Team teaching FYE – Innovative partnerships for success

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Background of the model

• University Division: FYE pioneer
  – Non degree granting program under Student Affairs for students who don’t choose a major when they enter the university.
• Started offering stand-alone FYE course over 50 years ago
• Transitioned from 1 to 2 hour course in mid 1990s

Evolution of the model

• Paired sections of University Seminar + Speech or English (late 1980s - 2003)
• Discipline ‘FYE’ courses taught by faculty with loose guidelines (late 1990s)
• Restructuring of Academic and Student Affairs resulting in current FYE model (2004 – present)
• Workshop facilitated by National Resource Center Co-Director, Betsy Barefoot, to plan new format and courses (Winter 2004)

Features of the team-teaching model

• Cooperative teaching teams
• Small sections
• College success curriculum + discipline curriculum
• Additional credit hour
• Common course elements

FYE Team-taught courses

• Art History
• Chemistry
• Criminal Justice – NEW 2006
• English
• Geography
• History
• Political Science
• Psychology
• Speech
• Women’s Studies

FYE Team-teaching Curriculum

• Academic Success Skills
  – Learning Styles and Skills Assessment
  – Reading strategies, Note-taking, Test-taking
  – Library Project
  – Computer Competency
• Educational and Career Exploration
  – Academic Planning and Standards
  – Career Planning
• Critical Thinking
• Diversity
Common Elements

- Students requirements
  - Attendance at campus events
  - Interview with instructor
  - Customized FYE textbook bundled w/planner
- Instructor requirements
  - Attendance policy
  - Integrated syllabus and grading structure
  - Interviews with students
  - Teaching circle participation
  - Annual workshop

Learning objectives of the model

- To integrate the mastery of ‘college success’ skills and student self-awareness with particular disciplinary knowledge
- To foster students’ assimilation into the university environment, both academically and socially in order to strengthen their commitment to degree completion
- To explore academic and career planning from both a disciplinary and a wider perspective

Types of assessment

- Institutional Research
- Programmatic Assessment
- Specific Course Assessment
- Student Feedback

Institutional research

- Current
  - Retention data
  - Freshman GPA data
- Future
  - Your First College Year (YFCY)
  - National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Retention of first year ABR* students

- High risk students (ACT < 20 and H.S. class rank < 50%) are overrepresented in FYE group

GPA of first-time freshmen who returned in F05

- Mean GPA
  - Took FYE F04 or S05
  - No FYE

* Admitted by review
Your First College Year survey

First-year student ratings/data, including:
- University facilities & services
- Instruction
- Campus connections & interactions
- Study skills
- Personal growth in thinking & learning
- Persistence
- Career development
- Use of time

Starting Spring 2006 (freshmen entering UNO Fall 2005), responses of students enrolled in FYE course will be identified.

Programmatic assessment

- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Research Projects
  - “Evaluating a First-Year Experience Team Teaching Model” (Neathery-Castro & Sowell)
  - “Meta-Skills in the Classroom: Teaching Time Management” (Brown)

“Evaluating a First-Year Experience Team Teaching Model”

- Student survey results:
  - Instructors effective as a teaching team
    - Very: 66%
    - Somewhat: 23%
  - Effective to combine FYE into subject course
    - Yes, require for all freshman: 36%
    - Yes, for those who need it: 39%
  - Found FYE ideas or skills useful
    - Able to apply to other classes: 31%
    - Helped me get used to college: 41%

Specific course assessment

- Chemistry 1180: Pre/Post surveys
  - Slightly less confident about time management skills
  - Much greater awareness of university resources
  - Better equipped with study skills needed to succeed
  - Much greater knowledge of career exploration strategies
  - Greater understanding of health and wellness issues and knowledge of campus resources to address them

- Political Science 1000
  - Comparisons of Grades between freshmen in FYE and non-FYE course
  - Explanatory factors: Institutionalization of the course + partner involvement
  - “I think it is critical that both the content and FYE instructors ‘sell’ the importance of FYE material throughout the semester. It becomes obvious to students if it is not a collaborative and/or integrated effort.” — FYE teaching partner

- Art History 2040
  - Comparisons of Grades between freshmen in FYE and non-FYE course
  - Explanatory factors: Institutionalization of the course + partner involvement
  - “I think it is critical that both the content and FYE instructors ‘sell’ the importance of FYE material throughout the semester. It becomes obvious to students if it is not a collaborative and/or integrated effort.” — FYE teaching partner
Student feedback

• “The FYE class helped my study habits & got me more comfortable with the campus & classes. I learned a lot about how to deal with stress & other people.”
• “The most helpful parts were the campus events. They made me get out there and get involved. I learned that I work best in a group, so I started study groups. I learned to not be afraid to ask people to hang out.”

Student feedback

• “The FYE class got me thinking & acting in the right direction as an incoming freshman instead of high school. The most important thing I learned was what it takes to get through college, what criteria is important when picking majors, & what other majors fit my personality.”
• “The easygoing atmosphere made it easier to learn. The teachers are understanding & seem to want to get to know us as people.”

Get the Rhythm of UNO

Here is an opportunity to get into the rhythm of your first year of college and strike a note of success!

UNO’s First Year Experience (FYE) courses are designed to enhance first year academic success, help you meet other students, give you a chance to work closely with faculty, and encourage active learning. Each FYE course will integrate academic content with college success strategies and orientation to college life.

Questions? Contact your college advisor.

UNO Strategic Planning Award for Student Focus – FYE 2005

FYE teaching partners

Toronto 2006

• Nate Bock, FYE Instructor
• Nicole Bowers, FYE Instructor*
• Maggie Christensen, English*
• Christina Dando, Geography
• Marjina Howe, Speech
• Jody Neathery-Castro, Political Science
• Fred Nielsen, History
• Lisa Oliveto, FYE Instructor
• Cathy Pettid, FYE Instructor
• Marti Rosen-Atherton, FYE Instructor
• Joanne Sowell, Art History

* Starting Fall 2006