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"Effectiveness of Remind.com for Students Missing Credits at Greenfield High School"

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Abstract

The purpose of this capstone is to determine the extent to which online credit recovery is effective at allowing students to regain missing credits at Greenfield High School (GHS). Recent studies show students do better in school when parents are involved. This helps students become motivated and engaged in being successful students. The counseling department at Greenfield High School lacks connection with students and parents. It is not the school's fault nor the staff trying to provide students with resources to help them gain a high school diploma. Unfortunately, Monterey County struggles with parent involvement for the fact that many parents are working long hours in the agriculture fields. There are approximately 134 sophomores who are at risk of not graduating high school for the reasons they lack motivation, are low income and lack parental support. Research has shown students who miss or fail academic courses are at greater risk of dropping out of school than their peers. The implementation of this project was to increase the effectiveness of credit recovery through a reminder application. The Odysseyware credit recovery system gives credit deficient students an opportunity to regain missing credits. This capstone focused on statistics showing whether or not credit recovery was helping students reach their long-term academic goal of graduating high school. Finally, the data helped the counseling department better understand the process to support students who are in pace of not graduating or prevent them from dropping out.

Keywords: high school, credit recovery, low-income, lack of motivation, effectiveness, odysseyware, remind

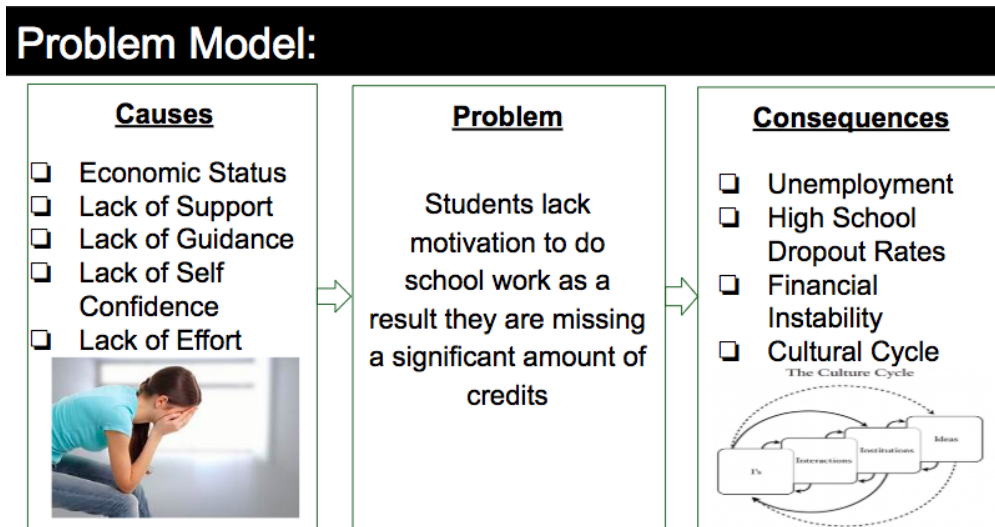
Agency and Communities Served

Greenfield High School is one of the two comprehensive high schools in the South Monterey County Joint Union High School District (Greenfield High School, 2018, para. 1). Greenfield is located in the south area of Monterey County and according to the California Department of Education (2016-17), it has a student population of 1,157 total. Greenfield is located in the southwest corner of town surrounded by vineyards, fields of vegetables and fruit, commercial buildings, and residential housing. The school was built in 1999 because the town did not have a high school of their own and students had to commute to the nearest high school that was approximately ten miles away. The school has now been open for 19 years and opens the door to students who proudly call themselves "Bruins." The mission for the SMCJUHSD is Greenfield High School provides students the educational and personal experiences enabling them to become lifelong learners and responsible productive citizens (Greenfield High School, 2018, para. 1). Greenfield High School has many programs and resources for students that consist of Gear Up, Migrant Education, Monterey County Social Behavior Health, School Psychologist, Speech Therapists, Educational Talent Search, and the counseling department that works closely with the program Odysseyware which helps students recover credits. All in all, the vision of this school is to provide all their students with a standards-based curriculum, educational programs, resources, and opportunities that will best help students achieve academic success.

Problem Definition

In the Greenfield community, the rate of high school completion and education readiness is very low. The lack of readiness in this school is too real, many students perform below average on the state tests, in 2017 students performed at an 8% of math proficiency compared to other students in California who scored 38%, in the English test students performed at 36%,

compared to the state scores of 49% (Great Schools, 2017, para. 2). Many of the students are failing their classes and falling behind on their credits, increasing the rate of students who do not finish high school and are not ready to academically succeed after high school. This has to do a lot with the connection the school has with students and parents.



Contributing Factors

The primary risk factor that contributes to the low high school completion rates and readiness is the fact most of the students are living in low-income households. The poverty rate of Greenfield CA is 25.1% and the median household income for males is \$49,263 and females \$33,879 (DATA US, 2018, para. 1). The Monterey County as a whole has a poverty rate of 12.9% and nationally 12.7% (Census, 2010). This means members in the Greenfield community live in more than double the rate of national poverty. Coming from a low-income household can affect students because they may not be getting the same resources as other students. In other common cases, coming from a poor household can also drive students to not focus on school and look for faster ways of getting money.

The secondary risk factor that attributes to the lack of high school completion is disinterest and boredom. Many students may suffer from boredom because they do not understand the subject. According to DATA USA (2018), the student to teacher ratio is 29:1, this means that teachers do not have enough time to individually teach the subject to those students who fall behind. As a result, students who do not understand a certain subject fall behind because they simply do not know how to do the work. When students are disinterested in school, it affects their grades because homework does not get completed and test scores get lower. For example, noted at Penn High School where a teacher had an issue where most of her students would skip her class because they did not like the traditional teaching structure (Penn Foster, 2018, para. 2). After Penn High school adapted the online credit recovery program and began allowing the students to choose their own lessons and curriculum, students were requesting the teachers class because of the flexibility in learning and the fast-tracking to course completion (Odysseyware, 2017, para. 5). Ultimately, at Penn High School credit recovery became the school's success, there was a 3% graduation rate increase from 2011-2013, all attributed to the Odysseyware credit recovery program. Overall, disinterest in the classroom can also be caused by miscommunication and the fact that teachers may not be able to relate to student experiences because they have not experienced similar situations.

Finally, the tertiary contributing factor for the lack of high school completion and education readiness is the fact that students do not get the support that they need. Students may not be getting the support they need from home because parents may be working long hours and may be tired when they get home. Another common factor is the fact that these are first-generation students who come from parents that perhaps do not know English and do not know how to help them and guide them through the school system. In conclusion, without the support

of parents, teachers, and administrators students will feel that nobody cares and will start to be careless themselves.

Capstone Project Description and Justification

The capstone focused on improving the effectiveness of Odysseyware for students missing credits at Greenfield High School. Odysseyware is a program offered at the high school designed for students who are behind in credits and are at risk of not graduating high school. Many of the students who are behind on credits are offered the program and allowed to make up classes in which they failed previous semesters. There are roughly 134 sophomores who are behind on credits and have not shown interest in getting back on track. Due to the high number of students who are behind on credits and shortage of staff the project will prioritize on sophomores. The capstone focused on reaching out to students via Remind.com. An online texting application that allows teachers and staff to remind students of upcoming important assignments or events. This helped recognize the problem for younger generations. That way in the future they have a strategy to connect parents, incoming and current students to obtain knowledge on what they need to do to succeed.

Odysseyware is a self-paced program and allows students to work on credit recovery from practically anywhere they have internet access. Convincing the students to commit to this was difficult, however, with the right motivation and guidance the main goal of the project was to increase the number of students involved in school activities and credit recovery effectiveness.

Additionally, in order to provide support and positive reinforcement, the main component of this project consisted of daily reminders sent through the remind application. The main focus was to reach out to those students who are at most need and connect them to better resources at the tip of their fingers. Nowadays students are focused more on their mobile devices. Therefore, the implementation of the remind application served the whole school but will help create a

positive way of reaching out to all students in regards to school academics. Additionally, weekly follow-ups were extremely beneficial especially for students interested in having the extra support to encourage them towards the recovery of their credits. This promoted and raised awareness of how important it is for students to do good in current classes so they do not fall further behind. The project focused on supporting students by helping them maintain priorities and focus on their school work. This was the essential key in helping students get back on track.

Research demonstrated that by implementing the online credit recovery program, students were able to recover credits because of the flexibility and targeted instruction. According to Dr. Denise Hoy (N.d), the flexibility of blended learning and guided study classrooms, allowed students to fast track and catch up in credits in order to advance learning and even give students the opportunity to graduate early (para. 4). The online credit recovery can benefit students who do not like the traditional learning model. By incorporating a blended learning model with the online credit recovery program, students are able to have more options in the way they receive instruction.

Ultimately, getting students to focus and commit to working on their credits was the hard part, however, the project revolved on reaching out and guiding them via text messaging. Remind.com was able to give us the correct data on which students were taking action to recover the credits and which students ignored the messages being sent to them.

Implementation/ Scope of Work

The scope of work and timeline indicated the process that was going to be put into place Fall 2018 in order for this project to succeed. As of April, the project was already in full effect by sending out customized summer school applications. The applications came with printed information such as the student's name and student ID. Informing students that they were potentially at risk of not graduating high school for the reason that they failed one or more

classes listed on the high school graduation requirements. The weekly check-ups started until summer school was complete. When going back in August a list of sophomores who were still credit deficient was used to focus on what was needed to help the students get back on track. Weekly check-ups were continued up until the students had completed credits needed for graduation.

Many of the students who are in need of help lack motivation and support. Very little students show interest in recovering credits when they see how many they need to make up to get back on track. The counseling department and the intern set up daily text messaging through an online service known as “Remind.” The project was implemented by reaching out to all students who have given permission to send out messages directly to their phone. The remind application helped students get text messages to remind them to work on credit recovery at home and to attend credit recovery class after school. The remind application served as a great way to send surveys that can be directly accessed for students to give feedback. This helped gather information on how many students received the messages and how many students actually took time out of the day to read the message. As the leader of the project, the goal was to build better education goals and fundamentals, for future students to not fall behind on credits.

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Deliverables</u>	<u>Timeline/Deadlines</u>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Got to know the agency and mentor -Get comfortable with the counseling department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communication -Relationship Building 	Fall 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1 on 1 case assessments -Naviance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communication -Relationship Building -Systems Management 	Fall 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Remind students of the importance of credits in order to graduate -Summer school applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communication -Relationship Building 	Spring 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Summer school enrollment -Encourage students to attend summer school -Develop a trust relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communication -Relationship Building -Systems Management 	Spring 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have students fill out credit recovery enrollment sheet in order to be placed in credit recovery classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Systems Management 	Fall 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attend credit recovery after school every Tuesday and Thursday to help students in questions they may have -Keep track of students attending credit recovery after school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relationship Building -Systems Management 	Fall 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student and teacher meeting in regards to parent involvement address ongoing issue about the importance it is to pass all classes so that students do not get assigned credit recovery -Go over the benefactors and struggles they may go through if failed a current or previous class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communication -Relationship Building 	Fall 2018

-Review students file of those who are enrolled in credit recovery to see if they have made any progress	-Systems Management	Fall 2018
-Survey sent out -Daily reminders -Case Assessments	-Relationship Building -Systems Management	Fall 2018
-Daily reminders -Final check up on current students enrolled	-Relationship Building -Systems Management	Fall 2018

Project results:

At first, the idea was to utilize the remind application to engage only students who were credit deficient but as the project developed the counseling department decided to send out reminders to all students who wished to receive notifications regarding all of ongoing and future school activities. There was a slight increase in parent and student involvement with the implementation using the remind application to send text messages directly to students and parents.

The expected project outcome was to increase the lack of communication between the school, parents, and students. This project was created in order to increase the graduation rate and promote long-term goals so in the long run students are able to pursue a higher education or technical career. In order to evaluate and assess how many students successfully attended credit recovery the remind application also gave information such as what percentage of students received and read the message, this was a key factor in reviewing who signed in and worked on credit recovery after school.

The overall result of the project was both positive and negative because it was very difficult to get credit deficient students to participate in attending credit recovery after school.

Many of the participating students had a low self-esteem which led to failing multiple classes in the past that were graduation requirements. Out of the 134 sophomore students who were called out of class to be informed that they were deficient on credits only 118 students showed up. Out of those 118 students who were handed a credit recovery enrollment sheet only 49 of them successfully came back and enrolled. Throughout the remind application and attendance sheet it was very clear that many of these students showed very little interest in recovering credits, on average every Tuesday and Thursday there would be approximately 6 or fewer students who attended on a daily basis. This clearly shows the lack of student involvement when it comes to making up credits.

A survey was also conducted using the remind application, the survey was sent out to all 134 sophomore students and was used to better understand credit deficient students. The survey was simple and really gave feedback on how the students felt. Many of them made it very clear that they would rather much attend summer school instead of after-school credit recovery because they say it is much easier. In the near future, the counseling department hopes to find tutors to step in and assist credit recovery after school. The expectations were for students to be able to catch up on their credits, not fall behind, and graduate with the rest of their classmates. Most importantly, create better habits for incoming students and current students using the remind application to connect students and parents to resources.

Personal reflection

This capstone project was very difficult to deal with because students at this high school are very troubled and lack motivation. Making credit recovery effective should not only be continued but should be a top priority at Greenfield high school. This capstone project has given statistics to provide information on where this agency or future interns can continue to improve for credit deficient students. Improving the effectiveness of credit recovery begins with

educating parents on high school graduation requirements. As well as building a healthy relationship with students to achieve long-term academic success. What has been an ongoing issue is the lack of communication between parents and staff. With the implementation of the remind application it will give parents and students instant text messages with information regarding ongoing activities and most importantly build a relationship. The remind application is very simple to use, the only issue would be that many teachers do not want to put the extra effort to go out of their way to send daily reminders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, to any future intern, I would recommend they do research on this agency before they decide if this is the right place for them. Working with a low-income community is very difficult to make a change with a one person army. I would recommend future intern to work closely with all staff who will be involved in the continuation of this project or perhaps their own project. Being from Greenfield and experiencing this issue first hand has opened a path towards seeking better education for all students and future generations to come. It is a very sad issue that seems to be growing rapidly and needs to be prioritized before it decreases the graduation and increases the drop out rate.

Appendix

Credit Recovery Student Survey

The data of this survey will be used to analyze the effectiveness of GHS credit recovery.

* Required

1. What is your first name? *

2. What is your student ID number? *

3. What grade are you in? *

10th Grade

3. What grade are you in? *

- 10th Grade
- 11th Grade

4. Have you attend Summer School anytime throughout high school? *

- Yes, I completed credits
- Yes, but I did not complete credits
- Yes, but I was dropped due to behavior or attendance
- No, I had better plans

5. How many credits are you behind?

- 5-15
- 20-35
- 40+

6. Do you attend Credit Recovery after school?

- Yes, twice a week
- Yes, sometimes
- Not at all

7. How often do you work on Credit Recovery at home?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Never

8. Briefly explain what we can do to help you succeed in credit recovery.

Enter your answer

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