The Student at Risk Checklist:

Key Words

Identifying students at risk of dropping out or failing

Abstract

This paper discusses the purpose and impact of a resource developed for lecturers and tutors to assist them in identifying students who are struggling with their assignments and therefore are at risk of failing or dropping out. Kember and McNaught (2007) acknowledge that meaningful learning is done best through teaching staff developing empathetic relationships with students based on a student's achievements as well as their immediate and long term learning needs. Success or otherwise, with an early assignment, is a strong indicator of when targeted intervention is needed to prevent a student from failing. However, indicating a need for intervention is not enough, lecturers and tutors need to know the degree and type of assistance a student may need to improve a that student's competence and autonomy (Koch et al. 2016a). The student at risk checklist not only indicates a need for intervention, but also what sort of learning support might be required and where those specific learning support materials can be located. It is a simple, online resource available on the RMIT staff support webpage. To use it, a staff member refers to a student's assessment task and responds "yes" or "no" to a series of questions based on that assessment task. If a problem is indicated, possible reasons are given along with links to student learning resources and teaching tips. The completed checklist can also be printed for assistance with developing individual learning plans for students, making learning even more learning-goal oriented (Koch et al. 2016b). The student at risk checklist is aligned with university policies around supporting individual learning needs and intervening at early stages to prevent students from dropping out because of poor performance that could otherwise be supported by existing services and resources.
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References

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