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Strategies for Success: Personalized Mentorship in Hybrid Learning Equates to Passage on High-Stakes Exams

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study examines the effectiveness of early, structured academic intervention within an accelerated, hybrid Doctor of Physical Therapy program in preparing students for high-stakes exams. Guided by Social Learning Theory and principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, the model integrates observation, mentoring, and collaborative learning to strengthen foundational behaviors required for graduate-level success. A tiered support model was implemented, consisting of orientation focused on expectations, learning strategies, and resilience. Tactical measures embedded throughout the curriculum included first-year tutoring for students scoring below 70%; proactive licensure examination preparation, individualized learning contracts, and a 16-week remediation path option.

Quantitative data from NPTE preparation scores and progression benchmarks demonstrated substantial improvements across three cohorts. Qualitative findings revealed that students frequently struggled with isolation, stress, and self-doubt in the hybrid environment; however, consistent faculty mentorship, emotional support, and structured accountability reduced psychological strain and enhanced engagement. The findings affirm that early intervention, personalized remediation, and sustained mentorship significantly improve academic performance, licensure outcomes, and student well-being. Although resource-intensive, this model highlights the institutional responsibility to proactively cultivate graduate-level competencies, promote equity in learning, and support students' resilience in high-stakes, accelerated programs.

Keywords: Advising; Blended Learning; Critical Assessments; Structured Intervention; Well-Being