At-Risk Characteristics

First Generation to Go to College

- fewer role models for attitudes and behaviors that lead to academic success
  - design peer-teaching and mentorship opportunities
  - facilitate study groups
- lower familial understanding or support of academic responsibilities
  - understand that families and communities can prioritize babysitting, chores, and day-labor opportunities over class attendance or private study time
  - design active-learning opportunities for students to practice using new knowledge in class
- lower career aspirations
  - help students identify what career-paths their degrees can open and how to pursue them
  - encourage students to aspire for more

Low Income

- irregular, demanding, or otherwise competing familial or work obligations
  - understand that schoolwork often takes a backseat to other obligations
  - design active-learning opportunities for students to practice using new knowledge in class
- limited resources for textbooks or other course expenditures
  - keep textbooks and other course costs low
  - develop or incorporate free online resources
- limited access to computers or online resources
  - list the computer labs on campus and label which ones have printers
- isolation from campus community
  - promote a strong sense of classroom community
  - notify students of upcoming campus events and encourage them to attend

Non-traditional

- competing familial or work obligations
  - understand that schoolwork often takes a backseat to other obligations
  - design active-learning opportunities for students to practice using new knowledge in class

- isolation from campus community
  - promote a strong sense of classroom community
  - notify students of upcoming campus events and encourage them to attend
- relevancy-oriented
  - clarify the relationships between new content and both prior and future content
  - clarify the relationship between new content and the career
  - clarify the relationship between new content and students' lives
- extreme desire for self-direction, autonomy, and respect
  - increase students' responsibilities in planning and evaluation

Cultural Minority

- Whereas higher education often emphasizes solitary learning, some cultures raise their children with a collectivist approach to decision-making and shun individualism.
  - create a balanced mixture of solitary and collaborative learning opportunities
- Whereas higher education often emphasizes debate, some cultures prioritize a common narrative and dismiss difference.
  - build trust
  - establish a safe learning environment that welcomes errors and unusual ideas
  - reframe debate as collaboration
- Some cultures assign the responsibility of wisdom and knowledge to elders, and deference and obedience to younger generations. Adult learners can have problems admitting that experience does not replace other learning, and younger generations can defer responsibility for knowledge to the instructor.
  - organize peer or small-group discussions and activities, and then visit each group to ask follow-up questions, remediate underprepared students, and challenge high-performing students
  - provide students with opportunities to negotiate course content with their prior and sometimes very different experiences with the topic

Gifted

- reliance on abilities and poor knowledge of study strategies
  - provide students with study strategies for each type of learning (memorization, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation)
- negative perception of seeking help
  - normalize the process of seeking help by routinely admitting when you seek it
  - build seeking help into the structure of the course