Using Behavioral Analytics to Support Student Retention

Q&A

Q: I was wondering how behavioral analytics is applied to written communication to students, if at all (e.g., email etc).

A: Yes, the Behavioral Analytics technology can linguistically analyze text and written communication. We made the strategic decision to focus initially on phone calls, given the volume of calls that are made to our students on a daily basis. We are just now starting the process of developing an implementation plan to use this technology for text. We don't have anything to report yet, but we'd love to check back (future WCET webcast?) with an update once we are up and running and have some early insights to discuss.

Q: There's obviously a lot of sensitivity around the use of student data without their consent. What kind of consent is obtained from students for use by Behavioral Analytics? And to what degree is the generated model visible to the students?

A: We mention at the beginning of every call that the call is being recorded. As for the data collected, the BA system isn't collecting personal information about the student. The data that's being collected is data about what happened on the call – not about what the student said on the call. To give an example, let's say we have a 15 minute conversation with a student who talks about how she's struggling in class because she recently lost her beloved pet frog Lucy. The data that BA captures could look something like this: call was 15 minutes starting at 1:10 and ending at 1:25pm on Thursday 4/26/18 at 4:19pm. Student was engaged for 7 minutes and 43 seconds of the 15 minute call. Student showed distress 8 different times. Wiley employee delivered a custom response twice. Student was a Emotions style type. There was a 45 second hold.

Obviously the example above is fictitious but hopefully shows that the system isn't collecting personal or identifiable information about the student. The BA system collects over 100 different data points and those data points are used to inform our likelihood models. Those predictive likelihood models are not visible to students and currently we are not handling students differently based on the predictive scores.

Q: Fascinating topic. Is data also collected from the LMS as part of the overall approach ... perhaps early intervention?

A: LMS data is part of the overall approach and used for early intervention. Our Success Coaches are looking at login reports and activities as part of their proactive approach. That said, all students get proactive outreach from a Success Coach – even if they're logging into the LMS and active in their classes.

Q: Each student has a coach or only those with demonstrated unprofessional behaviors or struggling with content?

A: Every student gets a Success Coach and proactive communication from that coach. Some students may need more support than others, but we are making outreach to everyone throughout the program (with more touchpoints for those that need them).

Q: No - it did not answer the question (about student data and permissions to use data and record calls). Earlier you stated that the coaches keep track of how the student likes to interact - so the next time they call in surely you are pulling up that diagnosis on the student and using it to respond??

A: Coaches linguistically analyze students in an effort to identify the student’s style type while on the phone. After the call has been captured by the BA system and analyzed the system then confirms the student’s style type. That style type is then uploaded into our CRM (Salesforce) which is a safe and secure environment for student information, accessible only to Wiley employees with login information.

Q: Kind of like a Student Mentor in a CBE program?

If this is in reference to the success coach role, it is more than a student mentor. A success coach at a very high-level is the individual that builds a relationship with a student that will exist throughout the student's time in the program. The success coach serves as a one-stop shop for students as they navigate the College's various offices and processes as well as serving as a liaison between the student and his/her faculty and ultimately the program director.

Q: Are your term to term retention numbers following specific cohorts at a time? And, Do these numbers include new enrollments?

Term-to-term retention follows students who were enrolled in a previous term to the next term; new enrollments would have to be moving to their second term before they are counted. When we look at completion rates we count all of the students that enroll in a given academic year then use a formula to determine expected completion - we can track cohort retention by start but this is more of manual process (it is difficult to program given that we have 3 starts per year).