Career Decision Making: Why the First-Year Seminar Matters

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Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to
1. Summarize research that shows the value of first-year seminars.
2. Describe how the first-year seminar can be used to help students with career exploration and academic skill development.
3. Describe strategies to be a campus champion for the course.
Student Success

MAKING THE CASE
Increased Retention and Persistence

Retention Rate from First to Second Year
Widener University
(Bushko, 1996)

Bronx Community College
(Karp et al., 2015)

“FYS participation has statistically significant and substantial positive effects on a student’s successful transition to college and the likelihood of persistence into the second year.”

Pascarella & Terenzini (2005)

Increased Graduation Rates

Students who take FYE courses are
17 percent more likely to graduate
than those who have not taken the course and
11 percent more likely to graduate on time

Leefer (2012)

Across all ability levels
FYE courses contribute to a higher graduation rate

Miller & Lesik (2015)
Improved Academic Experience

First-year students who take the FYE course and perform well are more likely to achieve better grades as sophomores or juniors.

Percentage of Students who Agree FYE Courses Helped to Develop Key Skills

- 94% Communication
- 93% Problem Solving
- 90% Participation
- 90% Time Management

Jaijaram (2016); Karp et al. (2015)

FYE students reported that they are more likely to engage in good classroom practices such as speaking up in class, collaborating with other students, and attending class regularly.

Keup & Barefoot (2005)

Sense of Belonging

First-year seminar students reported that they are more engaged in the campus community and more likely to develop close friendships with other students, as well as to experience greater interaction with faculty.

Students agree that the FYE course enabled them to be more involved in campus activities.

Keup & Barefoot (2005)

Students agree that the FYE course enabled them to expand their network of friends.

Jaijaram (2016)
All Students Benefit

Students of all ability levels who take the FYE course benefit in ways such as increased confidence, study skills, and awareness of resources (Howard & Jones, 2000).

Students of ALL ability levels who take the FYE course are more likely to persist.

Retention Rate by Level of Academic Preparation

Miller, Janz, & Chen (2007)

Responding to Naysayers

Why Everyone?

- FYS only required of at-risk students was least effective (Permzadian & Cred, 2016)
- High-performing peer models is critical (Yeung & Nguyen-Hoang, 2016)
- Mindset and messages are negative (Harrington & Orosz, 2018)
- Everyone benefits from career exploration

Why 3 credits?

- Time is needed for skill development (Karp et al. 2012)
- Faculty and students devalue courses less than 3 credits (Jessup-Anger, 2011)
- Motivation and retention higher (Du, 2016)
Making the Case Challenges and Solutions

Guided Pathways

Improving Student Experiences and Increasing Student Completion
Guided Pathways

Defining Pathways

Helping Students Choose a Path

Ensuring Learning

Helping Students Stay on a Path

First-Year Seminar and Guided Pathways

Defining Pathways

Helping Students Choose a Path

Ensuring Learning

Helping Students Stay on a Path
The First-Year Seminar: Areas of Focus

Career

Academic

Sample Learning Outcomes

Students will develop a higher sense of self-efficacy by:

• Identifying and utilizing strategies and resources that promote academic success, personal growth, and resiliency.
• Demonstrating critical thinking, information literacy, and technological skills.
• Practicing interpersonal and leadership skills essential in a diverse, global society.
• Reflecting on values, goals, decisions, and actions in relation to the impact on self and others.
• Creating academic, career and financial plans.
Helping Students Choose a Career Path

Advising Statistics

- Some Student: Advisor ratios can be up to 1000-2000:1 (average caseload is approximately 300)
- Only 36.5% reported advising was mandatory for all students
- Only 54.1% indicated that professional advisors were assigned advisees
- Average number of professional advisors: 4 per institution

NACADA 2011 Survey
One Solution: The FYE Course

“Student success courses are an important element of the guided pathways model, as they represent a cost-effective method of providing students assistance in goal formation and program planning”

(Bailey, Smith Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015, p. 69).

Where Do Students Get Career Information?

- Informally from friends and family
- Faculty rather than career counselor

Greenbank, & Hepworth (2008)
Are Students Engaged in Career Exploration?

Not much, they take a “serial” approach to academics and careers, placing greater importance on assignments and current work.

Greenbank and Hepworth (2008)

Benefits of Career Exploration in First-Year Seminar Course

• 15 weeks for students to engage in self-assessment, research careers, and engage in networking

• Increase exposure to options and learn from peers

• Develops information literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills

• Makes career exploration a priority!
Who Benefits from Career Exploration?

Up to 70% of students change their major
Albion and Fogarty (2002)
Declared students change their major too!
US Department of Education (2017)

Making the Case for a Career Focused FYE
Current Practices:

Career is one of least emphasized topics in FYS

• 29.3% of two-year colleges
• 13.1% of four-year colleges

Young & Hopp (2014)

Traditional Career Activities in FYS

Self-Assessment

Career Information

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Career Exploration Process: Parson and Holland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-assessment</th>
<th>Information about careers</th>
<th>Choose a Career</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values/passion, Skills/abilities, and Interests</td>
<td>Websites, Informational interviews</td>
<td>Match Self-assessment with Career Information</td>
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Re-thinking Self-Assessment

Assessments? ➔ Actions!

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Reflecting on Actions

What did you enjoy the most about this activity?
What did you enjoy the least?
Was the work/activity meaningful to you?
When you have a great experience/day, what made it great?
When you have a bad experience/day, what made it bad?

What about Networking?

85% of jobs are filled by networking (Adler, 2016)
Start Early: Relationships and Skills Take Time to Develop

Example Assignment

Career Exploration and Networking Actions Project:
Part I:
You need to participate in at least 10 actions that will help you learn about your interests, values, and abilities, about careers, and develop and expand your professional network. Document these activities in the table below (also in Canvas). At least 5 of these activities need to be interpersonal interactions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of Action</th>
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Example Assignment

Part II:
In a paper, presentation, or other format, answer the following questions:
1. How these actions helped you determine what you like to do, what matters to you and your strengths and abilities?
2. What did you learn about the career path you explored? What surprised you or what did you find interesting? What actions will you take next if you plan to pursue this path? If you don’t plan to pursue this path, what steps will you take to help you identify a different career path? Be sure to cite sources.
3. How did these actions help you build or expand your network? Who have you added to your network and how will these connections help you? How you can also contribute to and maintain these relationships?

Educational Plan

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Helping Students Stay on a Path

Skills Students Need

• Critical Thinking

• Information Literacy
Do Critical Thinking Exercises Work?

Completing isolated “critical thinking” exercises doesn’t work

![Bar chart showing pre-test and post-test scores for GALT and CCTST with p-values](image)

Cotter and Tarry (2009)

More Involved Research Assignments Work!

![Bar chart showing pre-test and post-test scores for PsychBuster Project and No project with p-value](image)

Blessing and Blessing (2010)
Information Literacy and Critical Thinking

Need to be explicitly taught - must carefully craft our assignments and not leave it to chance

(Hayes-Bohanan & Spievak, 2008)

Skills Needed

“it is evident that students can find information, but have great difficulty interacting with and understanding what they are reading.”

Using Research to Build Academic Skills

Student Success in College: Doing What Works!

Being a Campus Champion

Make the Case Data

Guided Coalition of Advocates

Professional Development
Resources

Student SUCCESS IN COLLEGE
3e

WHY THE FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR MATTERS
Helping Students Choose and Stay on a Career Path

Christine Harrington and Theresa Omode

RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES FOR YOUR ACADEMIC AND CAREER SUCCESS