

SmarterMeasure™

Learning readiness indicator



Case Study of Odessa College Global and SmarterMeasure™

SmarterServices™

Helping you make smarter decisions

Our mission is to organize and analyze data that empowers people to make smarter decisions. We help you obtain data about your students, faculty, teachers, employees, and courses. Data-driven decisions create strong strategic plans, maximize efficiency, and foster an environment of learning - learning from our mistakes, learning about best practices, and learning how to do things better.

SmarterServices™ provides the following four products:

- (1) **SmarterMeasure™** - learning readiness indicator,
- (2) **SmarterSurveys™** - automated data collection survey system,
- (3) **SmarterFaculty™** - searchable database of thousands of faculty who want to teach online,
- (4) **SmarterProctors™** - searchable database of neutral proctors to administer high stakes exams.



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Odessa College Global Campus

WHAT MAKES ODESSA COLLEGE GLOBAL UNIQUE

Odessa College was established in 1946 and currently serves close to 6,000 students, 56% of whom are minorities. With 65% of OC's students being over the age of 22, they serve a largely adult population. Since 2007, enrollments have increased by over 22%. OC is in west Texas and due to the demographic they serve a unique population of students affected in part by the oil industry. Fluctuations in the oil field industry greatly impact the schools enrollment.

The Challenge – Discover Student Demographic

PROACTIVE APPROACH

In the past, OC has provided courses with traditional starts of Fall and Spring semesters. Noticing high withdrawal rates, school officials looked at the reasons for the poor attrition and began to pay close attention to the patterns which corresponded to the boom and bust times in the oil field. Administrators immediately began creating a new system that would allow for shorter or longer class terms and more flexibility on start dates. This allowed students to complete course work with 4 terms throughout the year which were more compatible with their unusual work schedules.

In like manner, OC realized changing their scheduling was only part of the problem. OC was very interested in student readiness and whether students were prepared to do well in online classes through OC Global. With a population of mostly adult minority students, OC needed to know how to help their students based on their needs. Corey Davis, director of OC Global stated, "We were no longer content to use the GAG (good as guess) system. It was time to be proactive and precise".

IMPLEMENTING SMARTERMEASURE

In the summer and fall of 2011, OC Global implemented Smarter-Measure™ learning readiness indicator to help them understand their student population and increase retention and enrollment in online and hybrid classes. Prospective students are encouraged to take an abridged version of the assessment located on OC Global's homepage www.myocglobal.com. The assessment was rolled out to students enrolled in the OC Global courses, which offer accelerated and self-paced online courses. Students enrolled in programs funded by a Title V Grant that focuses on educational access and improving quality of distance learning for rural place-bound students. Enrolled students are required to take the entire assessment as their first assignment in an OC Global course. School administrators are then able to view results and take note of specific risk and success factors. These include demographic data as well as positive and negative skill areas.



The Results – Understand Student Population

COMMITMENT TO HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED

OC Global began using the SmarterMeasure data immediately to learn more about their students. Insight into students' weak skill areas including life factors, technical competency, on-screen reading, learning styles, and individual attributes (time management, procrastination, etc) empowered faculty to provide remedial help immediately to those students whose results indicated that they may need extra help. In addition to looking for signs in low scoring areas, administrators looked at data to watch for trends in high scoring areas as well. They are working on resources to support and encourage their at-risk and high scoring students. The student data has also resulted in curriculum and instructional design adjustments as well as review of delivery methods of courses.

OC believes strongly that every student should take at least one online course as a means of developing technology literacy. However, feedback from SmarterMeasure indicated many were afraid based on their perceptions of online learning. As part of OC Global's commitment to helping students succeed, they implemented the OC Guarantee. The guarantee removes the risk of taking an online class and gives OC the opportunity to prove their desire to help students do well. The guarantee encourages all students to take an online course making a good faith effort to complete all coursework and to participate. In doing so, if the student fails the course they are free to take it over again tuition free. OC Global is that confident about their practices to support their students. Corey Davis, OC Global's director stated, "Using the data in SmarterMeasure is a crucial component in our understanding of how to help our students achieve their educational goals and ensure they not only successfully complete our online classes, but also have a great experience while taking them. This helps grow our program, strengthen our retention rate, and most importantly increase student success."

The Impact – Grow and Strengthen Student Success

GETTING STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THEIR OWN SUCCESS

One final component OC Global uses is requiring students to continuously reflect on their SmarterMeasure score report and provide a written reflection, which is posted on "The Yard" – a discussion board and social media platform created by Connect Yard™. Connected through their LMS, the students are required to create a profile while incorporating the results of their SmarterMeasure assessment. While most students only take SmarterMeasure once, they are required to reflect on those results at the beginning of each online class, which provides continual opportunities for improvement and self-assessment. School officials report getting positive feedback from students saying Smarter-Measure has given them confidence and increased their awareness about their responsibility and capability in taking online classes.



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Corey Davis,
OC Global Director