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Doing More with Less in IS Education: Getting Students to Teach Each Other

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ABSTRACT

A course enhancement is described as a way to help alleviate educational problems in content understanding, need for multiple explanations, and lack of extra assistance. The method operationalizes students helping each other, and receiving credit for it. The method uses a web-based information system and the process works as follows: Mary helps Joe with a difficult course concept. As compensation, Joe logs in to the information system and registers the fact that Mary has helped him. He also gives Mary a “helpfulness” rating and comments on the help he received. Ratings translate into course points (for Mary and others), and students who accumulate enough points received Bronze, Silver, or Gold “Helper Status”. Students who reach Gold status get letters of recommendation from the professor upon request. A survey study conducted in classes using this Helper System versus one not using it suggests that such a system can help with the problems of content understanding, need for multiple explanations, and lack of extra assistance.

Keywords

Course enhancement, Effective instruction, information system, educational assistance, survey study.