Concurrent Enrollment Tool Kit, Week 13: Thinking About Your Next Course

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Essential Question(s)

- Assist students in identifying registration processes for the next semester.
- Guide students to consider whether to take a concurrent enrollment course next semester.

Summary

Week 13 of the Concurrent Enrollment Tool Kit is designed to help you guide students in thinking ahead to the next semester. It is important for students to learn how to plan for future semesters when in college, as many universities will expect students to do this themselves.

Learning Goals

- CE Tool Kit, Week 13 (attached)

Attachments

- CE Tool Kit, Week 13.docx
- CE Tool Kit, Week 13.pdf

Materials

Why is it important to start thinking about next semester now?

At this point in the semester, it's natural for students to be so focused on their current coursework that they haven't started thinking about the next semester. Especially when thinking about university-level coursework, it is helpful to emphasize to students that planning ahead can set them up for success.

Guiding Notes

Begin the meeting by greeting the student by name and if they have started to think about their plans for next semester.

Though it may feel like the end of the semester is still far in the future, it is likely a good time to help the student consider their next university-level course. Whether you are working with the student during the fall semester or the spring semester, it is important to think about additional concurrent enrollment courses early.

As you go through the meeting with student, keep the following in mind:

- Do you think the student has considered taking a concurrent enrollment course next semester?
  - Would you recommend this, based on the experience they've had this semester?
- Do you think that your student knows when registration opens for concurrent enrollment courses?
  - Would they know the process to enroll without you reminding them?
- If your student is currently a senior planning to attend a university next year, how might this conversation still help them prepare?

Discussion Starters

Consider starting the discussion by asking:

- Have you started thinking about whether you want to take a concurrent enrollment course next semester?
    - If so, which course(s) were you thinking of?
    - If not, is there a specific reason?
- Do you know when registration starts for next semester?
    - How would you register for another concurrent enrollment course?
    - How might you find out this information if you don't know?

Discussion Questions

To guide this week's discussion, consider asking some of the following questions:

- Have you looked at when registration starts for next semester?
- Do you think your experience with your current class has changed how you think about your plans for next semester?
    - Why or why not?
- Why might it be a good idea to take a course next semester?
    - Why might it be a good idea to wait?

Next Steps

To prepare for next week, ask students to

- Consider how they feel about giving presentations:
  - Does their current course require presentations?
  - Have they done presentations in their high school classes?
  - Do they feel comfortable doing a presentation?
  - Do they feel nervous when speaking in front of a group?

Research Rationale

Research shows a clear and strong link between concurrent enrollment and increased student academic performance (Jones, 2014; Dingess, 2018). Several studies have also found that students who participate in concurrent enrollment have time to acclimate to the college environment and thus earn higher grades in their postsecondary careers (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Dingess, 2018). This opportunity to build momentum also provides an avenue for those students who might carry complex social and educational challenges from high school as they transition into the university setting (Wang et al., 2015). A consistent concern with students as they transition from high school to PSE is that many of them might have difficulty in fully acclimating to the rigor and expectations of university-level coursework (Taylor, 2015; Vargas et al., 2017). This is especially apparent when looking at students who identify as first-generation college students, as they might feel overwhelmed by everything from student support to the specifics of financial aid (Lee et al., 2022). Concurrent enrollment offers a bridge between the familiarity of high school and the frontier of higher learning, building on the initial benefits of concurrent enrollment in high school to build toward greater academic momentum fueled by a smooth transition from high school to university (Wang et al., 2015).

To expand on the inherent benefits associated with concurrent enrollment programs, these programs are most successful when students are provided with extra guidance in how to navigate this new academic environment (Witkowsky & Clayton, 2020). Though students in concurrent enrollment programs might be high-performing, it is helpful to remember that they are still high school students and stand to benefit from “wraparound” services that counselors can provide as a bridge between high school and university-level expectations (Witkowsky & Clayton, 2020). Whether partnering directly with specific higher education institutions as part of the concurrent enrollment program or not, wraparound services can still be designed with the university course expectations in mind.

These tool kits are designed as conversation starters to provide the kind of ongoing support that allows concurrent enrollment students to be most successful (Johnson et al., 2021; Lile et al., 2018). Spanning a range of topics between goal setting and writing expectations, each conversation serves as an opportunity for relationship building and mentoring with students. For students who might not know which questions to ask or which resources to look for, these tool kits can help concurrent enrollment coordinators set a foundation for success for students to draw on after high school.