Re-Designing the First Year Seminar to Increase Student Success

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Learning Outcomes

1. Describe how the first-year seminar can play a critical, foundational role in promoting student success.

2. Identify strategies that can be used to re-design the first-year seminar to include academic and career planning.

3. Summarize the research evidence for first-year seminars.
Changing Majors: What do you think?

What percent of students enter college undecided about what career to pursue?

For students who declared their major as a first-year student, what percent subsequently change their major?

When students change their major, is the new major likely to be within the same career path?

Changing Majors

Up to 65-70% students enter college undecided about what career to pursue

• Albion & Fogarty (2002)

For students who declared their major as a first-year student, about 1/3 changed their major (10% doing so more than once)


Sometimes these changes are within the same career path, but some do not (i.e. 36% changed from STEM to non-STEM)

• Colorado State University (2011)
• National Center for Education Statistics (2009)
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

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)

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).
Benefits of Career Exploration in the 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!
- All students can develop a comprehensive academic, career, and financial plan.

REDESIGNING FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR CURRICULUM
Shifting...

From
Content-Based or Activity-Based Design

To
Backward Design

Course Re-Design: Backward Design

- Learning Outcomes
- Evidence
  - Formal
  - Informal
- Teaching Methods
  - Desired Results
  - Learning Experiences and Instruction
Who Should be on the Team?

Establishing a Course Design Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Full and Part-Time Faculty (Experts)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Teaching and Learning Center</td>
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Step 1: Learning Outcomes

How can this course support program and institutional outcomes?

What do you want students to know, think or do as a result of taking this course?

Sample Learning Outcomes: NJ

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.
Sample Learning Outcomes: CT

You will develop self-efficacy as a college student by:

• Creating academic and career plans, including a financial component, and modifying as needed.
• Demonstrating information literacy, critical thinking, and effective communication skills.
• Identifying and using campus resources and engaging with the campus community.
• Defining and applying college success and resiliency strategies.

Step 2: Evidence that Learning Outcomes were Achieved

What are approximately 2 summative assessments that would show whether or not students achieved the learning outcomes?

What formative assessments would help students know if they are on track to successfully perform on the summative assessments?
Evidence

Turn & Talk:
Describe an action-oriented activity to support career planning

More In-Depth Actions

- Networking Actions
- Plans or Maps that include coursework and outside of class activities

Research shows we must go BEYOND interest inventories and include activities that build career-decision making self-efficacy and other important self-assessment factors such as values

(Gore, 2002)

Types of Evidence

Career and Academic Planning

Academic Skills

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Example Assignment

Academic and Career Portfolio

- Self-Assessment
- Career Exploration Worksheets
- Academic and Financial Plan
- Networking Action Plan

Example Assignment

Research Article Presentation

- Article Selection
- Exploring the Research in Summary Worksheet
- Power Point Slides
Step 3: Teaching Methods

What teaching approaches will best support students?

Faculty Training
Training Videos: www.scholarlyteaching.org

Faculty Training Videos for Student Success in College: Doing What Works!

The Value of Teaching Research
Teaching Students about Research
The Jigsaw Classroom
Group and Presentation Skills
Goal Setting and a Visual

MAKING THE CASE
Increased Retention and Persistence

![Graph showing retention rate from first to second year](image)

"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

Leege (2012)

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

Miller & Leski (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. 

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

(Jajaram (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.

(Keeup & Barefoot (2009))

 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.

- 73% Students agree that the FYE course enabled them to be more involved in campus activities.
- 80% Students agree that the FYE course enabled them to expand their network of friends.

(Jajaram (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).**

**Retention Rate by Level of Academic Preparation**

Miller, Janz, & Chen (2007)

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Being Your Campus Champion: The Goal!

**All Students: This is an Equity Issue!**

**3 Credits**

**A Program Requirement**
Resources

Ask Cengage for a FREE Instructor Copy

Uses a Guided Pathways Framework

Rowman and Littlefield
20% Discount Code: RLEGEN18

Stylus Publishing: 20% Discount Code ETS20
Take-Aways and Action Plan

Take-Aways

• What are the key ideas you can take back to your campus?

Action Plan

• Who can you partner with and what initial steps can you take?

Thank you!

Questions?

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