solving math problems included in more than 150 current textbooks. Additional services include personal tutoring, using graphing calculators and more.

[www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/BEEP/BEEP53.htm](http://www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/BEEP/BEEP53.htm)

For a subscription to BEEP, contact the project manager: [lechnerj@spcollege.edu](mailto:lechnerj@spcollege.edu)

*The contents of BEEP were developed under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education (DOE). However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the DOE, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.*