Predicting Online Student Success

By Josh Johnson

Online Learning

- In 2018, 35.3%: some or all classes online,
  And took them 16.6% online-only[1]
- After Covid-19: ????

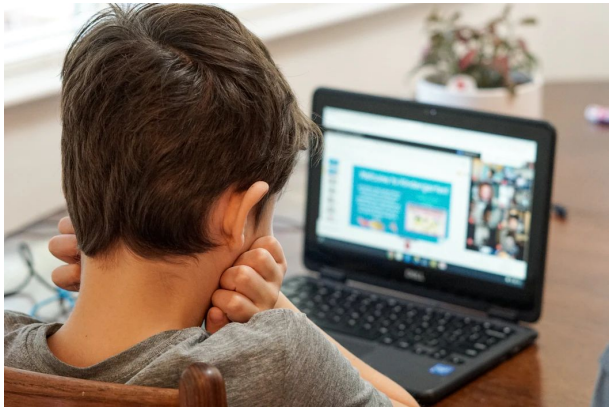


Photo by Thomas Park
www.unsplash.com

Retention

- Online university courses have a 10-20% higher dropout rate
- Other online courses have a drop out rate between 40% and 80%[2]

1. https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80
2. Bawa, Papia
   https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244015621777#:~:text=Online%20courses%20have%20a%2010,Smith%2C%202010).

Can Predictive Modeling Improve Student Success?

Photo by Frank Romero www.unsplash.com

Only if we know who needs it!

The Solution

Identify students in danger of no succeeding halfway through the course

Intervene before they withdraw and in time for interventions to be successful.

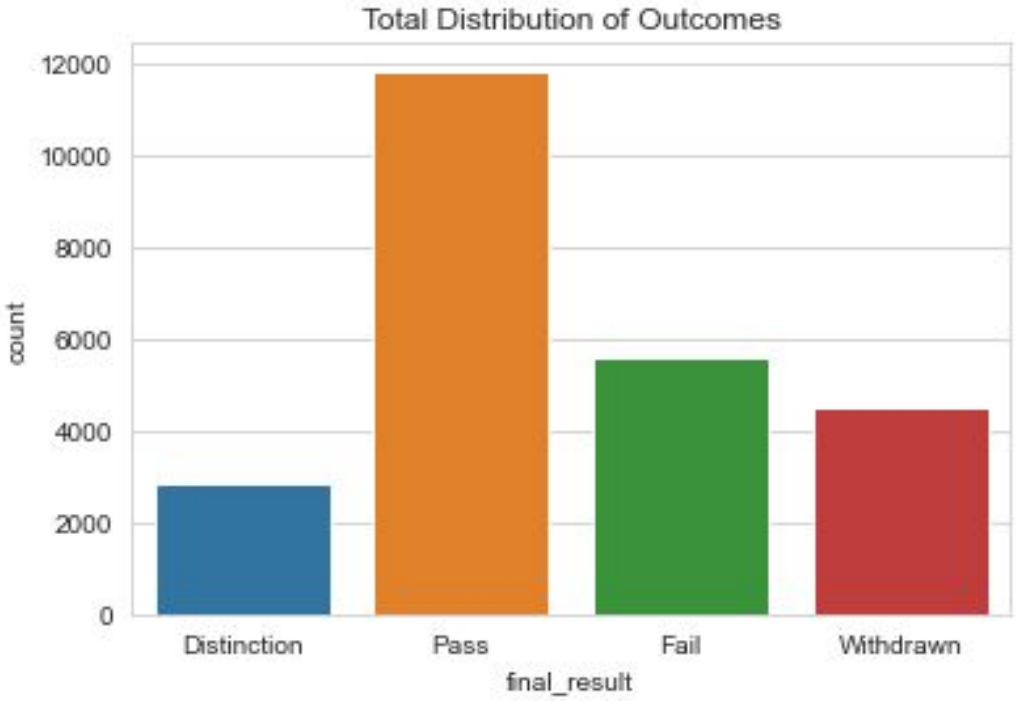
The Data

Online University: Years 2013 - 2014

- 24743 registrations
- 22424 unique students
- 7 course modules
- 22 cohorts

10,655,280 Student VLE interactions

Distribution of Outcomes

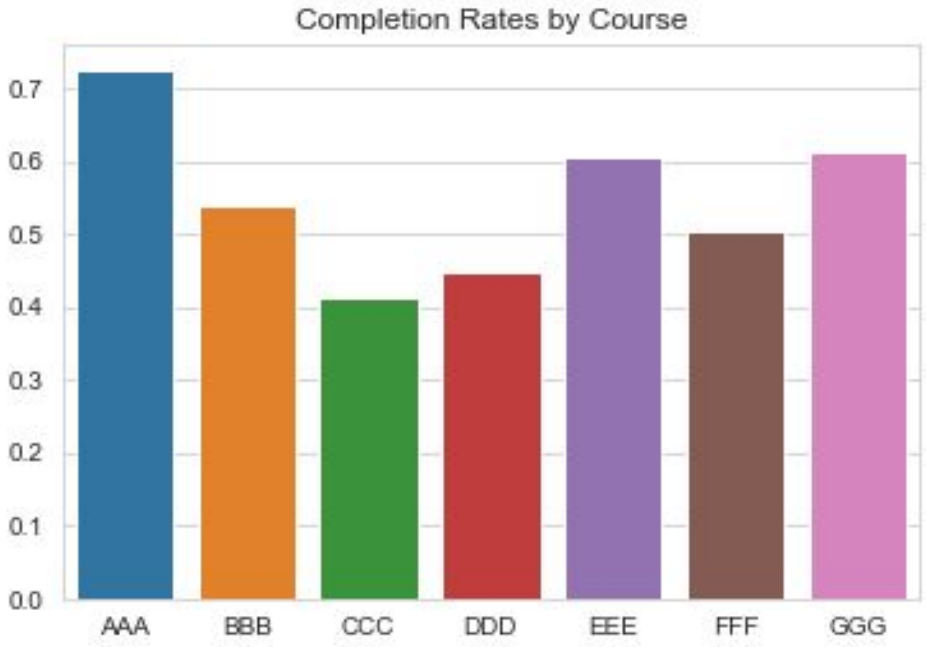


Features to Model

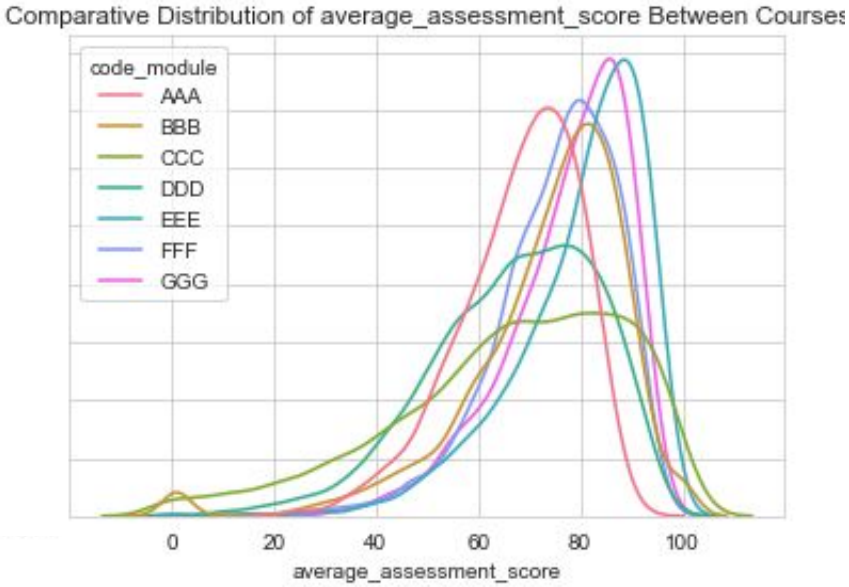
Image by Steinar Engeland, courtesy of Unsplash.com

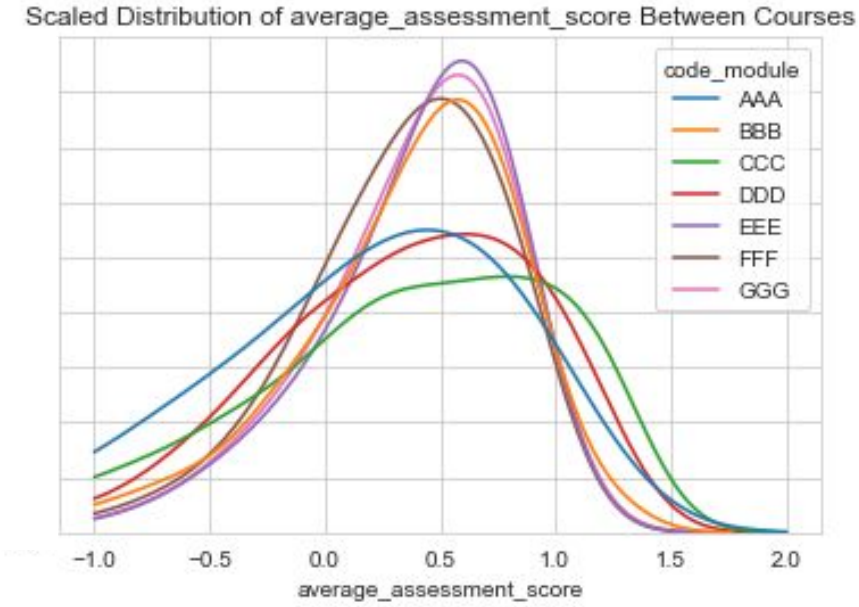
1. Average assessment scores
2. Number of assessments completed
3. Number of days studied
4. Number of activities engaged
5. Total number of clicks
6. Times repeated the course

Some Courses are Harder Than Others.



Distribution of Assessment Scores by Course

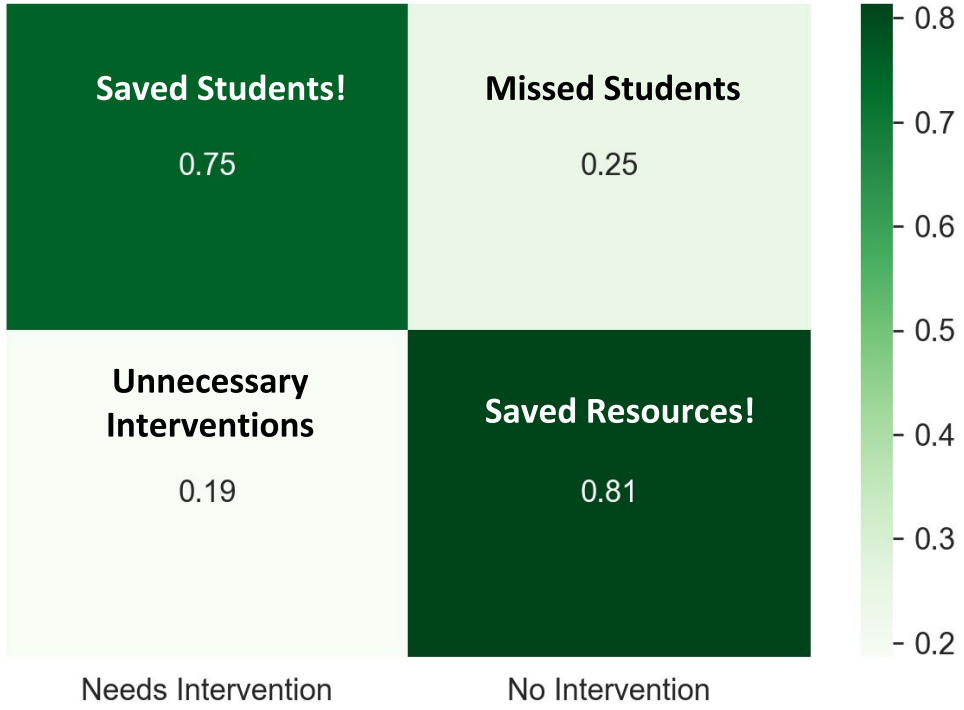




XGBoost Accuracy After the First Half of Courses: 79%

Needs Intervention:
75% Accuracy

No Intervention Needed:
81% Accuracy



Next Steps:

- Try more model types to improve accuracy
- Try different prediction windows
- Evaluate model results to find insights to help more students succeed
    - For instance, will spreading out your studying to less but more often really help?
- Deploy model
- Apply model to larger and more diverse datasets.

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