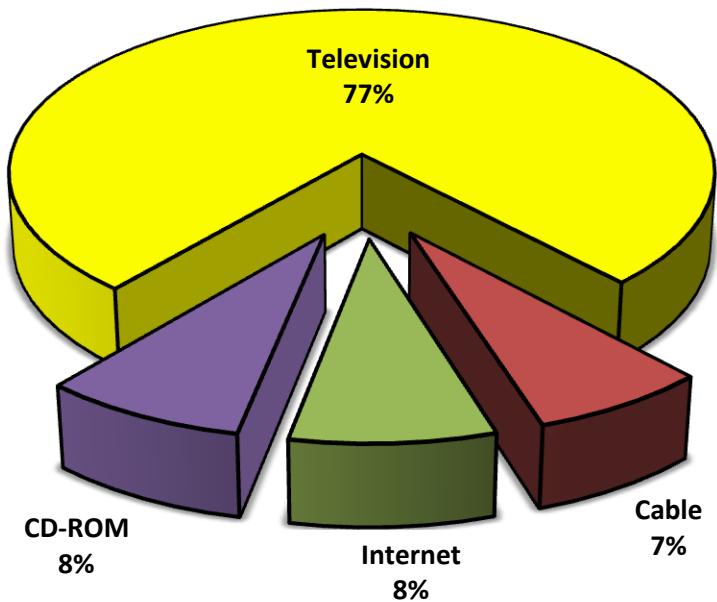# Student Success Strategies for Distance Learners
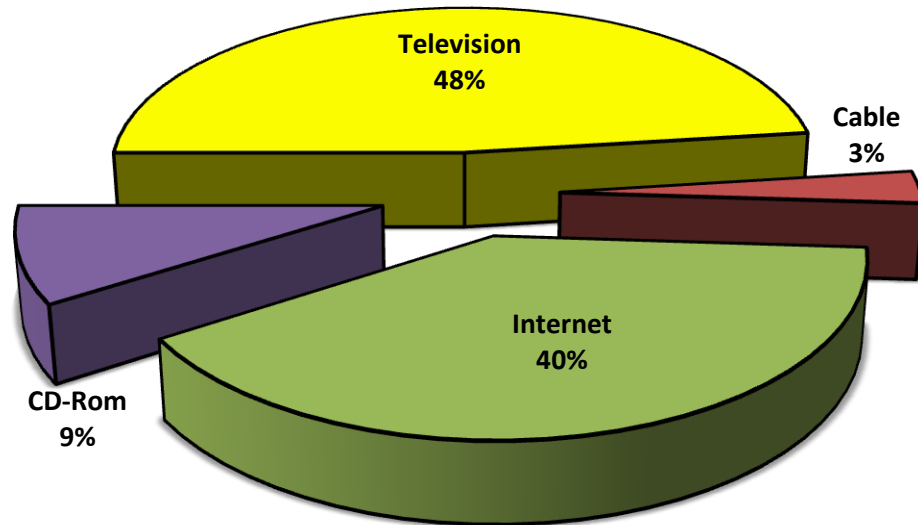
Presented by Vince Rodriguez, Jorge Sanchez, and Bob Nash
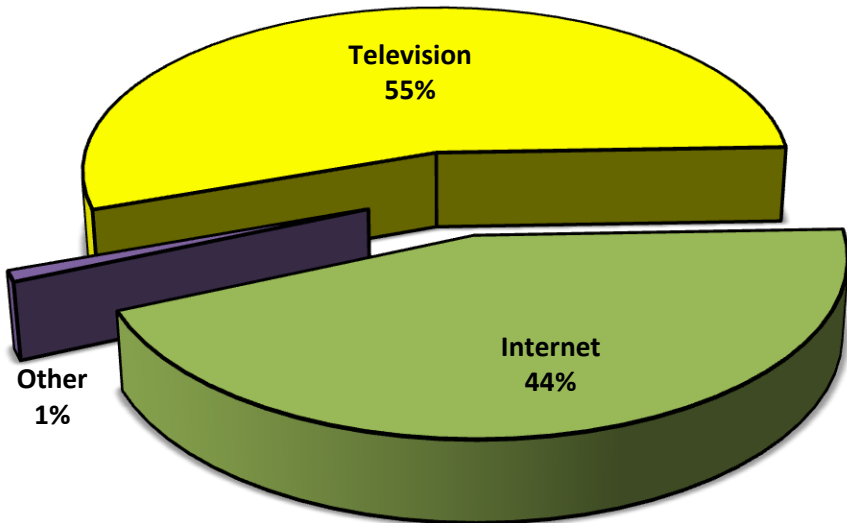
1998-99 DL Enrollments = 12,513

- Television 77%
- CD-ROM 8%
- Internet 8%
- Cable 7%

2002-03 DL Enrollments = 20,405

- Television 48%
- Cable 3%
- Internet 40%
- CD-Rom 9%

2006-07 DL Enrollments = 31,975

- Television 55%
- Internet 44%
- Other 1%

2009-10 DL Enrollments = 50,000+

- Other 1%
- Television 21%
- Internet 78%
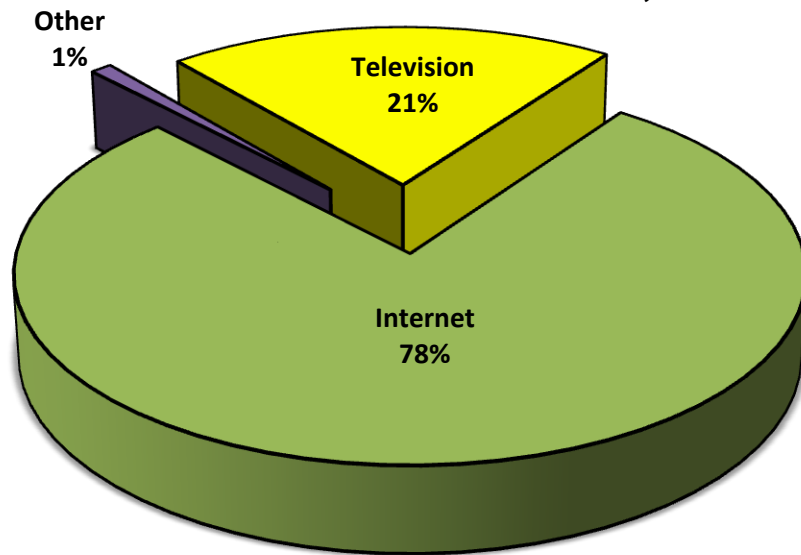
Coastline College: Fall 2008 Gender of DL Enrollments

	Female	Male
Online	47.4%	52.6%
TV	19.7%	80.3%
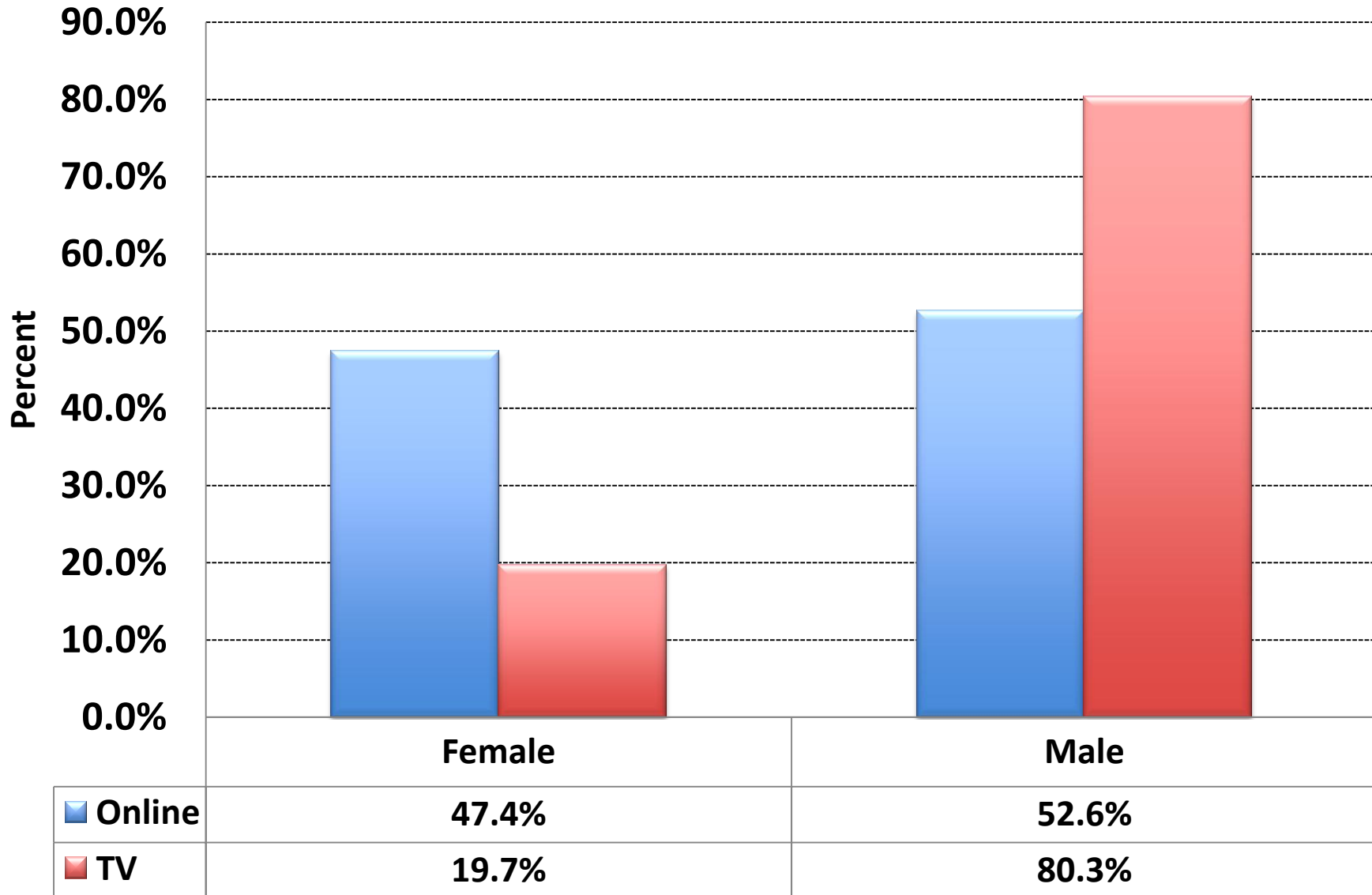
Coastline College: Fall 2008
Age of DL Enrollments by Mode of DL
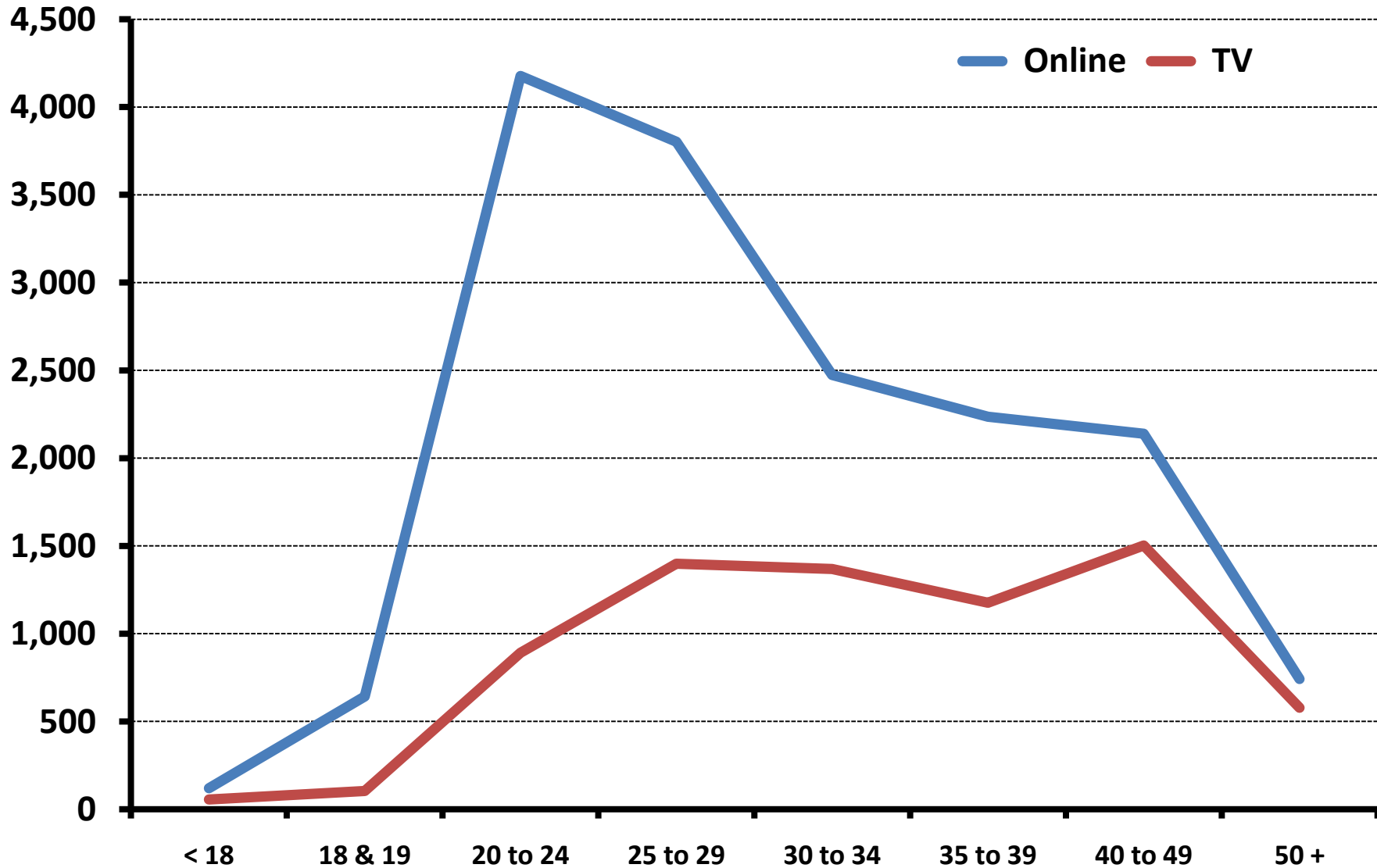
Coastline College: Fall 2008 Ethnicity of DL Enrollments

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Unknown
Online	10.1%	5.3%	13.4%	43.7%	14.8%
TV	5.0%	22.8%	24.3%	31.3%	12.6%
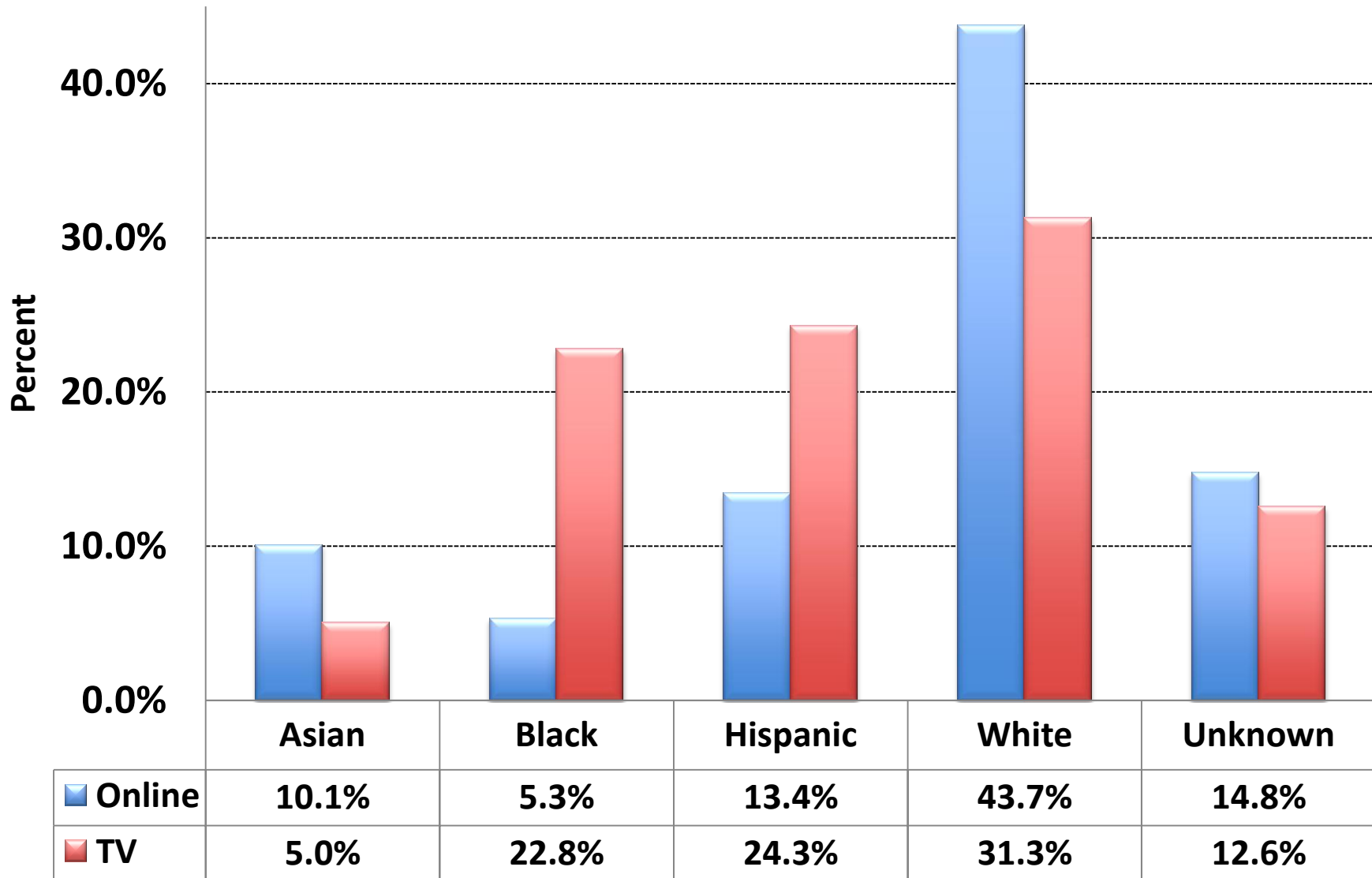
Current Student Characteristics

- Summer 2010 survey
- Population of 3,200 online students
- 25% response rate

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1999 DL Student Success Survey

- Random sample: 3,261 DL students from spring, summer & fall (32% of total population)

- All modalities: Telecourse, Online & Independent study

- 5% of population responded

Expectations/Reasons for Enrolling

Key Results

- 66% said they enrolled in DL "because of time or physical constraints"

- 48% said "I like learning at my own pace"

- 10% admitted they thought "the coursework would be a little easier"

Conclusions

- Time and flexibility is extremely valuable to these students

- They may benefit from pre-course orientations that manage expectations and describe workload

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Reasons for Drop/Failure

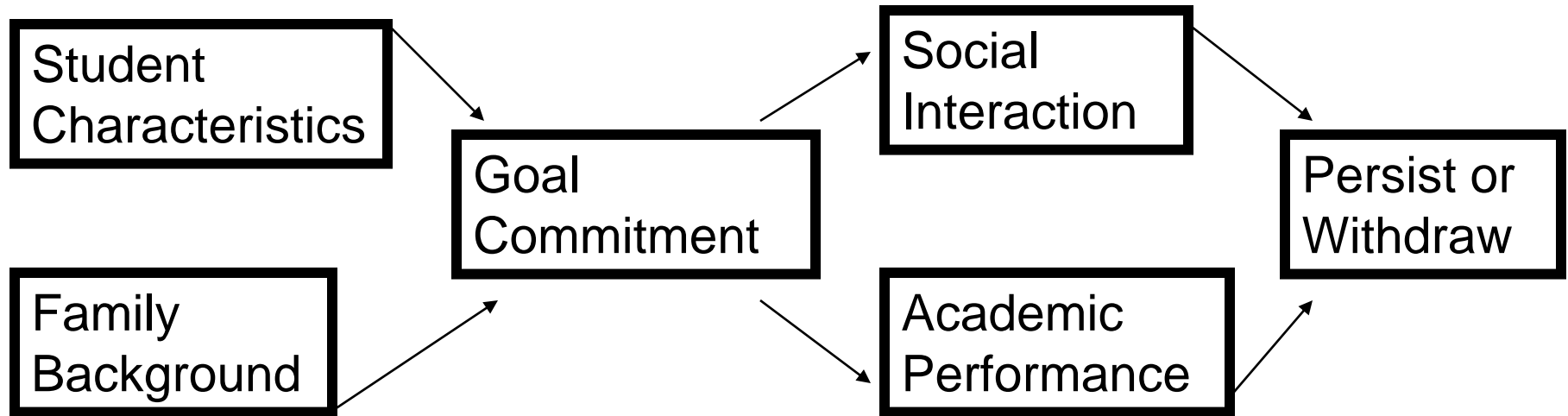## Key Results

- 40% said "I tried to accomplish too much that semester" -- especially those who dropped

- 25% indicated, "I had difficulty managing my time" -- especially those who failed

Conclusions

- They may benefit from pre-course orientations about course schedule and workload

- They may benefit by student success courses or seminars on time mgt. & planning

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Tinto's Model of Student Retention-Attrition

Student Characteristics

Family Background

Goal Commitment

Social Interaction

Academic Performance

Persist or Withdraw

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Some Factors Related to DL Success & Failure

Out of our control
- Lack of time
- Job Requirements
- Illness
- Life/Family Problems
- Previous GPA
- Learning Style

Within our control
- Expectations
- Services
- Success skills
- Course performance
- Instructor support
- Peer interaction
- Satisfaction

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Some DL Student Success Strategies

- Anticipate
- Motivate
- Communicate
- Cultivate

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Anticipate Needs & Questions

➢ Student Services
- Online, self-directed

➢ Course Design
- Quality rubric
- Everything explained, FAQs

Motivate Participation & Involvement

➢ Encourage more time on task
  - Make learning relevant
  - Realistic, authentic tasks/skills
  - Problems, cases, stories

➢ Use media and technology that is both effective and cool

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Communicate That You Care

➢ Make connections & build relationships
- • Maintain "presence"
- • Encourage interaction

➢ Reminding correspondence

➢ Prompt feedback on assignments

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Cultivate Good Learners

➤ Manage expectations

➤ Look for opportunities to connect students to services, support

➤ Build self-directed, self-regulating students through JIT learning moments

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Other DL Success Strategies

- Intake DL "readiness" assessment
- Early alert system
- Online learning communities & linked courses
- Interdisciplinary programs
- Online Tutoring (for course assignments)
- Peer Tutors/Mentors
- Mandatory DL student success course
- Integrated FYE program

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References

- Conrad & Donaldson, <u>Engaging the Online Learner</u> (Jossey-Bass)

- Ko & Rossen, <u>Teaching Online: A Practical Guide</u> (Houghton Mifflin)

- Palloff & Pratt, <u>Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace</u> (Jossey-Bass)

- Nash, R. (2005) "Course completion rates among distance learners: identifying possible methods to improve retention." *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/winter84/nash84.htm

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