

Students Don't Do Optional

A Resource Guide

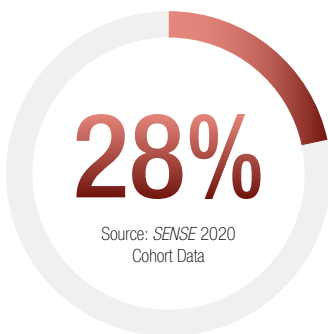


A longtime CCCSE tenet is “Students don’t do optional.” Years of CCCSE data and focus group interviews with students have shown us that community college students often don’t take advantage of recommended academic supports that could help them succeed. But when colleges “make it mandatory,” opportunities for failure are removed.

The purpose of this tool is to support your conversations about the importance of ensuring that students utilize the available resources that can help them succeed.

AN EXAMPLE OF “STUDENTS DON’T DO OPTIONAL”: Orientation

Orientation, a sometimes optional support service, offers students information and strategies to ease their transition into college and approach their coursework in ways that will help them succeed. Research shows that orientation services lead to higher student satisfaction, greater use of student support services, and improved retention of at-risk students.



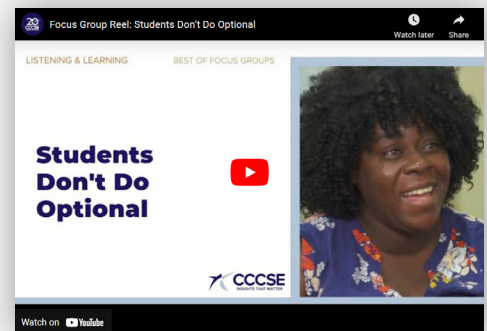
Yet **28%** (N=70,656) of entering students responding to the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) after having attended classes for at least three weeks reported not participating in orientation because they were unaware of it or scheduling issues prevented them from doing so.

Questions for Consideration:

- » Which students absolutely must participate in orientation? Based on what data? Are those students participating? If not, what is standing in the way?
- » What evidence would convince you that participation in orientation should be mandatory?
- » Do you know the percentage of your students who are not aware of orientation or did not participate due to scheduling or other issues? Review results from SENSE Item 11 and/or CCCSE Item 14 if your college has participated in one of our surveys.

VIDEO CONTENT: The Importance of Making it Mandatory

In the following [video reel](#), students and faculty describe their thoughts about services and assignments that are optional and those that are mandatory. Additionally, founding CCCSE Director Kay McClenney reveals why one of her mantras is “students don’t do optional.”



- » Which video clip stood out to you the most? Why?
- » What actions can you take to learn more about the services students are underutilizing at your college?
- » Are there services at your college that are optional, but perhaps should be mandatory? What are they?



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