

Exploring the Impact of Learning Contracts on Student Commitment and Academic Performance

It's not uncommon for a student with high potential to underperform in the classroom. With many activities competing for a student's time, success comes with commitment. Research (McKenzie-Mohr, et al. 1999) shows that commitment is most effective when it's written, made public, and voluntary. Four participating instructors in Engr 101, EM 220, and AERO 361 will offer voluntary, written learning contracts to students in the experimental group who do not perform well on the first graded review. Students will be grouped into one of six categories: those not offered a contract due to obtaining a C or better on the first GR, those not offered a contract despite receiving a D or F due to being in the control group, those offered but who refused a contract, those who signed a contract but did not fulfill contract obligations, those who signed a contract and fulfilled some of the obligations, and those who signed a contract and fulfilled all of the obligations. Mean change in graded review scores, participation in EI and reading and homework completion will be analyzed between these six groups.