

“I am still studying, I just have not finished” - research into the reasons for student non-completion at OTEN-DE

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Educational providers have long been concerned with their student attrition rates. Changes in federal and state educational policy have resulted in a competitive educational marketplace where providers vie with each other for students and resources in an increasingly stringent fiscal environment.

Distance education providers traditionally have higher student non-completion rates than their face-to-face counterparts and this is of some concern as one of the key performance indicators for VET providers now include module completion and non completion rates.

This research project was designed primarily to identify the factors which cause OTEN-DE students to effectively ‘drop-out’ and not complete their course-modules after enrolling and receiving their learning materials.

Based on the research outcomes, it is expected that specific policies practices and strategies will be recommended to enhance student retention and encourage module completion.

The project has just commenced with a mail and telephone survey of 3000 ‘profile’ 1999 students and this paper will report on the interim findings of this research.

Topic area: Student non-completion

Key words: Student attrition, student drop-out, student non-completion, student retention, flexible delivery, distance education.

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