

**Session Description:** The past two years have taught us many lessons. One of which is that the need to pivot and adapt to new circumstances can come quickly. In higher ed it has also taught us the need to employ empathy and compassion with our students and fellow faculty members as well. When you want to scale online course offerings, increase online programs, how do you do this and address all the other human concerns (we now face due to COVID) without forfeiting quality or increasing instructional costs?

This presentation will submit to the audience the idea of embedding "Academic Coaches" in online courses to support faculty within the course, providing a scalable option and savings on instructional cost while supporting and enhancing the student experience. This session will look at adding the human element to online courses via the academic coach who works collaboratively with faculty to reinforce their academic goals and learning objectives for the course. The coach focuses on enhancing student success and retention by increasing and promoting opportunities for collaboration, communication, and accountability, minimizing student isolation.

Academic Coaches understand the need for fostering positive, meaningful affective and professional relationships with students. Students feel connected to the course and the program because they are connected to their Academic Coach as well as the faculty member in the course. Each Academic Coach is a highly qualified, experienced practitioner in their field of study and has earned a graduate or doctoral degree. These individuals possess a strong educational, instructional, and leadership background, bringing value to the overall student learning experience. Research conducted by both the University of Texas at Arlington and the Louisiana State University Shreveport, and others will underscore the benefits of coaching. This presentation will engage participants in a lively discussion around this topic and areas that faculty are struggling with and how academic coaches can be part of the solution.

**Relevance to Chairpersons:** Scale, quality and the ability to provide faculty with needed assistance, without adding to your instructional costs.

**Presentation Focus:** Academic Coaches



INSTRUCTIONAL  
CONNECTIONS

# More: How to do more with more in 2022!

Abstract:

In 2022, we are dealing with new academic realities. This presentation will investigate current faculty concerns and explore the ways academic coaches assist faculty and put the personal touch in online courses necessary to support and enhance the student experience. Providing the ability to scale and save on instructional costs.

# Current Faculty Concerns:

- Larger Class Loads
- Online Readiness
- Time to properly prepare
- Addressing varying student concerns and needs
- Adequately providing necessary in-depth feedback
- You add your own concerns to this list....

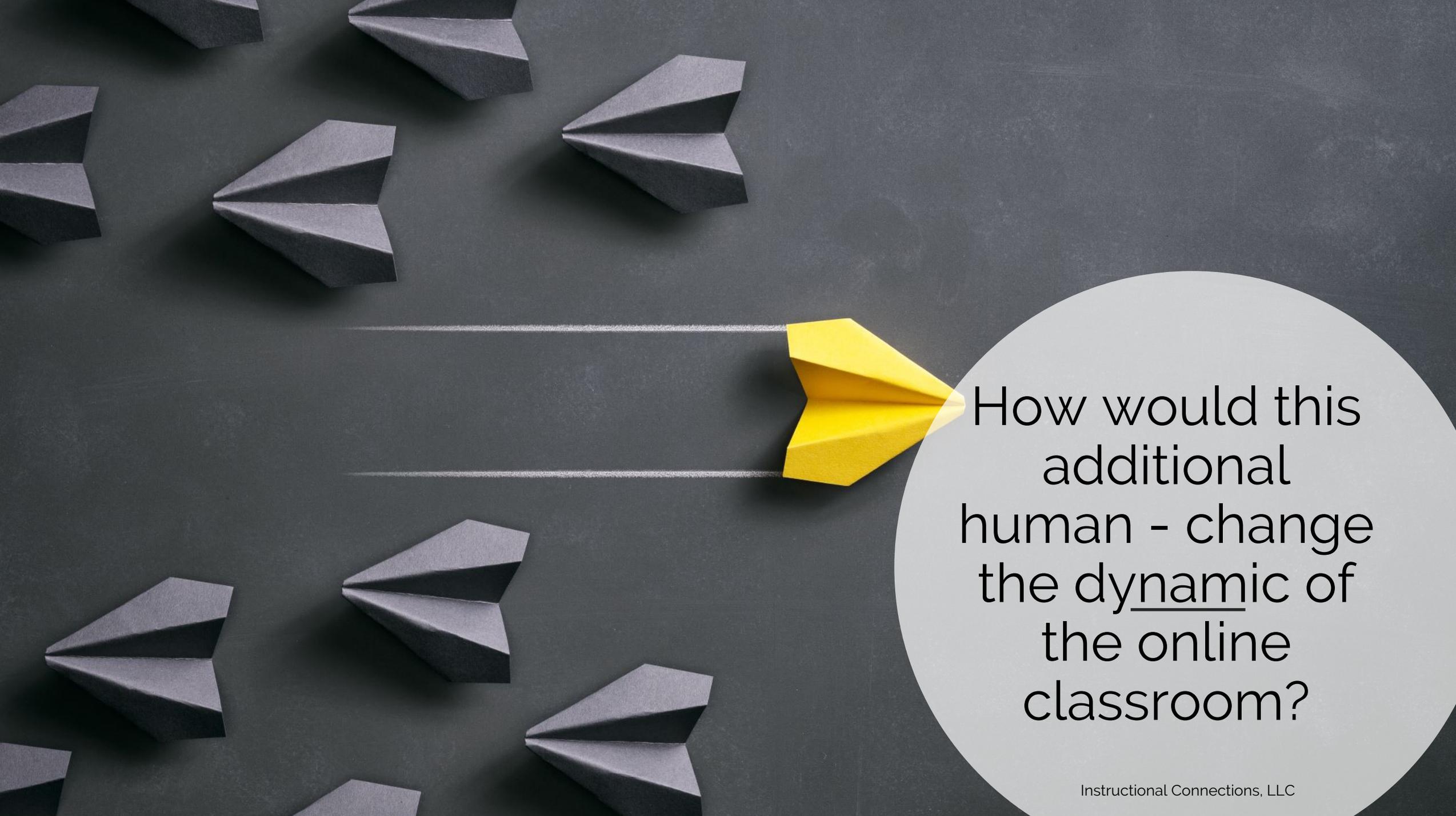
But what if  
faculty had  
more help...





What if the help came in the form of a highly qualified human?

Academic coaches are highly qualified, experienced practitioners in their field of study who have earned a graduate or terminal degree from an accredited institution.



How would this  
additional  
human - change  
the dynamic of  
the online  
classroom?

# Focus: Enhancing Student Success

Academic coaches work collaboratively with faculty to reinforce faculty prescribed academic goals and learning outcomes for the course.

They do this by:

- Providing detailed feedback
- Increasing and promoting opportunities for collaboration, communication and accountability
- Minimizing isolation felt by the student



# Clearly Delineated Roles

## The Faculty

- ✓ Faculty Member of Record - Stays in control of the course at all times.
- ✓ Subject Matter & Curriculum Expert
- ✓ Provides direction to Academic Coaches
- ✓ Final say on all grades and policy issues
- ✓ Leads Inter-Rater Reliability Activities
- ✓ Evaluates Coach Performance



# Clearly Delineated Roles

## Academic Coach

- Grade Assignments per Faculty Direction
- Monitors Discussion Threads per Faculty Direction
- Investigate and Report Student Issues/Concerns
- Respond to Student Questions within 24 hours



# Academic Coaches Make Connections

Students feel more connected to the course and the program because they are connected to their academic coach.

Thereby increasing that added sense of 'instructor presence,' we know is so important for affective learning, motivation and cognition.

Academic coaches understand the need for fostering meaningful, positive and professional relationships with students



# University of Louisiana Lafayette



## Highlights from this journal article:

- With the rapidly increasing number of RN-to-BSN programs and the ongoing challenge of hiring nursing faculty with online teaching experience, academic coaches are one approach to meeting the needs of the students.
- Careful screening, interviewing, orienting, and evaluating ensure that rigorous standards set forth by program administrators and faculty are adhered to by coaches and that successful outcomes are achieved.

# University of Texas Arlington



## Results from this study:

- The use of qualified academic coaches who support the faculty and provide students with a small-group experience is likely to yield high satisfaction.
- Coaches who answer questions and provide timely feedback to the students are likely to be successful in facilitating and enhancing the student experience.
- Faculty ratings of coaches were favorable, as were students' ratings of satisfaction with their online courses.

So, what are the outcomes  
of doing/having more?

# The Ability to Scale

- Increase online programs/scale online course offerings
- Never forfeit quality
- Doesn't increase instructional costs
- Support faculty
- Enhance the student experience



# Benefit to the Institution



Ability to Increase course offerings for high demand courses, pre & co-requisite courses and online/hybrid programs



Scalable for Rapid Growth in Student Enrollments



Students will be able to enroll in classes they need without deferment due to course caps

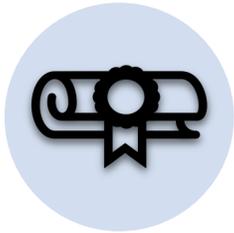


Lower Instructional Delivery Cost by only paying per student enrolled, with no minimums in course size or caps



The model has been held up to scrutiny by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC) and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

# Benefit to the Students



Academic coaches are **degree qualified** vs. Traditional graduate teaching assistants on campus who are students pursuing an advanced degree



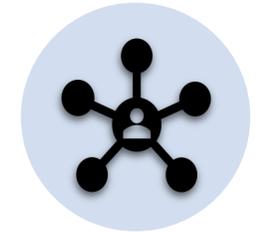
Academic coaches have a **mastery of the subject area** and are **experienced practitioners** in their fields



Academic coaches **support programs** through **building rapport** with students and faculty members



Allows the faculty of record to **focus on delivery of course content and outcomes**



**Low turnover among academic coaches (< 5%)**, who build strong working relationships with university faculty and strong supportive connections with the students

Thank you for listening



**INSTRUCTIONAL  
CONNECTIONS**

Jacquelyn Cato, VP Operations ([Jacquelyn.cato@iconnect-na.com](mailto:Jacquelyn.cato@iconnect-na.com))  
Harriet Watkins, CAO ([harriet.watkins@iconnect-na.com](mailto:harriet.watkins@iconnect-na.com))